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of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Ninth Legislature

| Member | Constituency | Political Affiliation |
|--------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
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| ALTEMEYER, Rob | Wolseley | N.D.P. |
| ASHTON, Steve, Hon. | Thompson | N.D.P. |
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| DYCK, Peter | Pembina | P.C. |
| EICHLER, Ralph | Lakeside | P.C. |
| FAURSCHOU, David | Portage la Prairie | P.C. |
| GERRARD, Jon, Hon. | River Heights | Lib. |
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| GRAYDON, Cliff | Emerson | P.C. |
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| HICKES, George, Hon. | Point Douglas | N.D.P. |
| HOWARD, Jennifer, Hon. | Fort Rouge | N.D.P. |
| IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon. | Fort Garry | N.D.P. |
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, May 12, 2010

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): It is my duty to inform the House that Mr. Speaker is unavoidably absent. Therefore, in accordance with the statutes, I would ask the honourable Deputy Speaker to please take the Chair.

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

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 35—The Condominium Amendment Act (Phased Condominium Development)

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Consumer Affairs): I move, seconded by the Minister of Housing and Community Development (Ms. Irvin-Ross), that Bill 35, The Condominium Amendment Act (Phased Condominium Development), be now read a first time.

Madam Deputy Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Family Services Minister and seconded by the honourable Minister for Housing and Community Development, that Bill 35, The Condominium Act, be now read a first time.

Mr. Mackintosh: This bill, Madam Deputy Speaker, strengthens protections for condo owners where the development is proceeding in phases, and more specifically, so that condo buyers are provided with clear information and protections about future plans, and it also streamlines rules for developers. It's part of the strategy announced yesterday for stronger consumer protection, called Let's Make a Better Deal.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

PETITIONS

Waste-Water Ejector Systems

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly, Madam Deputy Speaker.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

Manitobans are deeply committed to protecting the environment, and they want to be assured that provincial environmental policies are based on sound science.

In early 2009, the provincial government announced that it was reviewing the Onsite Wastewater Systems Regulation under The Environment Act.

Affected Manitobans, including property owners and municipal governments, provided considerable feedback to the provincial government on the impact of the proposed changes, only to have their input ignored.

The updated regulation includes a prohibition on the installation of a new waste-water ejectors and the elimination of existing waste-water ejectors at the time of any property transfer.

Questions have been raised about the lack of science—scientific basis for these changes, as a Manitoba Conservation official stated in the October 8th, 2009, edition of the *Manitoba Co-operator*, quote: "Have we done a specific study? No." End quote.

These regulatory changes will have a significant financial impact on all affected Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Conservation to consider immediately placing the recent changes to the Onsite Wastewater Management Systems Regulation under The Environment Act on hold until such time that a new—that a review can take place to ensure that they are based on sound science.

To request the Minister of Conservation to consider implementing the prohibition on wastewater ejector systems on a case-by-case basis as determined by environmental need in ecologically sensitive areas.

To request the Minister of Conservation to consider offering financial incentives to help affected Manitoba property owners adapt to these regulatory changes.

And this petition is signed by E. Lewin, R. Gilliland and P. Coy and many, many others, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: In accordance with our rule 132(6), when petitions are read they are deemed to be received by the House.

Multiple Myeloma Treatments

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

Health Canada has approved the use of Revlimid for patients with multiple myeloma, a rare, progressive and fatal blood cancer.

Revlimid is a vital new treatment that must be accessible to all patients in Manitoba for this life-threatening cancer of the blood cells.

Multiple myeloma is treatable, and new, innovative therapies like Revlimid can extend survival and enhance quality of life for the estimated 2,100 Canadians diagnosed annually.

The provinces of Ontario, Québec, British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Alberta have already listed this drug on their respective pharmacare formularies.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

That the provincial government consider immediately providing Revlimid as a choice to patients with multiple myeloma and their health-care providers in Manitoba through public funding.

The petition is signed by H. Eby, J. Rivet, B. Hanna and many, many others.

PTH 15–Twinning

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): Madam Deputy Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

In 2004, the Province of Manitoba made a public commitment to the people of Springfield to twin PTH 15 and the floodway bridge on PTH 15, but then in 2006, the twinning was cancelled.

Injuries resulting from collisions on PTH 15 continue to rise and have doubled from 2007 to 2008.

In August 2008, the Minister of Transportation stated that preliminary analysis of the current and future traffic demands indicate that local twinning will be required.

The current plan to replace the floodway bridge on PTH 15 does not include twinning and therefore does not fulfil the current nor future traffic demands cited by the Minister of Transportation.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Transportation consider the immediate twinning of the PTH 15 floodway bridge for the safety of the citizens of Manitoba.

Signed by L. Reeves, C. Martin, H. Kerr and many, many other Manitobans.

Multiple Myeloma Treatments

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

Health Canada has approved the use of Revlimid for patients with multiple myeloma, a rare, progressive and fatal blood cancer.

Revlimid is a vital new treatment that must be accessible to all patients in Manitoba for this life-threatening cancer of the blood cells.

Multiple myeloma is treatable, and new, innovative therapies like Revlimid can extend survival and enhance quality of life for the estimated 2,100 Canadians diagnosed annually.

* (13:40)

The provinces of Ontario, Québec, British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Alberta have already listed this drug on their respective pharmacare formularies.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

That the provincial government consider immediately providing Revlimid as a choice to patients with multiple myeloma and their health-care providers in Manitoba through public funding.

And Madam Deputy Speaker, this is—this petition is signed by H. Kraemer, P. Kraemer, M. Blei and many, many others.

Bipole III

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Carman): Madam Deputy Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

Manitoba Hydro has been forced by the NDP government to construct its next high-voltage direct transmission line, Bipole III, down the west side of Manitoba, a decision for which the NDP government has not been able to provide any logical justification.

Since this will cost Manitoba ratepayers at least \$640 million more than an east-side route, and given that the Province of Manitoba is facing its largest deficit on record, the budget of this extra cost could not come at a worse time.

Between 2002 and 2009, electricity rates increased by 16 percent, and Manitoba Hydro has filed a request for a further rate increase totalling 6 percent over the next two years.

A western Bipole III route will invariably lead to more rate increases.

In addition to being cheaper, an east-side route would be hundreds of kilometres shorter and would be a more reliable than a west-side route.

West-side residents have not been adequately consulted and have identified serious concerns with the proposed line.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to consider proceeding with a cheaper, shorter and more logical east-side route, subject to necessary regulatory approvals, to save ratepayers hundreds of millions of dollars during these challenging economic times.

And this petition is signed by P. Bowslaugh, J. Falk, I. Farley and many, many more fine Manitobans.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Manitoba Day and Treaty Day Proclamation

Hon. Eric Robinson (Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs): Yes, Madam Deputy Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism (Ms. Marcelino), I have a statement for the House.

Today, May 12th is Manitoba Day. It was 140 years ago that the Manitoba Act received royal assent in 1870, officially creating our province as part of Canada.

On May 12th, 1966, Manitoba's official flag was dedicated and unfurled for the first time, and in 1986, that day became Manitoba Day in recognition of its importance in the history of the province.

So, today, across this great province, Manitobans are attending celebrations and events to mark this significant anniversary.

One example is the Treaty Day celebrations held in this Chamber. This morning, the Premier (Mr. Selinger) signed a proclamation highlighting the importance of the treaty relationship to the co-existence of all people in Manitoba.

The proclamation reads as follows:

WHEREAS the Constitution of Act—Constitution Act of Canada, 1982, section 35(1), provides that existing Aboriginal treaty rights are hereby recognized and affirmed; and

WHEREAS the numbered treaties in Manitoba, including 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 10 that were signed between the First Nations and the Crown in right of Canada; and

WHEREAS the government of Manitoba recognize that the treaty relationship is a fundamental aspect of life in Manitoba; and

WHEREAS the government of Manitoba affirms that we are all treaty people; and

WHEREAS the government of Manitoba, the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and the Government of Canada have planned this event to approve the understanding of treaties and the treaty relationship within the province of Manitoba; and

NOW THEREFORE be—let it be known that I, the Premier of Manitoba, do hereby proclaim

Wednesday, May 12th, 2010, as Treaty Day at the Manitoba Legislative Assembly and commend its thoughtful observance to all citizens of our province.

Manitoba has always been and remains a land of opportunity, filled collectively by the First Peoples and by the many peoples and cultures that followed. It is the birthplace of the Métis nation, and a model of successful immigration policy emulated across Canada. There are over 300 ethnocultural organizations and over 100 different languages spoken across this province. Manitoba's rich cultural diversity continues to be one of our greatest strengths as we move forward together as Manitobans.

There are many exciting activities and initiatives happening to celebrate Manitoba's birthday and our rich cultural traditions continuing through May and the rest of the year. Manitoba Homecoming 2010 is a year-long experience bringing former and current Manitobans, visitors, friends and families together for events, festivals and all-around great celebrations.

As we celebrate, we take pride in the fact that Manitoba is home to people from—and cultures from across the globe. Our multicultural society gives our province and our country an excitement and vibrancy like no other place in the world. I encourage all members of this House and all Manitobans to explore our province, enjoy the many events, and take time to discover more about our collective histories and how our future is being shaped by our great people and our cultures.

Madam Deputy Speaker, before I conclude, I would like to ask for leave so that the proclamation may appear in *Hansard* as printed.

Thank you very much, and happy Manitoba Day.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Prior to recognizing the honourable member, is there leave for the proclamation to appear as it was written? *[Agreed]*

WHEREAS the Constitution Act of Canada, 1982 Section 35(1) provides that existing "Aboriginal and Treaty Rights are hereby recognized and affirmed"; and

WHEREAS the numbered Treaties in Manitoba included Treaties 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 10 that were signed between the First Nations and the Crown in right of Canada; and

WHEREAS the Government of Manitoba recognizes that the Treaty Relationship is a fundamental aspect of life in Manitoba; and

WHEREAS the Government of Manitoba affirms that "We are All Treaty People"; and

WHEREAS the Government of Manitoba, The Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and The Government of Canada have planned this event to improve the understanding Treaties and the Treaty Relationship within the Province of Manitoba; and

NOW THEREFORE LET IT BE KNOWN THAT I, GREG SELINGER, Premier of Manitoba, do hereby proclaim Wednesday, May 12, 2010 as

"TREATY DAY AT THE MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY"

And commend its thoughtful observance to all citizens of our province.

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet): And I thank the minister for his statement this afternoon, and on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus, I'd like to also join with the minister in celebrating and acknowledging the Manitoba Day and the importance of Manitoba Day to all Manitobans.

A hundred and forty years ago today, the Manitoba Act received royal assent, leading the way for proclamation on July 15th and the creation of our great province of Manitoba. It's a day for all Manitobans to reflect on our accomplishments as a people and as a province. Over the years we've faced adversity, from great floods to great wars. We have survived depressions and drought, and we continue to build our economy and our opportunities. These challenges have made us stronger as a province and as a people, and the lessons learned will serve us well in the future.

One hundred and forty years ago, we entered the federation as a vibrant young province with the aspiration to assert Manitoba's place in Canada. I know that Manitobans continue to maintain the same resolve and commitment that was asked of generations before us, as we continue to make our province a great place to work, to live and to raise a family.

Madam Deputy Speaker, 2010 is Manitoba's Homecoming as we—and as we welcome our friends and family home this year, we must all take pride in what we have accomplished as Manitobans. Today is

a time to celebrate. I know the official Manitoba Day festivities in Neepawa will be a great time, and I want to thank all the organizers and volunteers that have worked very hard to make this event a success. The party will, without a doubt, continue this weekend as Manitoba hosts the world's largest social. As we celebrate Manitoba Day and reflect on our past, we must look toward the future. There will certainly be challenges ahead, but I am confident that Manitobans are up to the task.

We, too, Madam Deputy Speaker, want to thank all those who participated today in the Treaty Day celebration. These wonderful—this wonderful event was a great display of Aboriginal culture, from the singing of "O Canada" in Cree by the Niji Mahkwa Singers, to the performance by the Spirit Sands Drum Group.

Treaties are an integral piece of the fabric of our province, and it's important that we continue to build a dialogue and mutual respect among all Manitobans. Thank you.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I ask leave to speak to the member's statement.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Does the honourable member for River Heights have leave to speak to the minister's statement?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Leave has been granted.

* (13:50)

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Deputy Speaker, I join other members of this Chamber in celebrating Manitoba Day and in celebrating our province. We are a province of tremendous opportunity, a province of huge potential, a province with a very rich history, and it's right that we should be celebrating today and recognizing the achievements that have been made over the last 140 years and the potential that we have for the future.

It was a particularly special day today, with the events that we had this morning surrounding the treaties, a recognition of Treaties 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 10, which are the ones which apply in Manitoba. And I'd like to congratulate the efforts of Dennis White Bird, the Treaty Commissioner over the last five years, for bringing the knowledge and understanding of the treaties to prominence and his role, along with many others, in organizing the events this morning and, of course, particularly the office of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, which

was very active in the organization. I'd like to thank the singers and the drum group from this morning and to recognize, as we already have, that treaties—we are all treaty people, that we were represented at the time of the treaties, either by the chiefs in council on one side or by the Crown on the other side. And we have shared benefits as a result of those treaties, which have been a foundation for our province in the past and as we move forward. Thank you.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Deputy Speaker: I'm sorry. I have guests to introduce.

I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today Eric Glass, Chairman of the Paramedic Association of Manitoba, along with a delegation of paramedics. They are the guests of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid).

Also in the public gallery today we have seated in—students from Dakota Collegiate, 48 grade 9 students, under the direction of Mr. Brad Fallis and Mr. Barry Wittivrongel. And they are the honourable—they are the guests of the honourable member—honourable Minister for Education (Ms. Allan).

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

Let's try again—oral questions.

ORAL QUESTIONS

New West Partnership Agreement Provincial Exclusion

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): I would just like to begin by thanking you, Madam Deputy Speaker, and the Clerks and staff for the role they played today, as well, on Treaty Day. I think it was a well organized and thoughtful event this morning here in this Chamber. Thank you for that. I want to also thank the minister—the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson) for his statement today.

And Madam Deputy Speaker, in terms of the history of this province, one of the great descriptions of this province through history was as the gateway to the West, a recognition of the important role that Manitoba has played, does play and will continue to play into the future as a great trading province, as the gateway to western Canada.

I want to ask the Premier why he's putting in jeopardy Manitobans' position—Manitoba's position as the gateway to the West by being not even at the gate but absolutely off the airplane when it comes to the New West Partnership.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): And we did have a wonderful morning in the Legislature this morning with all parties present, many of the Aboriginal leaders of the country—of the province here. And the staff did an excellent job.

And we really—this morning was a very important symbol because it recognized that the founding peoples of this province, through the treaty process, made it possible for us to settle here, made it possible for us to prosper here.

And as we go forward, we'll want to ensure that everybody in Manitoba is included in that prosperity, which is why we do things like CentrePort, which will allow us to be a gateway not only east and west but north and south, throughout North America and, indeed, around the world; which is why we have forged new relationships around the world, with partnerships with states like Wisconsin and Minnesota; which is why we have excellent relationships with the provinces to the west of us, with the first-ever joint Cabinet meeting between the government of Saskatchewan and the government of Manitoba, where we agreed, Madam Deputy Speaker, to work on things like transportation, like education, like things that will allow us to further the innovation economy. So we continue to forge new relationships east, west, north and south, in North America and around the globe.

Mr. McFadyen: Madam Deputy Speaker, the importance of this new trading bloc, formed to the west of us, has stated in a news release issued this morning, where they make reference to a seamless economic region of nine million people with a combined GDP of more than \$550 billion. Those three premiers are leaving in two days to seek investment, to create jobs, to build the wealth within their provinces, to be able to afford front-line public services: paramedics, nurses, teachers, doctors, police officers, and others, who provide public services.

In the absence of that growth, that investment and those jobs, all of these things are put at risk going into the future, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I want to ask the Premier, if he will indicate today, why it is that he is not proactively seeking to maintain Manitoba's position as a trading province,

recognize that more than 50 percent of our economy is based in trade. Will he take the proactive step of integrating Manitoba into western Canada and maintaining our place as a trading province?

Mr. Selinger: Madam Deputy Speaker, we are proactive in integrating Manitoba with the entire economic union of the country, which is why Manitoba took a leadership role on the labour market agreement which the whole country signed up to. Members opposite said that would never be possible, which is why we took a proactive approach in having our first ever joint Cabinet meeting with the government of Saskatchewan, which is why we're taking a proactive approach in our trade representatives around the world.

We've been in China for over 20 years, Madam Deputy Speaker, with an ex-Manitoban who has done excellent work there in forging new business relationships there. Two thirds of our business nominees—our Provincial Nominee Program, which is the envy of the country for bringing newcomers to Manitoba, over 13,000 people last year, and in the business nominee category, over two thirds of the business nominees are coming from Asian countries and, in particular, from the country of China.

We have a strong base of relationships around the entire planet. We share these relationships with other provinces and we will continue to do so in the future.

Mr. McFadyen: Madam Deputy Speaker, the concern is that while he's dining and having meetings all over the world that the western provinces are eating his lunch. I think that's the concern in terms of where we're going as a province.

Today, Madam Deputy Speaker, we saw the news of 300 layoffs at CanWest in Winnipeg in addition to other layoffs that are taking place. As the news of 300 job losses happens here in Manitoba, the provinces to the west of us are going out to attract investment and create jobs.

Tomorrow, Madam Deputy Speaker, this Premier will speak to the Brandon Chamber, and we've been hearing from business people in western Manitoba and around Brandon who are very deeply concerned about the exclusion of Manitoba from this agreement and the impact on their businesses, and the attractive welcome mat that is being laid out in Saskatchewan and to the provinces to the west.

Over the long term, it's a threat to jobs. It's a threat to social programs. It's a threat to our standard

of living. Why will he not get proactive and join the New West Partnership?

Mr. Selinger: Madam Deputy Speaker, we are part of the Council of the Federation. The Council of the Federation takes good ideas from any bilateral or trilateral relationship, whether it's in the east or the west of the country. The Council of the Federation builds on these ideas, generalizes them for the whole country, which is why we did the labour market mobility agreement.

Manitoba has always played a role of connecting the east and west and the north of this country. We do 53 percent of our trade in eastern Canada—of our Canadian trade. We do 43 percent of our trade in western Canada. We have more trade on a proportionate basis with Canada than we do compared to any other province than with the United States, which is still 70 percent of our overall trade. We are forging new relationships in Europe as we speak through trade relationships there. We have just signed a memorandum of understanding with Queensland, Australia, when I was in Chicago last week—[interjection] I know the members have trouble keeping up with us when we do all these relationships around the world.

* (14:00)

Just today, Madam Deputy Speaker, we are signing a relationship in India with agriculture to add value over there in our Food Development Centre—

Madam Deputy Speaker: The honourable member's time has expired.

New West Partnership Agreement Provincial Exclusion

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon West): Madam Deputy Speaker, it's obvious when it comes to growing Manitoba's economy, the Premier of the province of Manitoba is looking in the rear-view mirror while the premiers of three western Canadian provinces are driving their economic agenda forward at breakneck speed. The fact that Manitoba is nowhere to be found in this economic juggernaut is beyond embarrassing. It is a serious threat to all Manitoba businesses.

Is it too late for the Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade to finally wake up to the threat and attempt to join our neighbours to the west?

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade): Well, Madam Deputy

Speaker, perhaps the members opposite should look from coast to coast to coast in this country, as we are part of an agreement on internal trade. We work with all of our partners across the country. We have several federal-provincial-territorial meetings and, last I checked, that included all signatories to the Confederation. We continue to work on an issue such as CentrePort, which, as the First Minister mentioned, is east, west, north and south. I know members opposite, when they were in office, their north didn't even include Churchill on the map, but we look even further than that in terms of the potential for the Churchill port and—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. The honourable Minister for Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade to complete your answer.

Mr. Bjornson: Well, thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. The bottom line is we work on behalf of all Manitobans, with all Canadians, for a better Manitoba, for a better Canada.

Mr. Borotsik: The reality is, Madam Deputy Speaker, is that the minister is failing miserably. Has he even heard of, or has he even seen the document called the New West Partnership?

Madam Deputy Speaker, Manitoba businesses trade interprovincially and internationally. Those markets are very, very competitive, and now that competition is coming from our friends and our neighbours from the West, the B.C. Premier just said, in his latest press release, the recent economic downturn has proven that we are stronger if we work together.

Why can't Manitoba play nice and work with the neighbours to the West?

Mr. Bjornson: Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, I'd like to assure the member opposite that we play nice with our neighbours to the West, to the North, to the East and to the South, Madam Deputy Speaker.

We've been leaders on the agreement on internal trade, which the members opposite said would never happen, but through the leadership of this government and our role at the federal-provincial-territorial tables, it happened, Madam Deputy Speaker.

We work on the Western Climate Initiative. We've had the joint meeting with the Saskatchewan Cabinet as the First Minister has said. We continue to work on initiatives such as CentrePort, which is a

game changer for the province of Manitoba and for the future of this province. And members opposite said, that won't work either.

And we continue to work in the best interests of all Manitobans, and we continue to work with all Canadians to make Manitoba a better place, to make Canada a better place.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Just—before recognizing the honourable member for Brandon West, I just want to remind all honourable members that we are here in front of school children and other people in the gallery who would like to hear question and answers, so I'm going to ask for some decorum in the House.

Mr. Borotsik: The minister continually talks about his joint Cabinet meeting in Yorkton with the Saskatchewan Cabinet. The fact of the matter is they were never invited back, Madam Deputy Speaker, and never invited to be a partner in the New West Partnership. That in itself should tell the minister something, is that he's failing miserably.

I would like to tell the Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade that in my constituency, in Brandon, we're approximately 100 kilometres from the Saskatchewan border. A substantial amount of the trade that goes on between the companies and the businesses and the manufacturers in my constituency, goes to Saskatchewan. That is in jeopardy. The Premier's (Mr. Selinger) going to get a very frosty reception tomorrow, Madam Deputy Speaker, because this minister and this government is not protecting that trade with my businesses in Brandon.

What's he going to say to those businesses when they move to Saskatchewan?

Mr. Bjornson: Yes, I'm very familiar with the entrepreneurial spirit of the good people in Brandon, because one of the first tours that I had undertaken as Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade was in fact Brandon, where I did go and visit some of the companies there and I did see an incredible amount of optimism in terms of the economic downturn and now the recovery that's under way. And the businesses in Brandon participated, as businesses across Manitoba did, in terms of a survey that was done to find out what their sense of—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. I'm having some difficulty hearing the minister's reply. I just want to

remind all honourable members that I do have to make a ruling if there is a breach of the rules. So I am going to ask for some assistance from all honourable members.

The honourable minister, to complete his answer.

Mr. Bjornson: Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker, and as I was saying, there's a tremendous sense of optimism in the province of Manitoba. I've travelled throughout this province to visit many companies throughout the province of Manitoba. They've taken advantage of the situation to engage in lean manufacturing practices, looking at their training needs and requirements for the future. And at least members opposite should be comforted in knowing that businesses in Manitoba have optimism, unlike members—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. The honourable minister's time has expired.

Birds Hill Provincial Park Bicycle Lane Usage

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): Madam Deputy Speaker, this year marks the 50th anniversary of our provincial parks, which includes Birds Hill Park, where visitors have been able to enjoy the recreational activities including inline skating and cycling.

The road running through Birds Hill Park includes a bike lane which is widely used by runners, cyclists and inline skaters. They have now been informed that organizations are only allowed to host events on the bicycle-skate lane before 10 a.m., due to possible conflicts with campers.

Can the Minister of Sport indicate why he's restricting the use of the bicycle lane for cyclists and inline skaters when that lane is there specifically for that purpose?

Hon. Bill Blaikie (Minister of Conservation): Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm unaware of the ruling that the honourable member refers to. I undertake to look into it and get back to him as soon as I can, because we want to encourage all kinds of activities in the park. And if there's a good reason for that—what he's referred to, we'll try and get to the bottom of it and get back to him about it.

Mr. Schuler: I'll give the minister a little bit more information: that in the 1999 Pan Am Games, they held cycling and other events at Birds Hill Park. The Friends of Birds Hill Park society calls for the

maintenance and improvement of the roadways of Birds Hill Park so that cyclists and inline skaters can make better use of it. Explore Canada and the Great Canadian Rivers guide praise Birds Hill Park as a prime destination for cycling and inline skating.

Countless of Manitobans and visitors from other provinces enjoy the activities Birds Hill Park offers every year, yet cycling, triathlon and inline skating events now cannot be held after 10 a.m. because of this government has gone on to restrict the use of the bicycle lane which was created for that very purpose.

Why is this being restricted?

Hon. Jim Rondeau (Minister of Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors): I'm pleased to let the members know that we've gone and invested a lot in trails, in recreational trails. In fact, we've done \$20 million of investment in trails, and by the way, Madam Deputy Speaker, the members opposite voted against the \$20-million expenditure in trails. We're also—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. Once again, I just want to remind all honourable members that it's question and answer time. So the more time we're taking for me to stand up here, the more time it's going to be taking away from questions and answers.

The honourable Minister for Healthy Living, to complete your answer.

Mr. Rondeau: Thank you very much. I'm also—remind all members that we've gone into a program called in motion. That is trying to get people of all ages, young and old, active. We've now invested about a million dollars in grants to hundreds of organizations and businesses, and that keeps people active in the city, in the country, in the north, in the rural areas. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, again, the members opposite continue to vote against those types of activities.

Mr. Schuler: When it comes to strange answers, that is one of the tops. That was a strange answer.

The question really is: Would the minister rather have all of these cyclists and individuals on our roads where there are much higher risk of serious injury or, Madam Deputy Speaker, in a park, where they're being banned from?

* (14:10)

In fact, the proposed Duff Roblin bicycle trail is to be built extending 40 kilometres from the floodway inlet to Birds Hill Park. Thus a bike path is

being built to Birds Hill Park, but does not allow cycling events to be held in the park itself. This is another example of the short-sightedness of the NDP and a slap in the face to the inline skaters, cyclists, triathletes using Birds Hill Park

Why did the minister implement a policy that defies the purpose of the park? The very year that Manitobans should be celebrating the anniversary of our provincial parks, they're being kicked out.

Hon. Eric Robinson (Minister responsible for Sport): Madam Deputy Speaker, I believe this demonstrates true teamwork by a very effective government.

Let me say that what the Minister of Healthy Living (Mr. Rondeau) has just said is very important: that recreational activities and getting people active physically is very important.

Secondly, I believe that my colleague, the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Blaikie), said that he would avail himself to try and get more details in order to provide a more accurate answer for the member for Springfield. And I commit to the member of Springfield that I will do exactly the same thing: work with my colleague, the Minister of Conservation and the Minister of Healthy Living and come up with a response for the honourable member for Springfield.

Bill 29

Privacy Concerns

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): Madam Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Advanced Education has put forward Bill 29 that allows for collection of more personal information about students. Students have the right to know what information is being collected about them, and she has not consulted them.

Why has this minister not respected the privacy rights of students by bringing in this backdoor bill that potentially supersedes The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and The Personal Health Information Act?

Hon. Diane McGifford (Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy): And I am pleased to have the opportunity to answer the question and correct the misinformation that's been put on the record this afternoon.

When I had a briefing with the member opposite, I was very clear that the freedom of information and privacy—protection act and the PHIA act had prominence that anything—that this legislation was

overridden by these two bills. Also, students have the right to not give information. Students will certainly be advised as to the information corrected–collected.

In fact, the member and I are in almost total agreement, in that we agree that students have the right to protections of their private information; that's exactly what the legislation will yield.

Mrs. Taillieu: The only thing that was clear in that briefing is the minister did not consult before she brought in this legislation.

This backdoor bill is about collecting and sharing personal information on people from kindergarten to the grade, yet, it's done through a department not even responsible for privacy legislation. The press release on Bill 29 says, and I'm going to quote: is formalizing existing administrative processes, and the spreadsheet says, and I'm quoting again: provides a statutory framework, which suggests that the current collection and sharing of information could be illegal.

So I'll ask the minister: Does she need this bill to make the collection of student data legal, and, if it is legal, why does she need the bill?

Ms. McGifford: And, once again, that question is riddled with inaccuracy, and, once again—yes, once again, is riddled with inaccuracy.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. The honourable minister has the floor.

Ms. McGifford: As I made clear to the member opposite during her briefing, the purpose of the legislation is to improve our ability to design the post-secondary education system.

I know the member opposite felt the best way of finding out how many males and females who were in a classroom was to walk into every classroom in every university and count them. I don't know how she was going to count Aboriginal people or people from other backgrounds, but that was what she—that was her—that's what she said in my office. In other words, ignorance is better than knowledge.

Mrs. Taillieu: Madam Deputy Speaker, it's very obvious that this minister really is out of touch and doesn't know what this legislation is even about. If this government wants to collect more personal information on people, why by a backdoor bill rather than through the privacy laws?

She did not consult with the Ombudsman for a privacy assessment before bringing in the bill. She did not consult with privacy experts in the province. She did not consult with students, and she did not consult with parents. She could even be breaking the law by currently collecting the information on kindergarten kids, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Will the minister pull Bill 29, get her homework done first, be up front with the public and not sneak in a backdoor bill? Will she do the right thing and pull that bill, Madam Deputy Speaker?

Ms. McGifford: Madam Deputy Speaker, if the second question was riddled with inaccuracy like the first question, then the third question is riddled with fearmongering.

This bill is designed to do nothing, Madam Deputy Speaker, but to collect statistical information—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. The honourable minister has the floor.

Ms. McGifford: This bill will allow this government to collect information—to collect the very information that Stats Canada is already collecting and wants to sell to us.

Now, we prefer to do it by ourselves, thank you very much.

Addictions Foundation of Manitoba Government Funding and Strategy

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): Madam Deputy Speaker, it's—it is just like the NDP government to recklessly hide excess costs in excessive budget lines. During Estimates, it became clear that the Minister of Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors is doing just that within his department.

While this minister likes to brag about the increased funding in this budget for the AFM, this is simply smoke and mirrors. Not one single new treatment bed was added, despite horrendous wait times.

However, what was included this year in AFM's budget was the salary of a new employee for the minister's own department.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I'd like to ask the minister: Why is this individual's salary hidden away in the AFM budget? What—why—or, sorry—why isn't

this minister being transparent about the costs within his department?

Hon. Jim Rondeau (Minister of Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors): I'm pleased that we had over a million-dollar increase to the AFM budget to enhance services in schools and programs, treatments and support. And I'm pleased, Madam Deputy Speaker, that we believe in enhancing the service.

As I said in Estimates, that we've almost doubled the amount of money going to addictions services over the last 10 years, and we continue to look at enhancing the service. We're looking at the programs. We're looking at making sure that closures that happened in the past don't happen in the future. We're looking at enhancing programs to students in order to prevent, and what we are doing, Madam Deputy Speaker, is we're using an expert from the AFM to give us advice on—to continue to enhance the system.

Mrs. Rowat: When I asked the minister about this position's relation to the department and AFM during Estimates, the minister explained that he—that she'll work on policy with them and on us and work on issues with them and us.

So I ask the minister what he has to say about this: The external addiction treatment agencies this minister claims to be working with, or supporting, are concerned about a conflict of interest. They are being asked to report to an administrator paid through AFM's budget while being forced to compete with AFM for operational funding.

Until—under the Progressive Conservative government in 1990s, the administration of external addiction agencies were removed from under the AFM's control. Madam Deputy Speaker, why is this minister going backwards in addiction policy and supports?

Mr. Rondeau: Maybe the member doesn't understand that we're enhancing services outside AFM. We're enhancing services inside AFM, and what we're doing is we're using the advice of external agencies. We're using a seconded position, a person who's had experience in the addiction field, to give us advice on how to enhance—further enhance the system.

* (14:20)

And so, Madam Deputy Speaker, you want to have advice from the front-line services to tell you how to enhance the service. We will continue to do

that. We will continue to support both AFM and third parties to continue to move forward with addiction services and continue to look forward to the future.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, we'll continue to look forward to our investments—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. The honourable minister's time has expired.

Mrs. Rowat: Besides the conflict concern, the really—the only thing we're seeing is an increase in staffing capacity within this minister's department.

During Estimates, the minister admitted that only now is his department beginning to develop a comprehensive strategy—addiction strategy. We saw a Web site developed years ago but there's no strategy behind it. If he'd talk to any addiction worker or Manitoba waiting for treatment, he would be—he would know how grossly underfunded and overdue this strategy is.

Can the minister inform the House: When can Manitobans expect a comprehensive addiction strategy from this government?

Mr. Rondeau: As I explained to the member, we do have an addiction strategy. We continue to work with the addiction strategy. And what it is is, basically, we're enhancing the treatment; we're focussing on prevention in the community and in young people; we're focussing on support for people after treatment; we're looking at niche things like FASD.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, when we have doubled the funding and doubled the support for these agencies, the members opposite vote against. So let us not hear one thing and do another. We say we're enhancing the system. We vote for that and we create the supports in AFM and in the community to help people with addictions. We don't vote against that support.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Prior to recognizing the honourable member, I just want to remind all honourable members, we have loges. So if you wish you can make use of the loge, if you have a conversation you would like to have with another one of the members here.

Agriculture Industry

Supply Management Commodities Quota Tax

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): On March 23rd, this cash-strapped NDP government issued a press release outlining its 2010 and 2011 fee changes by

department. This release clearly stated that there would be a levy for producers on exchange and transfer of value of quotas.

Yesterday in concurrence, the minister stated there won't be a tax on quota. Will the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Struthers) now come clean in his government going to enact a tax on quota for producers in our supply-managed sector or not? Has he finally come to his senses and decided to axe his new tax?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Acting Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): Madam Deputy Speaker, I think the Minister of Agriculture relayed this information during Estimates, but I will inform the member that on April 26th the Minister of Agriculture met with the stakeholders from the five supply management commodity groups. The minister reinforced the facts that no final decision had been made with regard to the details of the proposed levy and encouraged the groups to work with the department to develop options. And the minister promised to meet again with the groups prior to any implementation.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, the minister is working on this matter. The industry is involved in this issue, and I would say to him, let the supply management commodity groups meet with the minister and come to a resolution on this matter.

Mr. Graydon: Madam Deputy Speaker, this government refuses to curb its spending habits, and it's so desperately enacting a new tax on supply managed producers. Penny Kelly, general manager of Manitoba Egg Farmers, is one in the many in this sector with concerns about this new tax. Kelly stated in May 6, 2010 edition of the *Manitoba Co-operator*, and I quote: Where does it stop? What's to prevent a new tax on local foods? It's a precedent issue that's almost alarming. End quote.

Will the minister commit today to scrapping this tax grab that will provide absolutely no benefits to supply managed producers and could hurt consumers?

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Deputy Speaker, we all know that supply management commodities are an important tool for our producers. As a department, we work with those groups. We provide specialists in the dairy, in the poultry sector. We continue to work on behalf of these producers when it comes to the WTO and addressing their issues there.

And as I have said, the minister has met with the groups. He has indicated that he will meet with them again and will continue to work out what the options should be, and the industry has said that they will work with the minister and look at how we might better enhance services in Manitoba.

Mr. Graydon: Madam Deputy Speaker, the minister's got it all wrong. She just doesn't get it.

The minister needs to come clean with Manitobans. This is a new tax that will hit dairy, chickens, turkey and egg producers in their wallets. They will see no benefits from it and consumers can ultimately pay the price. This is a government that doesn't care about the consumers.

The minister said yesterday that he hadn't finalized the details of this half-baked scheme and that nothing is written in stone.

Madam Deputy Speaker, will the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Struthers) today do the right thing and scrap this new tax? Will he admit that producers and consumers shouldn't have to pay for this government's out-of-control spending habits?

Ms. Wowchuk: What I will tell the member opposite is that this side of the House will continue to work with the agriculture community. We will continue to address their issues and, Madam Deputy Speaker, we will—he should talk to his seatmate, the member from Carman, who said, and I will quote: The Tories will put less focus on issues such as health care, roads, social services, agriculture and rural depopulation and First Nations, but we're not going to win on those issues.

Madam Deputy Speaker, on one hand, they say they're not going to put a focus on roads, and every time he stands up or one of them gets a chance, they continue to ask for more roads in their constituency but not work on the important issues. We will work with the commodity groups in—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. The honourable minister's time has expired.

Seven Oaks Hospital Emergency Services Reductions

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): The Seven Oaks Hospital in Winnipeg's North End is one of our jewels, Madam Deputy Speaker, and, quite frankly, the government's decision a while back to cancel emergency general services ultimately was to the detriment of the quality of health care being provided to the people living in the North End.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm looking to the Minister of Health, having had the opportunity to see the impact of that ill-advised decision, is she prepared to tell this Chamber today that the government is, indeed, prepared to revisit the issue with the idea of reinstating general-emergency general surgery over at the Seven Oaks Hospital?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): I'm happy to inform the House that, in fact, health services at Seven Oaks General Hospital have, indeed, expanded under our watch.

I can tell the member that, of course, in addition to the \$10 million that we have invested for a brand-new emergency room, we've also—which, of course, includes increasing the space by 50 percent, improving efficiency and flow, development of a six-bed reassessment unit, creation of secure rooms. We've also added dialysis and we've increased oncology services at Seven Oaks.

There was a regional decision to consolidate general surgery for a variety of reasons, but Seven Oaks Hospital services have expanded overall, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Deputy Speaker, it's unfortunate when the Minister of Health really fails to recognize the health-care needs in Winnipeg's North End.

You know, earlier today, we had a discussion in terms of—with a young lady whose mother had died. And in this situation, Madam Deputy Speaker, she was over at the Seven Oaks Hospital and, ultimately, had to be transferred over because of that service that this government, that the NDP took away from Seven Oaks Hospital. Be very clear on that point, Madam Minister. Don't try to mislead people in the North End.

Madam Deputy Speaker, because she went to the Health Science Centre, the daughter of this—of the deceased will, in fact, tell you had that—had her mother not had to have gone to the Health Science Centre, that she believes her mother would still be alive today.

Will the minister agree to investigate the situation?

Ms. Oswald: I can inform the member that it was this House that brought in The Regional Health Authorities Amendment Act that entrenched in law

the necessity of investigating critical incidents and it was supported by the entire House.

* (14:30)

And, indeed, if the member has some specific information that he's not yet relayed to me, of course, I want to hear that information so situations can be fully investigated.

Further, Madam Deputy Speaker, we know that the general surgery consolidation was done on the advice of medical experts for reasons of patient safety. We know that while the member was speaking against this, he was passing out leaflets with information about cardiac surgery that his own leader would not agree with.

Mr. Lamoureux: The only person inside this Chamber that has been spreading misinformation is members on the New Democratic caucus, Madam Deputy Speaker. That's the reality of the situation.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the quality of health care has gone down, in essence, because of the taking away of the general emergency services. I ask the Minister of Health: Has she investigated, at all? Has she had any follow-up studies to gauge to the detriment her decision, her government's decision, on allowing general emergency surgeries from being taken away—the negative impact that that has had on the community residents in Winnipeg North End? Because I believe that this lady is not alone, and this minister has a responsibility to provide quality health-care services to all Manitobans.

Ms. Oswald: We have said from the very beginning that the general consolidation of surgery from the regional health authority would be under continuous review, and that review is going on.

Further, Madam Deputy Speaker, it was this member that handed out leaflets in the neighbourhood, making reference to the fact that he believed that cardiac surgery should be done at the Seven Oaks Hospital, in direct contravention to the Koshal report, in direct contravention to what his own leader believes about surgery consolidation. This information, in addition to frightening seniors in the neighbourhood, was totally irresponsible.

So I would ask the member: If he's going to continue on this campaign, at minimum, could he try to say things that are not a danger to patients?

**Manitoba Food Development Centre
Memorandum of Understanding with India**

Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples): The Manitoba Food Development Centre is well known for its great work, helping to bring Manitoba food products from conception to commercialization. We understand the importance of sharing our knowledge and expertise with other countries around the world.

Could the Minister of Finance please update the House on an important MOU signed today in India?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Finance): And I'm very pleased to have that question because we have made significant investments to the Food Development Centre to make it one of the leaders in Canada, Madam Deputy Speaker. And we are working very hard to get further commercialization and value added to agriculture products, and to identify target export markets that we can work in.

Today, Madam Deputy Speaker, our government was able to spend—sign an MOU with Haryana in India, where we will be able to mobilize Manitoba's knowledge and technology and expertise to help launch food development centres in India. That's one of the largest markets in the world. And we have been working with them on food development, and I'm very pleased that we have been able to sign a second—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. The honourable minister's time has expired. Time for oral questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

National Nurses Week

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): We all know that good health is the cornerstone to a full and vibrant life. However, it is impossible to ensure quality care without strong, skilled and dedicated nurses. That is why I am honoured to stand today and recognize May 10th to 16th as National Nurses Week. This year's theme, "Nursing: You Can't Live Without It," is a reflection of the immense value that nurses have in caring for each and every Canadian.

In Canada, National Nurses Week also coincides with May 12th, today, which is International Nurses Day, which commemorates the birth of Florence Nightingale who laid the foundations for all that nursing is today. Florence Nightingale was a pioneer in nursing. Her advocacy for women's rights and her undying belief in quality care have contributed

immeasurably to the profession of nursing as we know it.

In my time as a nurse, I worked alongside many compassionate, dedicated and patient-centred professionals, and I have seen first-hand the difference that an outstanding nurse can make in a patient's life. Nurses that care, not only about a patient's medical health, but about their mind and spirit as well, makes a difference between adequate care and outstanding care.

National Nursing Week provides an opportunity for us to thank all nurses in Manitoba and across our country for the dedicated work they do each and every day. Nurses of all backgrounds and skills are vital to ensuring that every person receives health care of the highest quality.

Our nurses face many challenges. They work long hours, encounter difficult patients and keep up with the demands of a constantly evolving health-care system. But our nurses are highly skilled, creative and passionate individuals who commit themselves each and every day to saving lives and championing the cause of good health care.

I am deeply thankful for the work of every nurse, whether they serve here in Manitoba or around the world. I hope every member of this House will join me in celebrating International Nurses Day and National Nursing Week.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Emergency Medical Services Awareness Week

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm honoured to rise in the House today to give thanks to our province's emergency medical services personnel. I am also pleased to advise the House that next week is Emergency Medical Services Awareness Week, May 16th to 22nd, as proclaimed by the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald). Today, we have members of the Paramedic Association in the gallery with us.

Madam Deputy Speaker, at their moment of greatest need, Manitobans are likely to stare into the faces of our paramedics. Those faces, calm and reassuring, have brought comfort to us, our friends and our family. The skill with which our province's EMS personnel react to complicated, demanding and even dangerous situations, is both astounding and vitally important.

As members will know, emergency medical services are a vital component of our health-care

system. Access to superb pre-hospital care, such as that provided by our paramedics, dramatically improves the survival and recovery rate of injured or ill individuals. The work done by our paramedics sets a high bar in competency and dedication to craft, and our provincial government is a worthy partner in the care of Manitobans.

In the past decade, our ambulance fleet has been enlarged and modernized. Approximately \$5 million has been invested in EMS stations across the province. Since 1999, our government has replaced Manitoba's entire fleet of 160 ambulances. Over the last two years, we have also added 13 additional ambulances, bringing the fleet to 173. We are also focussing on changing casual EMS positions to full-time positions. We now have over 600 full-time paramedics, compared to just 200 in 1999.

In 2006, the \$7.8-million Medical Transport Co-ordination Centre in Brandon opened, helping to co-ordinate the dispatch of EMS as efficiently and effectively as possible. More recently, our government made significant investments to establish the primary care paramedic program at Red River College, and last summer, the first class of 33 students graduated.

The recent budget renews and maintains our commitment to front-line staff even in the face of a challenging economic downturn. We know that with our government's economic commitment intact, front-line EMS staff will be able to continue to provide the excellent care that Manitobans deserve and expect.

In closing, Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to reiterate how thankful members of this House and all people across Manitoba are to our paramedics. They are role models for our children, safety nets for our parents and both works against pain and discomfort for all. Thank you to our paramedics.

YMCA-YWCA Women of Distinction

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): Madam Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to tell this House of two wonderful women who were nominated for the Women of Distinction Award this year. Both were nominated by Lilly Mallard and both are from Elie. Janine was nominated in the category of Business and the Professions, and Christa was nominated in the community volunteer category.

Janine Bray-Klimack was a key part of the team that successfully led Elie through the first F5 tornado in Canadian history. Assistant Chief Administrative

Officer for the R.M. of Cartier, Janine assumed the duties of the Chief Administrative Officer after the CAO's home was destroyed by the 2007 tornado. She led the local emergency response, helped to ensure the safety and protection of people and property. Janine was also part of the Cartier, St. François Xavier and Headingley Emergency Management Committee that initiated important changes to the CaSH emergency plan. As a result, extra equipment was purchased and a mobile office was established to deal with future emergencies.

* (14:40)

Christa Vann was the first woman to launch a tornado relief fund in Canada after the first and largest-ever tornado ravaged Elie in 2007. She launched the Elie Tornado Assistance Fund and co-ordinated several fundraising events and activities to help local residents rebound from the disaster. In four months, more than \$91,000 in donations was raised to help displaced families affected by the tornado. Christa developed a video documentary on emergency preparedness in the aftermath of the Elie tornado that is now shown to emergency response personnel and disaster planners around the world. Her work was also recognized by the rural municipalities of Cartier, Headingley, St. François Xavier and the St. François Xavier Emergency Management Board.

On behalf of all my colleagues, I want to congratulate both of these fine women, Janine and Christa, on all of their achievements and thank them for their contributions to their communities. They truly are women of distinction.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Memorial Cup

Mr. Drew Caldwell (Brandon East): Madam Deputy Speaker, Brandon is a hockey town, and starting this weekend Brandon will be a hockey capital, the focus of the Canadian major junior hockey world. On Friday, the Memorial Cup, one of Canada's most storied sports championships, gets underway in front of what will be raucous crowds at Westman Communications Place in the venerable Keystone Centre.

The Memorial Cup brings together la crème de la crème of Canada's major junior teams. In 2010, the Calgary Hitmen, winner of the Western Hockey League; the Windsor Spitfires, winners of the Ontario Hockey League; and the Moncton Wildcats, winner of the Québec Major Junior Hockey League

will compete for the Memorial Cup against hometown favourites, the Brandon Wheat Kings.

For its part, the Memorial Cup, originally awarded to the Ontario Hockey League champs, is named in remembrance of those brave Canadians who served in the First World War. It was first awarded to the University of Toronto's club team in 1919. Past Manitoba winners of the Memorial Cup have included legendary teams like the Winnipeg Falcons in 1921; the Winnipeg Elmwood Millionaires in 1931; the Winnipeg Monarchs in 1935, 1937 and 1946; and the Portage la Prairie Terriers in 1942. Our Brandon Wheat Kings are hoping to bring the Memorial Cup back to Manitoba for the first time in the tournament's modern era.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm proud to note that the tournament was made possible by direct support from the Province of Manitoba and by our government's funding partnership with others, which today is investing some \$15.5 million towards the ongoing operations, debt reduction and capital improvements of the Keystone Centre. Our investment will not be without a return. The economic benefits of the Memorial Cup tournament and our work at the Keystone Centre will ripple across western Manitoba for decades.

To Jeff Cristall, the chair of the host committee, and to his massive team of volunteers, and to Kelly McCrimmon and his Brandon Wheat Kings hockey club, thank you for your work towards what is sure to be a memorable week. To the players and officials, good luck. And, most importantly, to the fans, let's celebrate and join together in the cheer of Let's Go Wheat Kings.

Drug Coverage Approval Time

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Deputy Speaker, on Monday, a report on health care in Canada was released. It compared Canada to European countries. It's called the Euro-Canada Health Consumer Index 2010.

The report shows that, compared with European countries, Canada is slow to get new effective drugs into use and covered under Pharmacare programs. And in this respect, we have a particular problem with action in Manitoba, as we have seen recently with a number of new drugs like Lucentis, where we were one of the slowest of all provinces to provide support for this miraculous drug which has been shown to be remarkably effective in reducing blindness due to acute macular degeneration, the

commonest cause of blindness in seniors. We are seeing this again with the drug Revlimid, a vital new treatment for multiple myeloma, a life-threatening form of cancer.

In the assessment provided by the Euro-Canada Health Consumer Index, the time from approval of a drug to when it's included under Pharmacare is an important indicator of the quality of health care provided in a jurisdiction. The expected good performance is less than 150 days; between 150 and 300 days is considered fair; and more than 300 days is considered poor.

Sadly, in Manitoba, we are finding that the time from approval by the Health Protection Branch to when the new drug is approved under Pharmacare is often much longer than 300 days, sometimes two to three times longer or more. For Lucentis it was about three years and for Revlimid it's been about two years so far. These are at the very outer limits of poor. Indeed, these times need a new category for Manitoba, called hopelessly long.

Under the NDP, sadly, we are so bad we are virtually off the charts. The NDP have talked a lot but have not performed in our province in a responsible way, getting new drugs covered by Pharmacare in a reasonable length of time.

ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Deputy Government House Leader): Madam Deputy Speaker, I wonder if we might resolve the House into Committee of Supply to deal with the concurrence motion.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The House will now dissolve into Committee of Supply.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Concurrence Motion

Madam Chairperson (Marilyn Brick): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

The committee has before it for consideration the motion occurring in all Supply resolutions relating to the—the motion concurring in all Supply resolutions relating to the Estimates of Expenditures for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2010.

On May 5th, 2010, the Official Opposition House Leader (Mr. Hawranik) tabled the following list of ministers of the Crown who may be called for

questioning in debate on the concurrence motion: the honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan), the honourable Minister of Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors (Mr. Rondeau), the honourable Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy (Ms. McGifford).

These ministers will be questioned concurrently.

The floor is now open for questions.

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): My question is for the Minister for Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors. In question period today, I asked a question with regard to a staffing allocation. I just need some follow-up answers to that decision.

* (14:50)

In AFM's budget, the budget line is 90,000, and I believe that's what the minister had indicated to me in Estimates, for the salary of one person.

Can the minister indicate to me where the \$27,100 difference is? As he had indicated, the person would be employed at 62,900. So if the minister can just indicate to me where the rest of that money will be allocated.

Hon. Jim Rondeau (Minister of Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors): I can find out that information and get it to you directly. I assumed, at this point, that it was more on stat costs, but I will find out from you—I will find out from the department and get it to you with the other material I'm providing.

Mrs. Rowat: They, at AFM, when I had met with some members of that organization, had indicated that when they do fundraising, their fundraising dollars actually are deducted from their department's funding. And I find that rather interesting because what it does is actually deters an agency, such as AFM, from doing any type of fundraising.

Can the minister indicate to me if there are any plans to allow AFM to fund-raise without it being deducted from their departmental funding?

Mr. Rondeau: What's happened in the new legislation that was presented to the House is that there is an annual plan. In the annual plan they talk about what services they're going to do, they talk about the finances. And, actually, part of the annual plan deals with finances, the raising of money and how that's money is utilized by the foundation. It's the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba. They have the ability to raise money, and they have the ability to invest that money into addiction services.

I know we have enhanced addiction services and continue to enhance addiction services. But what we're doing is there's clarification on (a) the finances, how they can be raised and how they are developed as part of the plan that's submitted, as outlined, in the existing legislation that's before the House.

Mrs. Rowat: So that I'm clear, that is not an issue, or are you indicating that you are looking at that as an issue with AFM, so if they do raise money through their foundation, they are currently deducted through their department for the dollars that they do fund-raise?

Mr. Rondeau: What'll happen, as is explained in the new legislation, is that they, the AFM, will come up with an annual plan and an annual spend. As part of that, they will come up with if they have a target or a plan to raise additional money, and how that will be allocated. That is submitted to the minister on an annual basis and signed off. And that's how we'll look at the funding and investments and enhancements that are going ahead with the addiction services. So what'll happen is every year they will create an annual plan along with finances. If they are going to do a project like a capital project, the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba was a foundation in order to raise capital and money, and that will be submitted to the minister, according to the current legislation that's before the House, and they will present it to us, and it'll be moved forward.

It's part of having a comprehensive plan to enhance services for addictions. It will be provided to us, and that'll be built into part of the budgeting.

Mrs. Rowat: Just one further point on that, Madam Chairperson.

If somebody should donate, say \$50,000 or \$100,000, to AFM, through the foundation, does that then reduce their—like, it wouldn't be part of their plan. It may just come to them halfway through their financial year or budget year. So would that money, then, be deducted from the grant that they would receive the following year?

Mr. Rondeau: In the past, what's happened is, if there's properties as were given to AFM in the past, there's been properties that then had been utilized by AFM. What we envision is that there will be a process where they say this is their list of services they want to deliver. This is the capital investments they want to make. And we will work with AFM to develop a program on treatment, prevention and post-treatment. And we will also look with them on a

capital project. And we will work with AFM on their plan and on their financial plan.

What I'm—we will do is we've talked about the ability to raise money for capital projects and enhancements to the service. And what I've been assured by the AFM is that their board will look at the potential of raising money to enhance services, and that will be submitted to the minister as per the plan. And then the government will make decisions on how to work with AFM, as it does with all addiction treatment services.

Mrs. Rowat: So I'm getting, from the conversation, if there's a hundred thousand dollars that is donated halfway through their budget year, then that will definitely have a detrimental effect on their budget the following year.

Can the minister indicate to me whether he is aware of a needs assessment study that would have been done in 2005 or '06 with regard to addictions programming? Is he aware of a needs assessment study that was done by his department during that period of time?

Mr. Rondeau: To finish in the previous question, what I said is that we would work with AFM about their capital requirements. I'm pleased that we've almost doubled the funding to AFM and increased, drastically, the amount of addictions services that are being provided. We'll continue to look at how to enhance the service, not to the detriment of any organization, but how to enhance services, and I'm pleased to move it from about \$10.8 million to about \$21 million, as far as budgets.

As far as the second one, there's been a numbers of studies to—on how to enhance services, looking at where there could be gaps or where other jurisdictions have got better practices. We're constantly working to improve the system and one of the things we're trying not to do, is, we're trying to make sure that everyone works together.

I can assure the member that—during the question period, she sort of said, it's AFM or the other people. I went in front of the organization for all addiction services, and I said to them, and I will say publicly, what we're trying to do is make sure we have best practices. No one has a monopoly on addictions services; everyone has their niche. We want to make sure people have best practices. We want to work with everyone.

And so what we do is, we're looking at—right now, we're looking at enhancements of the FASD

programs and supports for families and mothers. We also look at other gaps in services or places where we might have need for additional services, and we'll continue to look at it, not just in 2005, not in 2—but every year the government will look at how we can enhance addictions services and services that are needed in the community.

Mrs. Rowat: In 2005 or 2006, there was a needs assessment done. It was a huge initiative in studying addictions, and there were a number of stakeholders, as many stakeholders, I think, as possible, throughout the province, involved in this needs assessment.

Can the minister indicate to me if he's aware of this assessment that would have been done in 2005-2006?

Mr. Rondeau: I've read numbers of studies on how to build a better system and improve access all the way from 2005 to the present day, and what we're doing now is, we actually have a person seconded from addiction foundation to work with our staff in addictions to say, see how we're filling the gaps in service and enhancing services.

I can tell the member that we have worked recently to do additional second-stage treatment. We continue to expand treatment. We just, last year, opened up a site in Thompson, and we continue to look at things like centralized youth—sorry, youth centralized intake and outreach that we will continue to enhance.

So we do take this information from different studies and incorporate it and fund it to enhance the system.

*(15:00)

Mrs. Rowat: During Estimates, the minister and I had a discussion with regard to addictions counselling in schools. Can the minister indicate to me who the individual is that is the clinical supervisor that he has identified will be the individual to assist the schools in delivering addiction counselling services?

Mr. Rondeau: I will get the information as to the people who do that. We actually have a number of schools that get programs from AFM. I understand it's in excess of 60 schools that receive support from AFM, and we also have other programs on addiction that are out there in schools.

And so it's not one person. It's multiple people delivering the program. It's in every region in the

province, and I'm very pleased that AFM is doing a proactive intervention with young people in our schools.

Mrs. Rowat: And I thank the minister for his comments. Actually, I'm quite familiar with the program. Actually, I'm quite familiar that there was a moratorium actually put on this program.

Mr. Mohinder Saran, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

We raised this question in the House a couple of years ago and as recently as this year by one of my colleagues.

So this program was—there was a moratorium. We had raised it with government. We had raised it with the former minister, indicating that this program was a necessity within the school system. And so when the minister is indicating that they are restoring AFM funding to this program, we were more than pleased to learn of that announcement.

What I'd like to know is what the minister meant by his statement that they were restoring it to historical levels. Was that—was there a flat amount that was cut from that program by his government? What exactly does he mean by restoring funding?

Does—so I'm trying to find out whether this is going to be staffing, whether this is going to be services. Can he be more clear on that?

Mr. Rondeau: You changed, Madam Deputy Chair. No.

What I'm saying is that we—in 2009-2010, we had a number of schools who participated. I have them—a list of the schools who participated, and they're around the province. I understand that there's some schools that drop out of the program and some schools can be added to the program.

What I'm saying to the member opposite is that we have an amount of money in the budget to ensure that we actually have service to schools, but the schools—we have some schools that drop out and some schools that stay in the program every year.

So I can't commit that the same schools are in every year. The amount of money budgeted for support for those schools remains the same.

Mrs. Rowat: It's interesting that he's saying schools have been added and schools have dropped out. I'd find that rather interesting, since schools like Rivers and Forrest have been trying for an extended period of time to get into the program and were told by

AFM that there was a moratorium because there was no funding available to offer the program to any further schools.

So what I hear from AFM is a moratorium. What I'm hearing from the minister is that schools opt in and opt out on a regular basis. So there seems to be a mixed message here. So I will definitely let my communities know and other communities that have contacted us once we raised this question with the response of the minister shared. And I trust that they'll get a clear answer on whether they'll be able to access this program.

With regard to Healthy Child Manitoba, under a section of the Estimates book, the budget line, it said Supplies and Services. This is an area that saw a reduction in dollars but, at the same time, salary and benefit expenditures were increasing. Can the minister give me an explanation of why salaries and benefit expenditures were increasing under Healthy Child Manitoba, but supplies and services were being reduced?

Mr. Rondeau: What I wanted to clarify to the member is that the budget was not decreased in the school-based programs. It's not—it did not receive a 9.4 percent increase as all of the addiction programs, because some moved forward and some didn't, but it was moved to or remains at historic—at the same level it was previously.

And the other thing I would like to point out is that it's not like other—we do have interest in addiction services in schools. We're looking at ways to enhance that. We are looking at other ways of delivery of services, and so we'll continue to look at the whole youth addictions and prevention strategy. It is a goal of ours. As I mentioned to the member earlier, we really did focus on trying to find gaps in the service and enhance prevention in the budget. The monies for schools, for delivery of AFM services are—remain at the same level as they were previously. There may be some changes of some schools. I don't anticipate hundreds—dozens of schools getting out and dozens of schools getting in, but I do understand that over time, there has been schools that have changed.

In addition to the other issue, I can get the member information on the amount of people who are seeing the supplies, et cetera, and I can endeavour to get her that information with the rest of the package that we're going to provide to her.

Mrs. Rowat: I appreciate that. Healthy Child Manitoba—in going through the Estimates process, we saw, you know, some concerns with regard to areas of service, so we want to ensure that that's a program that is—remains healthy and strong and that the services and supports are—remain to be available for families who, obviously, are, you know, maybe at risk or may just need an extra support in ensuring that the children and the families remain healthy and strong. So I guess I look forward to the minister's explanations on why we saw a reduction in supplies and services with an—with, on the other side, an increase in salary and benefits. That is a concern, and we just would like some clarification on that.

With regard to the Triple P program, when is the department expected to complete the Triple P program evaluation? The minister went, and I had—I guess, the minister and I had a detailed discussion on the Triple P program and its outcomes, and my concerns were that there didn't seem to be any interview data available or evaluation data available to—that the minister was willing to—or able to share at that time. So I'm just wanting to know if the minister can give me a timeline on when the Triple P program evaluation will be complete.

Mr. Rondeau: As I said, what we're trying to do is work with multiple partners to get the information. Part of the Triple P program is to bring multiple family supports together and bring people who are involved in the Triple P together. As I mentioned, we want to get a good thorough evaluation. Anecdotally, we've had—heard very good things about the Triple P program, as we have with the home visitor program and other things. The trouble is is trying to translate the anecdotal positive messages into data. And what we want to do is work with multiple partners to get the data. We want to make sure it's a through examination, and it's like things like the EDI, the early development instrument. It—we instituted it. Now it's basically universal. It takes a while to get the information from the different organizations then utilize the data into order to develop programming.

*(15:10)

We want to get it right. We want to get the base information correct and we want to make sure that we get from all partners. So as I mentioned in Estimates, it's going to take a little while. I don't anticipate it in a matter of weeks. It will take a while to move forward with the evaluation to do it properly. As I explained to the member, we want to make sure that we get all the data from all the

partners and we want to get—have the chance to talk to the organizations when we get the data to see how we can incorporate into programs.

Mrs. Rowat: Mr. Acting Chair, my understanding is that this information was promised or was told to the former—or former critic for this area that the data would be completed by December. I guess my concern is that there doesn't seem to be any type of clear evaluation process. There doesn't seem to be, you know, a clear understanding of who is receiving the supports from this program, how those supports are actually working.

And the minister, you know, has to agree that this is an expensive program to have trainers come from Australia to train staff. There are no trainers available in—from out of—anywhere else but from Australia. So, you know, there's an expense to this and we really want to ensure that the program is actually, you know, doing what it is intended to do and provide supports for families.

So I would encourage the minister to push for the evaluation, to push for the interview, data collection and try to get, you know—my understanding is there doesn't seem to be a handle on how this program is actually working at this point. So I look forward to further discussions with the minister on this. And I would like to have, maybe, a commitment from this minister that a copy of the interview data collected could be shared at this point so that we can also have a look at, you know, how the program is working, and how the dollars are being allocated, and what programs—supports are actually being delivered through those dollars.

Mr. Rondeau: What the member should know is that this original program was rolled out through Australia, they invented the program, and what it was to do is to—an incrementally more intensive way of intervention with families to help support children. And so it started off with basic general supports to provide information to early parents on parenting skills, on raising children, all this, and then it went incrementally to higher levels of intervention and support by different organizations.

It was not only a basic information and actions on how to raise children and parenting, it was also on how to get supports should your kid—child need the supports. It was also on how to bring it in a comprehensive package. And so when you're talking about the ability to measure it, you're talking about the difference between having knowledge and having—working with families to have good

parenting behaviour, and good supportive parenting behaviour.

And you're also working with how different agencies and organizations work together, whether it's a school and family services, and child services, and the health organizations so that they can develop a healthy community. And that might have everything to do with food or activity, nutrition, dealing with temper tantrums, or health conditions or mental health conditions. So it's a very complex thing. When you're talking about a program evaluation, it's my impression that, if Australia has done it, incorporated it, we have then not developed a program from scratch but bought the expertise from Australia, brought the expertise here.

As I mentioned to the member opposite, we are going to be working through a train-the-trainer model so that we don't have to keep bringing the expertise from Australia, that we do develop it locally. And what we have done is we've got some very good cases where this is developed. We want to continue to expand the Triple P program throughout the province, and it is a good model. It's worked in Australia. Where it's expanded it's been very successful. So we do believe that this is an investment in children.

And when you look at James Heckman, which is saying that, you know, you're getting 7 to 10 to 1 return on investment in programs like this. You talk about Dr. Fraser Mustard—these are positive investments that we have to continue, and we think it's an investment in children. And I'm pleased in the investment in the Healthy Child programs.

Mrs. Rowat: Mr. Acting Chair, I have no issue with providing programs and supports for families who need it. What I do have issue with is when you offer these types of programs with no evaluation attached to it. There's no way of knowing exactly how this program is working. And, you know, often when you do an evaluation, you may find ways that this program may be fine-tuned and work better for Manitoba, even though it's being developed in Australia and being—you know, the trainer's being trained in Australia. There may be different needs in Manitoba compared to Australia. So, you know, what I'm looking for is some assurances that what this program is doing is providing the best service possible for families who need it.

So what I'm asking for—information like how many people have been trained; what agencies are involved; who's receiving this program; how many

families have actually, you know, tapped into this program; how many families have actually, you know, graduated from this program; or, how do you tell if a family has graduated from this program or has seen positives?

Just have a blanket statement and say that it's a program that's working, without anything really to justify that, raises some concerns. I don't doubt that the Triple P program is providing resource—helpful resources and supports for families, but I do believe that if you don't evaluate it or, you know, continue to monitor it, you're missing opportunities for the program to do more in supports and help for families.

So I just encourage the minister to push for that type of information and, again, I would ask the minister copy me on interview data collected so far. If the minister doesn't have a comprehensive evaluation completed, would the minister be willing to provide me with a copy of the interview data collected so far?

Mr. Rondeau: One of the difficulties is, is that this is an incremental program. So lots of people might take one or two or three parenting workshops. A number of groups will take more interventions, which might involve some specialists. It works all the way up to large interventions, and it's done on an individual basis. It's done with the parents. It's not a program that you impose. It's a program that parents avail themselves to. We started the program about four or five years ago, and it takes a little while for people to incorporate the whole philosophy. It takes a while for parents to get used to it.

I know in St. James-Assiniboia, I know that there's lots of parenting programs that are delivered. I've gone to one or two sessions which are talking about handling teens. I've talked to other organizations about tantrums. I've got to sessions where new mothers—or, new parents, because there was some fathers even there—that actually talked about issues that they had with their own children.

And so it's a harder thing to do, when you start talking about behavioural change, diet, exercise, when you talk about obesity and things like this, it's behavioural change.

And so I will endeavour to get the member the evaluation once it's completed, but this will be ongoing. The program will continue to be modified. It will continue to be enhanced, and it will be continued to be expanded in areas where it needs to.

Mrs. Rowat: And I'm encouraged that the minister is going to be looking at the data collected.

What I'd asked for was interview data collected so far. I'm not looking for a complete report. I'm just wanting to see what they're doing to evaluate the program to this point. So I'm hoping that he'll consider doing that.

With regard to chronic disease prevention, we understand that that department was fragmented and disbursed through different departments within government. I'm wanting to know if the minister can give me some further information with regard to the job description and salary of the director of the Chronic Disease Prevention Initiative. I think her name was Charlotte Lwanga. If the minister could provide me with a job description and salary, so that I have better understanding of exactly how the disease prevention initiative is going to move forward.

*(15:20)

Mr. Rondeau: One of the things we do in government is actually work well with others. I think the members of Cabinet get along well. They work well and so the departments we're trying to do is work together and develop programs and move forward together.

On chronic disease, lots of the Chronic Disease Prevention Initiative talk about exercise, diet, and behaviours that happen before you get the chronic diseases and that's the prevention, and that leads to more of my ministry. But, then again, Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) is also looking at chronic diseases too, and so what we want to do is work together to have an overall strategy for prevention which deals with food, nutrition, diet, different things. And then what that will do is we'll work also with the Minister of Health and, of course, the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan) and Family Services to make sure that we have an environment that deals with chronic disease prevention, which is, often, not the medical model. It's often the non-medical model which is trails, activities, and that's where we're going with that.

As far as the person involved, we talked about her role being to look at the prevention model, look at what we can do cross-departmentally and move the whole Chronic Disease Prevention Initiative forward.

Mrs. Rowat: Can the minister then provide me with a job description and a salary of Charlotte Lwanga?

Mr. Rondeau: That will—we'll give you some information on the individual in your package.

Mrs. Rowat: And the minister mentioned bike trails and we saw today how, when we ask a question with regard to a specific issue, we had three different ministers stand up in response to that question and that just sort of speaks to the confusion. If we're not sure and the government's not sure of who is responsible for a bike trail in Birds Hill, that only leads to further questions with regard to different issues within different departments so, I guess, if you're going to separate something like a chronic disease prevention into various branches, I think educating the public so they know where they can go to get information that is specific to their needs or their requests would be very helpful.

We find that also in the area of Conservation and Water Stewardship. In my constituency, as the MLA for a rural area, often people are confused and believe that their concerns might be led under Conservation but are actually under Water Stewardship. So just a, you know, a warning or a, you know, a suggestion that as they roll out this Chronic Disease Prevention Initiative in its new format, to ensure that people who are going to be stakeholders or users of those programs and supports actually do know where they're supposed to go to get those supports.

With regard to Estimates again, the minister had indicated there was an evaluation committee comprised of multiple partners to evaluate the program. Can the minister indicate to me who sits on the evaluation committee?

Mr. Rondeau: To respond to your preamble, the whole idea of prevention doesn't rest in just Healthy Living, and that's the misconception that members opposite may have on it because the question today was a perfect example of cross-departmental collaboration. So, when there's a question on trails—yes, we now build trails, all sorts of trails, in provincial parks and we build them with our—and that's with Conservation. We also work with municipalities through intergovernmental affairs to build a network of trails in the cities and towns across the province. And we work with the trails association to build them across the province.

And so it is not Healthy Living that is solely responsible for the prevention initiative. Conservation owns part of it. Intergovernmental owns part of it, and then you get into the other departments like Education when you talk about in

motion and Building Healthy Kids. And the Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures task force, that's talking about an interdepartmental initiative on prevention.

So when you ask where is it, when you're talking about prevention, it's in all across government and outside of government. It's everyone's responsibility to do prevention. So whether it's—the bike trails are a perfect example where I'm pleased the Minister of Sport (Mr. Robinson) responded; the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Blaikie) responded, and, myself, as Minister of Healthy Living, responded, and I'm pleased to say that there's a few other ministers who could've got into the discussion on prevention as well.

In motion, by the way, is dealt with by businesses, non-profits, in government, education, seniors, youth and in day cares. So it's across the spectrum.

So I'm pleased she brought that up as a question because then I can answer, the answer is everywhere, where every department has components of prevention in them as much as they can because everyone has ownership. And so I find it interesting because even in government services they're talking about making the facilities for employees more healthy and more interactive.

So that answers the first part of the question, and in the second part of the question, I think that what we need to do is always look at prevention as the major focus is what we do. And so whether it's Triple P and on the evaluation of Triple P, we want to bring all the players, which is Healthy Living, Education, Family Services, maybe Sport people, intergovernmental people. We bring everyone together, and there's school divisions involved; there's municipalities involved.

And so when you ask about the delay of the evaluation, the reason why the delay of the evaluation is you want to get input from all partners and good understanding of where they think they've gone and where we need to go. And that's what we're trying to do, and that's why I'd rather delay a little bit and get a good evaluation with good information, rather than a rushed report.

Mrs. Rowat: It's great there are various departments that are involved in it, but who's leading it I guess is probably the biggest question. Who's leading this initiative? There has to be a lead on this. There has to be somebody that is co-ordinating the evaluation. There has to be somebody that's—or a department

that's actually responsible for a comprehensive outline of the steps that will be taken through the evaluation process.

So my question to the minister is, what is the time line for the Chronic Disease Prevention Initiative evaluation? He's saying he doesn't want to rush it. I think people are out there wanting to see some outcomes. We recently saw a youth health survey that shows 85—or 185,000 Manitobans continue to smoke. We see 4 percent of high school students are eating the recommended number of servings of fruits and vegetables. We're seeing, you know, eating disorders initiative that we're wanting to see some outcomes.

So there are a number of initiatives that are looking for some leadership from this government. So I'm wanting to know if the minister can provide for me a timeline for the evaluation—this fall, by December. It would be, you know, very useful that—if there was some type of a timeline attached to that.

And if the minister can please provide to me a comprehensive outline of the steps that will be taken to do this—can the minister provide that for me today?

Mr. Rondeau: As far as the chronic disease initiative, we do look at things like smoking. I look at the smoking cessation initiatives. I have to commend the former member from Carman, who's brought forward a bill to do the non-smoking. It was passed unanimously in the House.

Madam Chairperson in the Chair

At that time, I believe there was 36 percent smoking. This year it's down to 19 percent smoking, and we continue to push on a number of initiatives on smoking. And that's an example.

Now, the interesting part about the non-smoking initiative is I have a unit in Healthy Living that leads that initiative, and I have to say that we have been aggressive on it. We will continue to push to get young people to not to start smoking and people to stop smoking, and we'll continue to do that.

* (15:30)

As far as eating, it's a cross-departmental initiative lead by Ag and Healthy Living, where what we do is we talk—start talking about eating healthy foods and a healthy diet. So that's a program that's led by Healthy Living and Ag.

I have to let the member know that there was a great gardening initiative that was led and delivered by Frontier School Division. There was 60 gardens in Wabowden, and that school actually presented to the United Nations just last—I think, this week, where they went to the United Nations and presented on one of the best examples of healthy food and economic development in the world. And I have to commend Frontier School Division, the Department of Ag and there was one specific individual, whose name doesn't come to mind instantly, who moved that agenda forward, because that's an example of chronic disease prevention led in Ag.

Also, a lot of day cares are also focussing on it. We also have some healthy living programs in schools, and I have to commend the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan) for moving forward in those initiatives.

So when the member says, what's the chronic disease prevention, I think that prevention is important. Whether it's in housing, education or any other area, we have to look at health across. Now, in general, my department is involved in coordinating and working with others and facilitating programs, but even on the healthy food one, where we're part of the initiative, we're not the lead; Ag is the lead. So these programs are behavioural change, they're slow, and we'll continue to work with others. But it's not an easy thing to measure because when you talk about diet and food, that's a harder thing to measure. It's not like just sitting there counting a certain number; you're talking behavioural change.

Again, even with smoking, we have a general program for smoking but now, because smoking's gone to below the 20 percent, in order to reduce rates further, we have to get down into the very, very specific areas that haven't changed and we're working with groups on how to do that.

Mrs. Rowat: Can the minister indicate to me why the obesity strategy was pulled? I understand that it was very close to being released, approximately within the last year, and the strategy was pulled. Can the minister indicate to me why that occurred?

Mr. Rondeau: You've changed—the program—we do have a healthy eating program. It has to do with diet and food. It's a gardening program. I failed to mention my colleague in Housing, the Minister of Housing (Ms. Irvin-Ross), who has some initiatives on neighbourhood gardening.

And so we do have—when you're talking about obesity, it's food and activity and parent knowledge and actual behavioural change. If you look at where we're going, we have a major initiative on food and healthy food. And that's through the schools, through day cares, et cetera.

As far as activity, in motion does all the way from infant up—and that's been very, very positive. And in schools we now have—we just got great grades because we're the only jurisdiction in Canada that has a K to 12 phys ed curriculum. And actually, we now have the new tax credit that goes on to the age 24, which is encouraging young people to stay fit. So, when you talk about obesity strategy, we have an obesity strategy with food, activity, behavioural change and parental change so that kids stay healthier.

And it's quite funny because one of the things we're talking about is how, when I was a younger kid, my mom said, well, go out and play and get active. And we're talking about—well, you know, Mom was right or Grandma was right, get-out-and-play type of strategy, because that's where we need to go. So it's not just even each individual; it's cross-generational keeping healthy.

Mrs. Rowat: My grandmother used to say, eat, eat. I don't know where you get to go out and play.

But, anyways, I understand what the minister is saying. But I believe that at one point there was discussion by this government that there was going to be an obesity strategy developed and presented. The minister speaks about different pieces of chronic disease prevention, but I don't see anything that would relate to an obesity strategy that was—my understanding, based on what I understand—was promised by this government.

There was a strategy that was supposed to be presented. There was a strategy that was supposed to be released, and it was pulled or it's going to be released down the road.

I just want to know what the status is of that obesity strategy and if the minister can commit to it being released in the next while or indicate to me why it was pulled.

Mr. Rondeau: Well, I can let the member know that we do have obesity strategy. It has to do with getting healthy foods. It has to do with making sure people have accessibility to healthy foods. I can let the member know that the Northern Healthy Foods

strategy has been extremely successful. I'm very pleased on how fast that's rolled out.

As I tell people in my public appearances, Garden Hill wasn't mentioned—wasn't called Garden Hill because there was no gardens on it, and that's quite far north. And I'd lived in Norway House and I actually had tomato plants when I was in Norway House.

So, if you're dealing with obesity, the way you deal with obesity is diet, exercise and parental activity, and that is obesity strategy. In order to have kids more active, we have a K to 12 activity, physical education, compulsory program. In order to have less obesity, you have kids that leave school transition to activity, because one of the things that the healthy kids and healthy children's task force said was the kids stopped being active at a certain time in their life. Why we increased the tax credit for activity was to ensure that kids transition from school, out of school into activity. And so that's why we moved it to the age 24.

So when the member opposite's asking about obesity strategy, those are the broad strokes of the obesity strategy, and we'll continue to move that strategy forward with multiple departments.

Mrs. Rowat: So I'm getting that there's no comprehensive strategy that is laid out so that we can identify how it's working and how it can be viewed as being successful or needing work.

So, we'll focus on those different areas. Let's talk about smoking prevention.

We know that 185,000 Manitobans continue to smoke and 85 percent have tried to quit. Even more concerning, the youth health survey, which is a great measure that was done, shows that over one in five high school students are currently smokers. So that's not a good stat.

So I'd like to ask the minister what smoking cessations programs are funded by the Province.

Mr. Rondeau: Progress continues to be made on smoking. It's interesting to note where we were and where we are now. If you talked about the '50s and '60s, the vast majority of people smoked. Back in 1999, 29 percent smoked, and we are continuing to push it down to about 14 percent this last year. So it's continued to move down.

Some of the programs we have which are interesting is the rate-and-review program. I like that because it's actually trying to get young people in

schools to look at commercials and see how it affects—

I have to give an anecdotal response. One of my staff members came in three days after the rate-and-review was done in their school, and she had her hands crossed and she said, I'm grumpy. And I said, why are you grumpy? And she said, because my 14-year-old went to school, you showed her these damn commercials—sorry, that's not—damn commercials, and I quit smoking when my 14-year-old was crying and said that I had to quit. And so they do work, and that was good.

*(15:40)

We also have the denormalizing tobacco use, which is more the programs on getting people to hide the tobacco and keep that down. We have worked with the feds on a non-smoking campaign. We also work with MANTRA, which is the docs on that. We also have a teen smoking cessation program: Not on Tobacco. We have a media campaign which is talking about getting people to quit smoking, and we also have some resources for K to 12 for Manitoba schools, and I also, actually, had the chance to go to Students Working Against Tobacco—they call them the SWAT teams—and they are in schools and they actually are a bunch of kids who advocate for non-smoking, and they're very good. They actually do a great job as far as convincing and peer support for not smoking rather than smoking.

So, although we have a number of programs and we have people who actually go out and enforce The Non-Smokers Act and other smoking act, I know that we can continue to push the envelope, and my goal is to continue to push to have less people smoking, especially young people.

Mrs. Rowat: Can the minister indicate to me how many smoking cessation programs are funded by this—by the Province right now, and where they're located?

Mr. Rondeau: Generally, we have two ways of doing this. We go through school-based programs. I understand there's a number of schools that use the rate and review. It's done different schools, different years, but generally there's school programs. The TV programs are just a mass media buy. The Back Off Tobacco is a K to 12 resource that's available for all schools, and the SWAT teams—I can get you—I think we have where all the different SWAT teams are. I can get the school SWAT teams if you want. Is that what you want?

Mrs. Rowat: What I'm looking for is knowing how much money is being put into this program, where it's being offered. So, I'm looking for, you know, a budget breakdown, where it's being offered, what is being offered through the budget line and how it's being staffed and then, I guess, ultimately, I want—would like to know how the data is being tracked. Does the department track the success rates of participants? Again, we're looking at one out of five high school students are current smokers, so, you know, I'd like to see how this data is being tracked and how they can determine a success rate of the participants?

Mr. Rondeau: On the smoking, Madam Chairperson, in general when—back in 2003 we had about a 36 percent smoke rate, generally; now we have about a 19 percent rate.

I can't tell you exactly how we do it. We get it from—the data from, I think, Health Canada. I will let you know where we get the data from. They also do a focus on young people and that's where I got the 29 to 14 percent. I know we've only gone down by a half. It used to be two in five; it's now one in five. I know that's progress, but it's not—as long as we have young people starting smoking, we'll continue to have higher cancer rates, and so we are aggressive on it.

I can let the member know where we get the data from, whether it's Health Canada or who provides the data. When we did look at the health survey, the Youth Health Survey, myself and the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Mackintosh) looked at it very seriously and said, okay, we still have to do more work in certain areas, and so we're working with the department to see how we can roll out new programs to go in specific targets.

Mrs. Rowat: I thank the minister for that response and I look forward to the information.

Nutrition in schools, according to the Youth Health Survey released in March, only 4 percent of high school students are eating the recommended number of servings of vegetables and fruits in a day. And I'd say, based on my husband, it would probably be my kids that are eating the most fruits and vegetables. I'm not one of them, but we're working at it. So I understand that that is a challenge in a lot of households, but I do know that people are looking at that stat and are making a conscious effort to do better.

The Province announced a \$225,000 investment in the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba. Could the minister indicate to me if this is a one-time investment?

Mr. Rondeau: I think that that was an—we made an investment with that organization last year. We made another investment this year. And we like the work of that council because what they're doing is they're getting healthy food into schools. And, as a former teacher, I spent a lot of time buying fruit, veggies and stuff for the kids that they would have before class. Actually, I found it a very good motivator for—get kids on time to school, but I also found that it does enhance learning. So I'm pleased to work in co-operation with this group and the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan) to move that forward on the healthy food initiative. And that, again, is another part of the whole food, nutrition, obesity, activity process—and programs.

Mrs. Rowat: So the minister—just to clarify: \$225,000 investment—was that in last fiscal year? Was that the amount from last fiscal year? And if the minister can indicate to me what will be allocated for this fiscal year.

Mr. Rondeau: I don't know off the top of my head the amount of money they got last year. I know they got funding. I will send the member the amount of money they got last year and the amount of money this year. I do know they got funding in what for last year, as far as food, nutrition, breakfast programs, snack programs, healthy food campaigns in school. I know that was funded last year. It is in the budget this year. And they're going to get funding. I will make a commitment to get you those numbers as to what last year and this year.

Mrs. Rowat: And, as a former parent advisory council member, I also, you know, appreciate and know that the nutrition programs within the school are a welcome change, and are moving forward rather successfully. Can the minister indicate to me when the next scheduled review of the school-based nutrition program will take place?

Mr. Rondeau: I don't know whether there's a regular review. I will consult with the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan) to see if they have that through the Education department, because they are our partners in that program.

Mrs. Rowat: Last year, the department announced a community-based eating disorders clinic operating out of the Women's Health Clinic. Elaine Stevenson

is a passionate advocate for eating disorder prevention and treatment. She has advised us, in an e-mail that the minister will also have received, that second-phase funding is urgently required, particularly considering the existing wait times for treatment at the clinic.

Can the minister indicate what concrete steps his department is taking to bring down the wait times or the wait lists at the clinic, or to increase the clinic's capacity to treat patients?

Mr. Rondeau: With respect, that's not a question to Healthy Living. That would be to Health, because it's treatment program. And so it's not in our Estimates.

Mrs. Rowat: Just one or two final questions and I'll move on to—or we'll let the other ministers have an opportunity to respond to critic questions.

Can the minister indicate to me what the monthly costs to the department are for maintaining the Magnus Centre building? I'm going through my questions and your responses, and there didn't seem to be a clear answer. Would the minister be able to—I know he's looking and raising his arms in—and not sure. Can the minister then go back to his department and, in the package of information that I'll be getting, if he could provide that detailed breakdown for me?

Mr. Rondeau: As I mentioned, that's not as easy as it was. We do have a cost for security, which we're maintaining the building on. We need to do that. I understand that the reason why we had some difficulty on that is that we do have an estimate of about \$897,000 for the facility, but that it included the executive director. It included security, heat, light, water, all that sort of stuff. So I can let the member know what our maintenance estimates are going to be, but, again, we turned off the boiler when the weather was unseasonably warm. And so I can let you know what our estimates were on maintaining the facility as we move forward with that project.

*(15:50)

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): My questions are to the Minister of Advanced Education. There have been some issues at the Red River College with wait times for people who want to get into courses. I wonder if the minister can provide an update on this situation.

Hon. Diane McGifford (Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy): Of course, it is quite common at community colleges across the country

for there to be wait times. I'm not aware that the wait times at Red River are inordinate.

We have certainly increased the numbers of spaces quite dramatically throughout the college system. Red River, of course, has the new facility on Princess Street, of which we're extremely proud, and is currently working on the Union Bank Tower, because the culinary arts program will come to the Union Bank Tower, and it will make more positions in culinary arts available. And I don't want to use a number because my memory might be a little inaccurate here.

So—and Red River also is planning a new trades building, and so I think we will be expanding the number of spaces. But we have done extremely well in increasing the number of spaces to date.

Mr. Gerrard: I remember in 1999 the government made a promise that they would double the number of spaces in the college system within four years. I don't think they achieved that. How are we relative to that goal of doubling the number of spaces in the college system, now, more than 10 years later?

Ms. McGifford: Yes, we have been quite successful in increasing the numbers, as I just said, and we have been able to double the numbers of sequential students, that is students 18 to 21, who attend Red River.

Mr. Gerrard: Can the minister give us the number of students in college this year compared to 1999?

Ms. McGifford: I don't have those numbers in my briefing material, but I can certainly supply them to the member.

Mr. Gerrard: Okay. Thank you. Now there's been, you know, quite a bit of attention to increases in fees, particularly at the University of Manitoba. Let me start with the graduate students' continuing fees. The students have come out strongly opposed to this. Is the minister going to listen to the students before there's a final decision?

Ms. McGifford: If I can just back up, I have found the enrolment figures at Red River for 2007-08 and then for 2008-09. We, of course, won't have the complete figures for '09-10 as of yet. But in 2008 enrolment had increased by seven—oh, pardon me, the enrolment in 2007-08 was 10,494, and it had increased by 7 percent in '09-08 to 11,244.

The question about graduate students—I want to tell the member that the University of Manitoba has

withdrawn the proposal to increase the re-registration fee for grad students.

Mr. Gerrard: I wonder if the minister can provide an update on other proposed increases in fees for medical students, rehabilitation students, dentistry and law students.

Ms. McGifford: The University of Manitoba has forwarded a number of proposals for increased tuition fees to the Council on Post-Secondary Education, and the council has not yet met and made decisions, so I can't at this minute provide an update.

Mr. Gerrard: What is the expected time line for the—having an answer to this?

Ms. McGifford: Well, the council is meeting tomorrow evening. Whether or not they'll complete the work of making—of decision making I can't say at this time.

Mr. Gerrard: One of the concerns that's raised on an annual basis with respect to the University of Manitoba is the ranking in the *Maclean's* survey, which for medical doctoral students has been, you know, lower than we would like.

I'm wondering whether the minister would comment on the *Maclean's* ranking and what is her approach to the ranking.

Ms. McGifford: Well, I think the member probably knows that the University of Manitoba's president has spoken quite publicly about the *Maclean's* ranking, and the University of Manitoba—along with several other universities, including the University of Toronto—had withdrawn from the *Maclean's* ranking. But, then, *Maclean's* worked around the universities to obtain information that they used to do their ranking.

I can tell the member that the *Maclean's* ranking is—could be compared, for example, to *The Globe and Mail* ranking, and in *The Globe and Mail* ranking the University of Manitoba does quite well. In both sets—both rankings, the University of Winnipeg does extremely well.

I think the member opposite may already know, but I'll say again, that the University of Manitoba has more Rhodes scholars than any other university in western Canada, including large universities like UBC and University of Alberta. One of the things with—one of the points—if I might make this—with regard to the *Maclean's* ranking, an awful lot of points are awarded for the entrance grade of students. And the University of Manitoba has been—has

deliberately been—made itself more accessible than other institutions and, by doing so, it loses a lot of points on this particular category. But I think, and I hope the member opposite would agree, that accessibility to post-secondary education is extremely important, and many students may graduate from high school with rather—I don't want to say low but not so grand grade point averages, and they go on to do remarkably well in post-secondary education.

So it's six of one and half a dozen of the other. As I say, many presidents of many universities and many highly respected educators think that the *Maclean's* rankings are very flawed.

Mr. Gerrard: With regard to the *Maclean's* ranking, although I share the minister's concern about the need to make sure that the university is accessible, on the other hand I would suggest to the minister that there are some areas where there is room for improvement in the *Maclean's* ranking.

And I would ask the minister: Is she looking at taking any action in these other areas?

Ms. McGifford: Well, you know, it's really up to the institution to take action on improving its rankings with *Maclean's*. I don't—I'm not the president of the university. I don't have the responsibility for running the institution.

If the member wishes to provide Dr. Barnard with information or ideas, I'm sure he would be very open to them, or if he wishes to provide me, who, in turn, can provide them to the institution, I'd do that.

But, again, I think what's important for us to do is to recognize the things that the University of Manitoba is doing extremely well, and I highlight the ACCESS program which has been recognized by people like Adrienne Clarkson, by her husband, John Ralston Saul. I certainly have attended ceremonies where both of them have spoken extremely highly about that program.

* (16:00)

The University of Manitoba has graduated more Aboriginal engineers than any other institution in Canada, more Aboriginal lawyers, more Aboriginal doctors, more Aboriginal dentists. So let's give the university credit for the things it does well. Unfortunately, those aren't things that are categorized as important in the *Maclean's* survey. But I think they're important, and I know that this government, with its dedication to accessibility, its desire to erode

social barriers, to widen the margins, I think those things are extremely important. I think the member opposite thinks they're important, too, because I'm sure he has a social conscience.

Mr. Gerrard: The—you know, the minister is right that it is important that we're graduating many Aboriginal students and this is certainly a plus.

But I was asking—

Madam Chairperson: Order.

The honourable member for River Heights, I'm sorry to interrupt. You're just maybe a little bit far away from your microphone. People are giving me some indication they're having trouble hearing your questions.

Mr. Gerrard: There are certainly areas in the *Maclean's* survey where there is room for improvement and where there is merit in improving. And I wonder whether the minister would be receptive to proposals to improve in those areas?

Ms. McGifford: Again, I think it's Dr. David Barnard who is receptive—would be receptive to any ideas that the member has to share. As the member knows, there—the university is a self-governing body, and I don't interfere and no minister is—does interfere, or at least shouldn't interfere, according to the legislation, in the workings of the university. We value academic autonomy, and I refer the member to the university president.

Mr. Gerrard: I'm—I know that the minister is certainly aware of the situation where there's a shortage of early childhood educators, and I'm interested in what the minister is doing in terms of programs like the Red River College program to make sure that we're training substantial numbers of early childhood educators.

Ms. McGifford: I didn't hear the question.

Mr. Gerrard: I am sure that the minister must be concerned about early childhood education and the shortage of early childhood educators in the province. And I'm asking what the minister is doing in this respect with regard to programs like that at the Red River College for training early childhood educators.

Ms. McGifford: Well, we are working together with Family Services who are early childhood—or, pardon me—child care being also part of the responsibility of Family Services, and we do have early childhood

training at Red River. We do have it at University College of the North and ACC.

We're very pleased to know that there's a greater demand for child-care workers because, of course, the number of child-care spaces is increasing and if we are not keeping pace, we'll have to work harder in order to provide the child-care workers that the province requires.

Mr. Gerrard: What I'm told is that, in fact, it's not just a matter of new spaces, but there's a problem with getting sufficiently qualified early childhood educators to make sure that existing spaces are staffed by people who are fully qualified. So I think that there is a concern there.

Now the minister has been at the forefront of the midwifery program at the University College of the North, and there was an announcement that the University College of the North would be delivering the midwifery program in Winnipeg. Can the minister provide some details of what the plan is?

Ms. McGifford: I'm just checking for that information for the member.

I'm afraid I'll have to get back to the member on midwifery. I don't seem to have the information with me today.

Mr. Gerrard: Maybe I can ask a couple of specific questions.

Will there still continue to be some students trained in northern Manitoba or will all be now trained in Winnipeg?

Ms. McGifford: Yes, there will continue to be students trained at University College of the North. The plan, the Aboriginal Midwifery Education Program, was specifically designed for the north and, indeed, the branches in the south—or the new programming in the south will be run by University College of the North.

Mr. Gerrard: In the first, you know, year that students were allowed into the program, and that year was followed through, initially my understanding was the minister was going to have a yearly intake, but then it was changed so there was not additional intake for several years.

But in that program, there was quite a significant drop-out rate of students for a variety of reasons. Can the minister indicate whether those students have been followed up to make sure that the problems in the program have been or are being addressed?

Ms. McGifford: Well, first of all, I have found some information on midwifery and I wanted to tell the member that my understanding is that the Council on Post-Secondary Education will be working with the University College of the North on a new intake of students for the '10-11 year. And—but I want to also make the point that it isn't the minister who intakes students; it's the University College of the North who intakes students. And the original plan, as I understand it—and maybe the member has a different understanding—was that one plan would—one set of students would be worked through their program before a new cohort was registered. And the reason for that was, as I understand it, was the number of clinical spaces and the number of mentors that were available.

Now, I think the member needs—I am sure the member is aware that there are many challenges for students in the north, that students in the north—and particularly in this program, this Aboriginal midwifery program—students in the north—these students tend to be older. They tend to have family responsibilities. And the member's right, there were several drop-outs from the original program and they were related to extreme circumstances, deaths in families and that kind of thing.

Sometimes, some students need extra special supports to be able to complete their program and I think this is one of them. And I think it's important that we do everything we can to support these students, and that is what the University College of the North is attempting to do.

We do want to have practising midwives in northern communities, and the member probably knows better than I, given his profession, the kinds of obstacles that women of childbearing age face in the north. And we want to do everything we can to make some changes so that those women have the health services that they need in their communities.

Mr. Gerrard: For those who got part way through and may have got one or two or three years through the program, will they be given an opportunity to continue from where they left off?

Ms. McGifford: Yes, that is my understanding.

Mr. Gerrard: Can the minister indicate how many students actually made it all the way through the program?

* (16:10)

Ms. McGifford: I understand that there are currently two students in the program and four on leave of absence who are planning to rejoin the program in the near future.

Mr. Gerrard: Can the minister indicate just exactly where in the north the program will run from? Will it continue to be largely out of Norway House? Or will it be combined, The Pas and Norway House, or other centres?

Ms. McGifford: Well, my understanding is that there are two northern sites, The Pas and Norway House. What plans the institution has for the future, if there's a change, I haven't heard that but with the southern component of this program, that will not be run out of The Pas and Norway House. It'll be that curriculum and it'll be delivered in the south but not out—obviously, it'll be delivered in the south.

Mr. Gerrard: For the southern component, will that use UCN instructors then?

Ms. McGifford: Well, it'll use UCN curriculum and the credential will be from UCN. As to specifically who will instruct the program, I can't say. That will depend on who the University College of the North hires to do the work. They would at least be sessionals or contract staff in order to be working for UCN, though.

Mr. Gerrard: The part of the concept of UCN, as I have understood it, is that there would be a lot of opportunities for courses to be delivered at a distance in the communities themselves. Can the minister indicate how many communities now have students in their communities taking courses at UCN?

Ms. McGifford: Yes, I believe it's 12 or 14 community-based sites. I can double check on that while the member looks for his—prepares for his next question.

Mr. Gerrard: And to expand upon that a little bit, how many students in total at the different sites?

Ms. McGifford: Well, I wouldn't have that—have the specific information as to how many students there are at each site with me and I don't know whether—well, I can certainly endeavour to get that information for the member.

Mr. Gerrard: I think, actually, that completes the questions that I had so unless the minister has some further information on that one question in terms of the distance education sites and information as to what they are, that would be it. Thank you.

Ms. McGifford: I can't find the breakdown for the community-based sites but I can point out to the member that enrolment at UCN increased by 11 percent between '08-09 and '09-010, and, once again, I don't have the specific numbers for '09-10. I mean—no, I did give them for '09-10. Thank you.

Mr. Gerrard: That completes my questions. It's over to the MLA for Steinbach.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): I thank the member for River Heights for ceding the floor for some questions to the Minister of Justice. I know, in Estimates, the minister, together with his—*[interjection]* I know. I'm always too quiet and it's funny, that's a common thing in the House.

The minister's department had undertaken to get back to me on a number of different questions. Is he able to provide an update on any of the issues that were taken under advisement by himself and his department leaving Estimates?

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Yes, I can advise that my department continues to work on the undertakings that were given in Estimates. Some of them actually require a fair amount of manual work by officials within my department, so we will continue to get that work done and provide it to the member when it's available.

Mr. Goertzen: In particular, the one question, in the year 2007-2008, his department spent \$17,000 with Probe Research, and the minister had indicated to an initial question in Estimates that his department didn't do any public opinion polling. And so when I followed that up and asked him for the—what exactly that \$17,000 had been used for and given to Probe Research, he indicated he would find out and that it shouldn't be long, because it was a simple expenditure. In fact, to his credit, there was a number of other expenditures that I identified coming out of the budgetary books, and those all had responses within a day, which was good.

In terms of—there was money going to Hanford Drewitt for court costs for outfitting judges and outfitting lawyers, and we understood that. There was money going for—to recreation facilities or businesses, and that we found out within a day. But we still haven't been able to get to the bottom, for some reason, of the \$17,000 expenditure to Probe Research. So, if the minister indicates that there's no political polling happening or issue polling happening out of his department, he must have been

as curious as I was about the \$17,000 that was expended to Probe. Is—what is the difficulty in finding out where that payment went?

Mr. Swan: I don't have that information for the member today, but as I've—as I said at Estimates, I've undertaken to provide that to him. And, once I have the information, I will make sure he has it.

Mr. Goertzen: Has he been told by his department that there's some sort of difficulty in—are they a multitude of cheques that have gone out that were accumulated to \$17,000? Is that the challenge—that there are so many payments of smaller amounts that accumulated to \$17,000 that is taking long to compile the payments?

Mr. Swan: No, I've got confidence in my department to pull together the information that I undertook to provide. As I say, there's a number of different items outstanding from Estimates, and we will provide that to the member once it's available to me.

Mr. Goertzen: Would it be easier, perhaps, if I suggest to the minister that they don't need to send them all as one total package, if that's the holdup. It may be they've identified the \$17,000 payment, but they don't have some of the other issues that are more difficult. Could they just provide them as they find them? Would that be more helpful?

Mr. Swan: If the member for Steinbach is telling us that that's his highest priority in terms of the undertakings, I will pass that on to my department and see if that will speed up a response.

Mr. Goertzen: Well, I don't know if I'd classify it as my highest priority, but it certainly is a priority. And I didn't have great success with the minister's predecessor in getting information very quickly in the last Estimates go round. Prior to that, it wasn't so bad. And so I just don't want to fall back into the system where things are delayed by months and months when they should be relatively easy to find.

The minister had indicated not only to myself but to the media that he would be reviewing the expenditures that probation officers were putting in to the department for reimbursement that may have been intended or to reimburse them for things that they had purchased for those who were under their care in terms of their probation orders.

Has he been able to review that and can he give us a summary of what he was able to learn?

Mr. Swan: No, I provided that undertaking, and my department, I am advised, continues to pull together that information. Again it's a fairly—it is a fairly comprehensive question that was asked—an appropriate question, I'll accept. So I don't have that information for the member yet.

Mr. Goertzen: But the minister, then, is committed to providing a breakdown with detail, in terms of what the total expenditures were and what the expenditures were for from probation officers being reimbursed for things that they were purchasing for those offenders who are under their probation watch?

Mr. Swan: I'm sorry. I'm just having a bit of trouble hearing again. It's not like the member for Steinbach to be soft-spoken. I'm sorry. Are you just—are you repeating the question I was asked at Estimates or are you asking for something different?

*(16:20)

Madam Chairperson: Order. I'm just going to, at this point, remind all honourable members that if they wish to have conversations, I would suggest they make—take advantage of the loge. A couple of times now, I've heard from ministers and members asking questions that they're having difficulty hearing the people putting forward the questions. So I would suggest if members wished to, they could make—take advantage of the loge.

Mr. Goertzen: And I will—you know, I'm trying to turn over a new leaf, sort of the new kinder, gentler member for Steinbach, and if that's not working, I can revert back to the more aggressive, less soft-spoken member, but will continue to try on the new path.

The question was just to confirm that the minister believed that he'll be able to compile a list, with detail, in terms of how much money has been put out to probation officers over the last few years and what that has been for in terms of purchasing things for those who are under their watch for probation. He's confident he's going to be able to get that information even though he doesn't have it here today.

Mr. Swan: Yes, I am. My department tells me that there is a fair amount of material to go through, again some that's going to have to be pulled together by hand because I know the member wouldn't want us to miss anything or to provide anything less than what he's asked for in the Estimates process.

So that is a work in progress, and my department is continuing to work on it.

Mr. Goertzen: And, no, I wouldn't want the—I would prefer to get it right the first time. So that's fine if there needs to be some additional time taken.

Also in the vein of getting things right the first time, there were some questions around The Police Act and when some of the provisions would be put in place in relation to an incident that happened on the weekend and the fact that the investigation unit under The Police Act wouldn't be up and running in terms—in time for that particular incident.

In terms of the investigation unit and, overall, the provisions of The Police Act regarding the commission and when police boards are expected or supposed to be in place for municipalities, does the minister have some timelines that he can provide, not just for my sake, but I know that some of the municipalities who have municipal police forces would be interested in knowing when some of these provisions are going to be coming into place?

Mr. Swan: The—of course, everything will flow in a couple of different stages. The first step which has to occur is the establishment of the Manitoba Police Commission, and the hope is to have that—those members in place late spring or early summer. We're moving towards having those members named.

Once that commission is established, then we can move ahead to do two further things. One is to begin hiring and set up the independent investigation unit, or the IIU. The other is, then, to move ahead to have the municipalities establish their police boards.

I undertook to meet with any municipality who wanted to speak about The Police Act and the impact it would have on their municipal police force. I had those meetings with a number of different municipalities and their police chiefs. They were good meetings. They provided a lot of helpful input that my department is working on.

I did undertake to those municipalities that we wouldn't require them to have their police boards up and running until after the municipal elections in October of this year. That was expressed as a concern in a couple of different communities. The point which I accept was a reasonable one, it wouldn't make sense for an outgoing council to be appointing those individuals to the initial police board if the council was going to be turning over, if people were going to be retiring. So I did undertake

that I wouldn't require those police boards to be in place until after the new councils were in place.

So, for both the independent investigation unit and for the police boards, it's our intention to move ahead and have them established by the end of calendar year 2010.

Mr. Goertzen: So there were no budgetary reasons why the investigation unit or other aspects of The Police Act, the new police act, weren't able to be up and running sooner. There was no budgetary implications. It was just simply a matter of getting due process done. That's what the minister is saying?

Mr. Swan: Well, I can advise the member that if, you know—if we go through the budget documents, you will see that there are amounts that are set out for the staffing costs. They are intended to be coming on during the year. We're not funded for those positions as of April 1st. The intention was to have them coming on line during the course of the year. That was the intention all the way through.

Mr. Goertzen: In the discussions that he's had with municipalities who are now going to be asked to put forward—put in place a police board for their municipal police forces, he indicated that a commitment was made not to have them enforced until after the municipal election, which I think might make some sense. The—were there any other sort of changes that he could foresee coming as a result of the discussions that he had with those municipalities?

Mr. Swan: There is—there was some good advice, which will most likely find its way into regulations that'll be created under that act, and also, in terms of the policies and procedures that are going to be prepared, including the nature of the training provided to individuals that will be serving on these new police boards.

I think it's fair to say that a number of mayors and a number of police chiefs expressed concern, wanting to make sure that people who were going to be sitting on the police board would have the necessary knowledge and skills and abilities to make the kind of decisions that we're looking for police boards to make. So that will be folded into the work that we'll be asking the police commission to do.

We're going to be asking the commission to take a look at the police board system that operates in other provinces, to find out what the best practices are, to adopt those practices from other provinces that seem to make sense and not adopt those that

don't. There's going to be a fair amount of heavy lifting for the members of the new police commission early on, to make sure that once the police boards are ready to be constituted that we've got confidence that the proper training will be there, procedure manuals will be there and policies will be in place so that boards can really step up and do what we hope they'll do.

Mr. Goertzen: In terms of the investigations unit, has there already been an intake of applications for individuals who may be applying, either for the director or positions as investigators? How's that process going to work in terms of filling those positions?

Mr. Swan: Yes, as far as I understand, there has not been any intake yet for applications for those positions. Once again, once the police commission is constituted they will be doing work to make sure the civilian monitors are in place, which is a big piece of the system, and we'll then be having a competition for the head of that unit and for the other staff positions.

Mr. Goertzen: Well, and, for the record, I—the minister might be surprised at this, but I actually in some ways defended earlier this week the fact that the unit hadn't been set up yet. I mean, I do think it's important that it be set up properly and be done right the first time because it is important. It's obviously important for the public. I think it's an important thing for those in law enforcement to ensure that it's set up properly, and I do want to see it done right the first time. That doesn't mean that it's an open end in terms of timeline from my own perspective, but I do think it is important that it get done correctly. So, lest the minister think that I'm just always looking to try to put a stick into his spokes, that's not always the case. I think, in this situation, it is important that that gets done properly the first time.

A question regarding legislation that's been brought forward in Ottawa regarding mandatory minimum sentences for drug trafficking. I know the minister and I have often spoke about federal legislation. Is his government supportive of the mandatory minimum sentencing legislation that's been brought forward for those involved with drug trafficking, including marijuana plant growing?

Mr. Swan: You know, we have called on the federal government for some time to go ahead and take that step, to bring in tougher penalties for those who grow and who sell drugs. So I'm happy that the

federal government has gone ahead to introduce a new legislation.

* (16:30)

The member may be aware that I actually spoke out when the Senate had chosen to tinker with the provisions that had been passed, actually, with all-party support in the House of Commons. I know there's been some dispute about the low end of the scale at which a minimum penalty should kick in. I have to tell the member I was very frustrated with the Senate because the Senate effectively wanted to tell Canadians that 199 marijuana plants was not evidence of a criminal operation. And I think we—the member and I agree completely that, certainly, first of all, it is a major concern. Secondly, we know that it is a way that organized crime obtains a lot of the funds that they need to do other things that they're doing. So Manitoba stands, certainly with the other western provinces, in terms of supporting this legislation.

Mr. Goertzen: And I appreciate that and I know speaking out against the Senate is—can be a bit of a risky thing, as his predecessor found out and almost got locked up in the Senate prison. But I think that we do agree, I think, in terms of the legislation being important.

Does he have concerns about the low end in terms of the—what would get caught under the act in terms of the number of marijuana plants it would take to fall under the legislation and be subject to a mandatory minimum sentence?

Mr. Swan: You know, when we called on the federal government to take steps, neither Manitoba nor, as I understand it, the other provinces, set a specific low end.

I understand that the legislation, as it now stands, would make six plants something that could generate a minimum sentence. I suppose there will be some debate in Ottawa about whether that's the right number. Again, when I look at the higher end that the Senate was prepared to vary, again, I think I can say, with absolute certainty, that 199—or 100 plants, for that matter—or even some much lower number, is evidence of a criminal operation.

I don't know that six plants is, but, again, Manitoba didn't specify a particular number to the federal government. So if that's what comes out of the process of now proceeding through the Senate then back to the House of Commons, then Manitoba will proceed on that basis.

Mr. Goertzen: Well, and I'm glad to see the support, in general, for the legislation, even though the minister might quibble with the specifics about what qualifies, or what should be a qualifier under the act. I hope he's been able to bring over his friend and colleague from Elmwood also in terms of these tougher measures. I know he maybe always didn't favour them so much when he was in Ottawa but, perhaps, with gentle persuasion, he now is in favour of many of the things that the Harper government is doing in Ottawa, and that's good to see that he's had a conversion on the road to Manitoba.

Has the minister looked, then, at what implication this legislation, and others like it, in terms of mandatory minimums, will have on provincial facilities? Particularly since, I think, the mandatory minimum is six months on this particular legislation, ranging from six to nine months depending if it's a rental unit and there's a third party that's been brought in. But is there any indication of what impact it's going to have on already difficult incarceration numbers in the province?

Mr. Swan: Well, as we discussed in Estimates, there's a number of factors that go into trying to predict what the inmate population will be in the future. So, no, we haven't done a specific analysis of what we expect to happen. We have no idea at this point how many arrests will wind up occurring.

I'll be interested to discuss this with my western counterparts, particularly my counterparts in the province of British Columbia where this provision might have the biggest impact on their inmate population. So, no, we haven't done that and, I think, from news reports that have come out over the past couple of days, I think any politician should be careful about gazing into the crystal ball and suggesting how much a particular provision might cost or might impact on the corrections system.

And I say that because there are so many factors that come into play. Certainly I would hope that if there are new provisions in the federal acts, that will discourage people from cultivating marijuana and decrease usage. That's certainly my hope, but I suppose time will tell on what the real impact will be.

Mr. Goertzen: And those discussions with your counterparts will be interesting. I know there has been some analysis done in British Columbia by municipalities. And municipalities, I believe, were interested in having a new prison facility in their

municipality, and so they would have had, you know, some amount of an interest in what the results were. I'm not suggesting that that impact the results one way or the other but they did do an analysis and some of it was quite striking in terms of what they thought the impact of mandatory minimums would be.

I just wonder, does the minister not think it would have been prudent to do some of that analysis, in conjunction with advocating on the federal level, for these changes? I support the changes obviously and I'm glad the advocacy happened from a number of different levels. But at the same time that you're advocating for change, would you not want to have a good idea of what that change is going to mean in the province?

Mr. Swan: Yes, I think—and I was referring more obliquely to a similar issue but I'll take it more head on.

We had called, for some time, on the federal government to end the two-for-one credit for time already served. And our support for doing that was, I think, based on the need for people to have confidence with the administration of justice and also the need for a correction system be able to actually deal with offenders and start to make meaningful change.

Federally, there were some estimates of how much that might cost. The federal system and provinces across the country, the government of the day, has one view. It seems that there are others in Ottawa that have a very different view. Frankly, we didn't call on the federal government to make those changes with a particular dollar figure in mind. We asked them to make the change because we thought it was a good thing for the Justice system. Similarly, other changes that we're calling for, with respect to organized crime, will again have an impact and, ultimately, will have a cost. But we believe that there will be a benefit in continuing to make Manitoba and making Canada an unpleasant place for organized crime to do business.

So I guess we haven't done a particular analysis because there's a lot of difficulty in doing so.

Mr. Goertzen: Well, in the absence of that analysis, if we can assume that there will be upward pressure on prison population numbers, for whatever reason, it may not all be as a result of changes to federal legislation. It may simply just be a continuing trend,

unfortunately, that we see in the province, of more crime, and therefore resulting in more incarceration.

But if the impact is to have more individuals incarcerated because of the federal legislation, does the minister feel confident that he has the capital resources to meet those needs over time, or is that something that he'd be looking to go to the federal government for assistance on?

Mr. Swan: Well, just to correct one misconception that's made its way into the question, Manitoba actually is experiencing less crime year to year, and the numbers bear that out. And there will be more numbers, frankly, I'm looking forward to.

But there are better results in the Justice side because of investments that we've made in policing across the province, investments in our Crown attorneys, and that has then resulted, together with some changes in laws, in more people spending more time in our jails.

You know, since we've come to office, we've added the equivalent of, effectively, a Headingley jail. This year alone, we'll have shovels in the ground to add the capacity of a Milner Ridge to our system. We are aware that we'll have to keep our eye on the numbers, that there will have to be more capital investments, but we do have a very active program going on right now. And I point to expansions in The Pas, expansions in Brandon, expansions at Milner Ridge that have just been completed and more expansions that are on at the present time, expansions to the Agassiz Youth Centre, as well as the new women's jail, which, frankly, can't open soon enough for my liking.

* (16:40)

So, yes, we think there's going to be some upward pressure but, yes, we're continuing to deal with that, wherever possible, by using our existing facilities and expanding them in a way that it is going to be safe for the inmate population, safe for Corrections workers and of benefit to public safety in general.

Mr. Goertzen: And in that, I think the minister missed one point of the previous question was he then has no intention of going to either these ministerial meetings or other national meetings in the future, sort of cap in hand, and asking for the federal government to be putting forward money for correction facilities as a result of any upward pressure that might come on population numbers?

Mr. Swan: Well, never say never. If my colleagues in the west believe that this is something they feel strongly about doing, I would consider, in the spirit of unity, to have Manitoba step up and be part of that. Similarly, as I talk to my colleagues across the country in advance of the next federal meeting which will happen this fall, there may well be a mood to make this an issue with the federal government.

If it turns out that our experience is that there is a tremendous increase, Manitoba may, in connection with some provinces, or with others, suggest that there be some additional assistance from the federal government for doing these things, but at the present time, we—frankly, we want to support the federal government when we think they're moving in the right direction. We'll openly criticize them if we think they're going in the wrong direction, but on the crime front and the public safety front, we're largely pleased with the direction that they're going in, although there's always room for improvement.

Mr. Goertzen: And I don't expect the minister would need a lot of arm-twisting from his western colleagues, given some of the statements that he made during his shortened leadership race when he indicated that if he were premier, he would try to make Manitoba's economic situation look as dire as possible to the federal government as a way to try to wrestle every penny he could out of that senior level of government. So I suspect that, if there's even a hint of a movement from his colleagues, he'll be, if not leading the bandwagon, then certainly firmly on it.

But I think that that could be difficult because there's been plenty of warning and certainly his predecessors and I had many discussions about the need to plan in advance as one of the things that was—has been discussed in electoral forums about the need to have more facilities, and you simply can't just call for changes to legislation and not be prepared for it.

So, if that is the direction that he is headed in, I would suspect that he has no one to blame than himself, or maybe his predecessors. I wouldn't lay it all on the foot of this—or the feet of this particular minister, but certainly he and his government may not be as prepared. So let's hope that they're not just simply going to go cap in hand, and will take some responsibility for maybe not being as well prepared as we would have liked them to have been.

He indicated that he believes crime is going down in the province. That would be a discussion, I

think, if we had—in a public forum, he may have difficult time getting support for, though I know he would pull out statistics and I would pull out mine and we'd have a great debate about statistics and probably lull everybody to sleep with our statistics going back and forth. But there is a movement, or a pretty well-established movement in the United States to have a victimization service.

I know other provinces, and British Columbia, has done more victimization surveys, recognizing that there are many more crimes that are going unreported and that, sometimes, the statistics aren't a very good indicator of what the real crime rate is because, as people become more frustrated with the system of justice overall, if they don't believe that there's going to be adequate punishments for crimes, if they don't believe that individuals are actually going to get caught or if the police are too busy to respond in some sort of a fashion, that they simply remove themselves from the system by not reporting the crime, and it's probably particularly true for property crimes where people will just simply absorb the cost, and if they're not going to report it for insurance, anyway, they don't need a report number and they just simply don't register the crime.

So it's not indicative of crime going down. Sometimes it just means that people are more frustrated with the system and they just report less crime. That's something that's been expressed to me by police. Certainly, Winnipeg police have done surveys in the past, their own victimization surveys that indicate somewhere between a third and 40 percent of crime often goes unreported.

Would the minister entertain having victimization surveys done, not on a daily basis, obviously, but on some sort of a regular basis to try to compare what the real crime numbers are as opposed to those who actually walk into a police station and report a crime?

Mr. Swan: And I'm actually going to ignore some of the toxic parts of the member's preamble, given that we have limited time to still discuss things this afternoon.

The Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics does do a survey once in a while across the country to try and get some handle on that aspect.

And I would point out, though, that, for example, a crime like auto theft—I think it's probably fair to say that virtually 100 percent of people who are the victims of auto theft report their crimes—

report those crimes because they want to deal with MPI. They want to be compensated either for damage or, even worse, for the loss of the vehicle. So I think in that case—when I look at auto theft as an example—there is virtually no victimization that goes unreported, and we have those very clear figures at hand. We know that auto theft is down 75 percent from where it was in 2004. In fact, we know that auto theft is lower in Manitoba than it has been at any time since 1992 when there was a major explosion—if I can call it—of auto theft that really wasn't addressed in any way by the previous government.

I look at other areas such as domestic violence. Manitoba has two things. It has one of the highest reported levels of domestic violence, which has come about largely—as most advocates and groups would say—because Manitoba is a place where people have confidence that the system takes complaints very seriously, that, because of some of the investments we've made and the work we've done, cases move through the system relatively quickly. And the happy by-product of that is that domestic violence homicides in Manitoba have actually been cut approximately in half, because we believe that with those investments people are more likely to make complaints, have them dealt with so that situations don't escalate.

In terms of other kinds of property crimes—and, again, where it's a property crime that results, say, in a loss to an individual's property—again, I believe that in most cases people will make claims no matter what they may think of the justice system. And I'm not even going to comment on that. They will certainly want to make a claim for insurance purposes. So, again, I find it hard to believe that there would be major thefts taking place that aren't reported to the police, simply because people are acting in their own best interests of wanting to recover insurance money.

Mr. Goertzen: Well, we might—we may disagree there, and I would relay the story of a—that a police officer told me about how they had made a change in terms of how property crimes—certain property crimes are reported. And they stopped allowing reports to happen over the phone and made individuals come down to a community police station or to a district police station to make a report, and they found, lo and behold, the next year that the reporting had dropped some 40 percent. And they thought, well, this is great. Look at all the reduction in crime that we've had. And then they realized,

whoops, actually this might just be because people don't want to come down to the station, whereas before they had the opportunity to phone. It might not be worth it because they may not be putting in an insurance claim because it affects their annual premiums. So when they went back to the system and allowed the individuals to phone it in—look at that, all the crime came back the next year. And, of course, the minister knows, as I did—hearing this story—that it had nothing to do with the actual amount of crime that was taking place. It had to do with the way it could be reported.

And so victimization surveys—I don't think I would dismiss them as quickly as he might have. And I know that there are national surveys done. I believe, and I stand to be corrected, they're done once every five years, and that they don't break them down specifically by jurisdictions.

But, regardless, I suspect the minister may not want to go down the road of victimization surveys because of what might be found out in them.

There are, it was reported, last week, 10 to 12 thousand outstanding warrants in the province of Manitoba. Can the minister indicate or would he know how many people that would relate to? I know that there are many people who have multiple warrants, but of the 10 to 12 thousand outstanding warrants that was reported publicly last week, would he have an indication of how many individuals that would represent?

* (16:50)

Mr. Swan: No. I don't have that information before me.

Mr. Goertzen: Is that some—the data that was put forward in terms of the 10 to 12 thousand outstanding warrants, is that something that his department tracks on a regular basis? Do they keep the number of outstanding warrants as a matter of record on a regular basis?

Mr. Swan: You know, the serving of warrants is something that's done by the various police services, so, frankly, I don't know the nature of the record keeping within my department. So, we rely on the police, subject to their own resources and their own decisions to take care of those.

Mr. Goertzen: In terms of trying to bring that number down, what specific programs does the department involve itself in to try to reduce the

number of outstanding warrants that there are in Manitoba?

Mr. Swan: Well, again, it's a policing matter. There are regular meetings that take place between the police and my department to see if there are issues that need to be discussed and things that can be improved. So it's really a matter of police resources and police priorities on that front.

Mr. Goertzen: Are there no ways to 'incentivise' people to deal with their outstanding warrants, either through the tax system or some other way where you could identify individuals who had not dealt with their warrants and, then, either remove some sort of a privilege or deal with them in some way that would give them an incentive to deal with it?

Mr. Swan: Well, the member's thinking and it's—that's always good. I know that dealing with, for example, with Revenue Canada, getting to them to provide any co-operation on any issue is not an easy thing to do. So it's an interesting thought that's put forward.

One of the frustrations, of course, is that a lot of people for whom warrants are issued, are, effectively, judgment proof, who may not have the same kind of lifestyle or situation that members of this Legislature may have. The difficulty, obviously, is finding any way to tap into those individuals. So I don't want to rule out the possibility of there being some other way to try and incent people to be available to be served, but there are some real difficulties in accessing other systems to try and do that.

Mr. Goertzen: There was a disturbing case that appeared in the local newspaper a couple of days ago about an individual who was released out on bail and who, his psychologist had indicated, would be likely to kill, I believe, were the words that he had used. And I know that the Crown prosecutors in the minister's department rightfully argued that the bail provisions should not be extended to this individual, and I'm glad for that. Yet he was still released by the judge, given a second chance, or language to that effect.

Can the minister indicate whether or not he's given—has he asked for information on the case to see if there'd be an appeal on that bail provision?

Mr. Swan: Well, I mean, of course, as the member knows, I mean, I don't control what judges do, whatever level they may be at, and I don't criticize judges' decisions on any particular case. I can advise

that my Crown attorneys, whenever there's a decision, will see whether there's a reasonable ground for pursuing an appeal. I don't direct them to appeal. I don't direct them not to appeal. They will make that decision based on their judgment, based on, obviously, the facts of the case, based on the judge's reasons and based on the law.

So I haven't personally involved myself in that case because it would not be appropriate for the Attorney General to do so.

Mr. Goertzen: And I don't believe that I've criticized judges, but I do criticize judicial decisions at a point, and there is a distinction, although the member might feel it's a narrow distinction or a distinction without a difference. But I still believe it exists.

On—are there any policy directives in the department currently that would indicate that an appeal would be forthcoming in a case such as the one that happened—that we saw a couple of days ago?

Mr. Swan: Yeah, I don't have that information at my fingertips, but I can have my department review those policy directions to see if there's any more light we can shed on that for you.

Mr. Goertzen: I would—so the minister hasn't asked for any further information on that case from his department.

Mr. Swan: As minister, no, I have not. I've not specifically asked for more information.

Mr. Goertzen: It's one that I know elicits concern in the public. I've had a number of people contact me regarding that case, some who I think may have a specific connection to it, others who I don't—I think who are just members of the general public who were very, very concerned that this individual was released despite the comments of the Crown prosecutors and despite the comments of the psychiatrist involved, where there seemed to be a clear—

Madam Chairperson: Order. I just want to remind all honourable members that we do have questions and answers going back and forth in committee here.

The honourable member for Steinbach has the floor.

Mr. Goertzen: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I appreciate you trying to maintain order in the House and I think you're doing a fine job of it.

I—just on that point, I want to say to the minister, I think that there is great concern about that case and the fact that a stark warning was provided and not just by the prosecutors who I know are representing one aspect of the law but by the individual who was charged to examine this person and his propensity to commit another crime.

So I leave that with the minister. My hope, obviously, would be that there would be an appeal of that decision to release the individual out on bail because I think there's compelling evidence that it might pose a danger to the community at large.

The—a quick question about the police helicopter which the minister has been involved with, obviously in terms of negotiations, sometimes choppy negotiations, but it sounds like we're moving to a launch date on that unit.

Are there any multiple uses other than directly policing uses that could be engaged with the helicopter?

Mr. Swan: Well, within the area of policing, because police—police serve so many roles. I mean, some of the examples that were given beyond the I think most immediate ones that Winnipeggers and Manitobans are aware of, which is trying to reduce chases, trying to get to areas quicker—and one of the examples that Chief McCaskill gave to me was searching for missing persons.

And I give an example, the Assiniboine Forest. It is not unheard of for people, sometimes elderly

people, to wander into the forest, and even though you think it's in the middle of the city, it's actually a pretty large physical area. If the police are called in, it actually requires sometimes as many as 15 units will be dispatched to try and locate somebody.

The helicopter that the City will be purchasing, as I understand it, has infrared technology which means they can actually, from the air, very quickly find where somebody is. So, instead of it being 15 units, it would only be two or three units dispatched that could assist.

I've also been told that there may be some uses to assist firefighters and, again, the infrared technology would allow, from the air, to find out where the hot spots are. Say it's a fire in a warehouse or a commercial building or even a house, that information, as I understand it, can be relayed to fire officials.

So those are just a couple of examples beyond I think the traditional policing—

Madam Chairperson: Order. The time being 5 p.m., committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. The time being after 5 p.m., the House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow morning.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, May 12, 2010

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