



Third Session - Thirty-Seventh Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

DEBATES

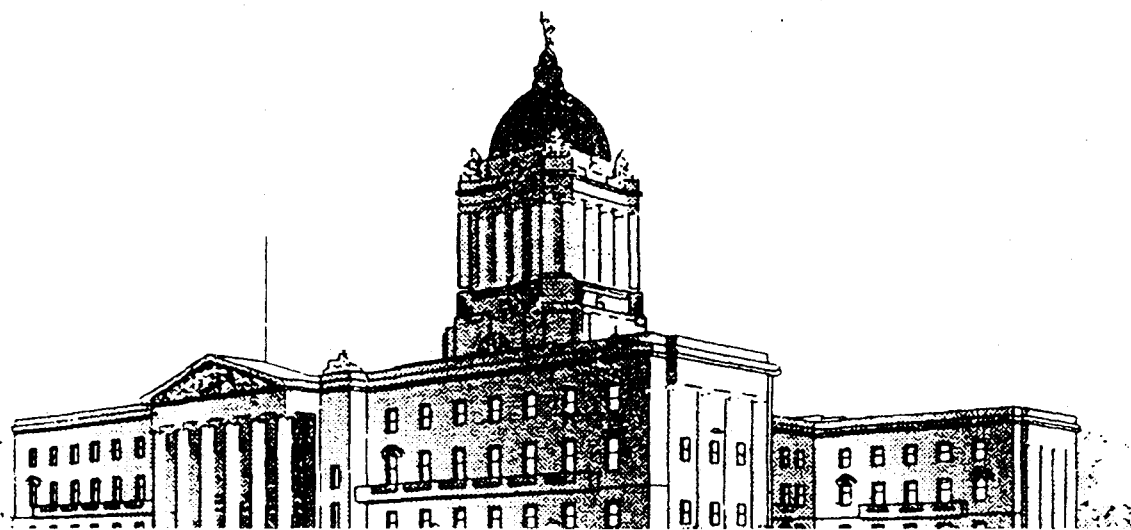
and

PROCEEDINGS

Official Report

(Hansard)

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The Honourable George Hickes
Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Seventh Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, July 24, 2002

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Universities Property Tax

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Smith), I have reviewed the petition and it complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Clerk, please read.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): On January 11, 2002, the Government of Manitoba announced a five-year phased-in property tax plan for four of the province's universities.

The Government of Manitoba's plan shifts the universities' property tax bill directly onto the taxpayers of Winnipeg and Brandon.

The cost to the City of Winnipeg for 2002 will be \$1.3 million, rising to \$6.64 million in 2006, for an accumulated loss of \$19.9 million over five years.

The loss of almost \$20 million over five years will have negative consequences for the City of Winnipeg's efforts to lower property taxes and make Winnipeg more competitive.

While all taxpayers in Winnipeg will be adversely affected, those taxpayers residing in the school divisions of Fort Garry, Assiniboine South, St. Boniface, St. Vital and Winnipeg No. 1 will also see increases in their local education taxes.

The Fort Garry, Assiniboine South, Winnipeg No. 1 and St. Boniface school divisions

will lose \$1.86 million in total this year, rising to \$9.34 million in 2006, for an accumulated revenue loss of \$28 million over five years.

The Government of Manitoba has made it clear that it will not in any way make up the loss of tax dollars the universities currently pay to municipalities and school divisions.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

We request the Government of Manitoba to consider ensuring that local property and education taxes do not rise as a result of the off-loading of provincial responsibilities onto the City of Winnipeg, the City of Brandon, the Fort Garry, Assiniboine South, Winnipeg No. 1, St. Boniface and St. Vital school divisions.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

West Nile Virus Mosquito Fogging

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): On July 12, less than two weeks ago, the Health Minister invoked legislation passed by the Doer government instructing that the entire city of Winnipeg be fogged for mosquitoes. At the time the Health Minister said, and I quote, after discussions with the Premier and with the mayor, we have determined that the Province will be asking that the entire city of Winnipeg be fogged.

The Health Minister added, and I quote, it is our decision from the Province that an imminent health hazard is possible. The words of the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak).

Yesterday, the City of Winnipeg sent a letter to the Premier asking for direction regarding further fogging. Is the Premier instructing the City of Winnipeg to fog the 40 percent of Wolseley residents that have yet to be fogged for West Nile virus?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): I believe the letter went to the Minister of Health, pursuant to the act, and the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin). We reiterate our view that the detection of West Nile presents an imminent risk. The Minister of Health certainly issued the order in a serious way. We intend on implementing the order with our municipal partners.

* (13:35)

Mr. Speaker, we are also in conversation with the other municipal officials outside of the city of Winnipeg where the other birds have had the detection of West Nile. This legislation overrode the individual rights to have a so-called barrier or buffer zone. It was not taken, as they say, without care, and we are committed to the implementation of that order.

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, in the letter which I would hope the ministers have shared with the Premier, saying he was part of the initial discussion, the City is looking for direction and they are asking questions such as: Do you wish to fog the remaining 40 percent of Wolseley? What legal action are you prepared to take on this matter? In addition, under what conditions could we anticipate a further order to fog?

They end by saying it is critical we get some direction from you today, meaning the NDP Doer government. We know the media has reported that Wolseley residents opposed to the Government's decision to fog the entire city have blocked fogging trucks from public roadways and alleys in the neighbourhood. He said they have no plans to use the courts to force Wolseley protestors out of the way of the City's fogging trucks.

The City is asking for direction from this Premier, Mr. Speaker. A number of Wolseley residents who support the fogging have questioned the protestors, that they have not been arrested by the fact that they are breaking the law. That is what they are asking of this Premier, some form of leadership. The City of Winnipeg has stated it is clearly looking for some direction from the Premier. What legal action is the Province prepared to take to ensure that 100 percent of the Wolseley residents are protected from a potential West Nile virus?

Mr. Doer: I want to make it clear the fogging reduces the risk. There is no such thing as 100% protection for anybody, Mr. Speaker, and I think the Leader of the Opposition should be very careful on a very important health issue like this to be very accurate in his statements.

Secondly, the provincial government officials met with the City of Winnipeg officials this morning. We reiterated our view that the full order should be implemented, including 100 percent of the residents in the city of Winnipeg to reduce the risk. That was conveyed to the City today at the meeting and, as I understand it, they understand that issue and will proceed.

Thirdly, Mr. Speaker, the issue of arrest. It has not been my view to second-guess the Winnipeg city police in this Chamber. I am surprised the Leader of the Opposition would do so.

Mr. Murray: Well, Mr. Speaker, what the Premier is making a comment on is that there was some meeting to proceed. I think, on behalf of those 40 percent of residents in Wolseley, they are saying what does proceed mean. Does that mean once again that under imminent health hazards, as said by the Minister of Health, his words, his decision to fog the entire city, is he now saying they have some kind of a process in place that still yet today, if the fogging trucks go into Wolseley, if protestors stand in the way of what is legislation, of what this Premier has said is the law, that in fact they are not going to allow them to proceed?

My question simply to the minister or the Premier is this: What is the process? Are you going to fog a hundred percent of Wolseley or not?

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, under the former government the buffer zone requirement was in place. We have brought in legislation not just for West Nile but for anthrax and other diseases to allow for, in circumstances like this, the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) to proceed with this order. We are implementing the order.

* (13:40)

We believe strongly the order was made for the benefit of the total community. We know

that any order from a provincial government, there is always dissent, but the bottom line is the order was given for the public health benefit of the majority of the community, in our view, to reduce the risk. We are still committed to 100% fogging and implementation of that order. We are working with the City of Winnipeg to implement fully the order that was issued 10 days ago.

Dakota Tipi First Nation Women's Safety Concerns

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Mr. Speaker, last night a number of women from Dakota Tipi appeared before committee, some showing visible signs of abuse. These women, living in terror on a day-to-day basis, have asked this Government to help in an effort to improve their lives. They wanted to be able to go home last night without fear of retribution, without fear of danger for their own personal safety and for the safety of their children.

I would like to ask the Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Ms. McGifford), since our province has a very strict policy on zero tolerance regarding violence, why has she not taken any action to work with these women, given that this group made presentation to her and her Government in September of 2001?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, certainly the accusations, the allegations that were heard last night are of serious concern to all those who heard them. I might also note for members that there have been, as well, serious accusations by members of another faction in this community of Dakota Tipi. There is, I guess for lack of a better description, a power struggle that has been developing in that community for some time. Accusations have been levelled at both sides, both in terms of allegations of criminal activity as well as allegations about police responses. We take this matter very seriously because we do expect no less than the application of the law of this country being enforced across this province.

In answer specifically to the question, in terms of specific allegations of criminal misconduct, domestic violence or assaults, it is my information from the department that there are several investigations and there are several

matters that are before the Crown Prosecutions office, which has been referred, by the way, to the Brandon office to distance from Portage to ensure a view of independence. Those orders are before the justice system as we speak.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Since the Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Ms. McGifford) is the advocate, chosen by her Premier (Mr. Doer), to speak on behalf of women around her caucus and her Cabinet table, will the Minister responsible for the Status of Women do something for the women who indicate the police force that has been put in charge of ensuring their safety is a police force they do not believe can help them because it does not represent them and it reports to the chief of the group this Government appears to be supporting?

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, Mr. Speaker, there were members of this House and legislators in the Parliament of Canada who came before us who had the wisdom to ensure criminal allegations, criminal matters are dealt with, not at the bar of a Legislature but rather in a court of law with the Prosecutions service that acts on the basis of law and evidence and with police forces that have checks and balances in terms of their administrations. As well, people who have gone before us in this Legislature have established a Law Enforcement Review Agency and there is a police commission the police force in question reports to.

Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that there are matters before the criminal justice system and it would be inappropriate, of course, to discuss those from my bench, but it is premature to say nothing is happening. It is my understanding that in fact the Crown is taking these matters very seriously and will examine it in the professional way they have shown Manitobans in the past.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, but these words ring pretty hollow to women who have been abused and fear for their lives.

* (13:45)

Can the Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Ms. McGifford) ensure the safety and security of those women? Are they safe and

free from harm? As a result of the public admission they made last night in front of the Minister responsible for the Status of Women, what has she done since she heard that information first-hand to ensure they can go home to their communities and that their lives and their children's lives will be protected?

Mr. Mackintosh: We have concern for all of the men, women and children of this particular community which has been going through a very, very difficult matter. This is not just a matter about divisions between two or more factions. This is also about divisions within families, and it is very important that we look to see what the Province can do, recognizing the constitutional and fiduciary responsibilities of the federal government, but we do take the responsibility seriously.

When considering what the Province can do, we have to recognize, Mr. Speaker, that the criminal law is in force; it is being exercised. I can also advise there are ongoing discussions, in fact, today, with the signatories to the contracting to the policing arrangement for this particular community between the Justice Department, the federal government and the Dakota Ojibway Police Service to examine a range of options, given the challenges facing the community. So I look forward to receiving a report on those options.

Dakota Tipi First Nation Women's Safety Concerns

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Mr. Speaker, last night in committee we heard a cry for help. We heard a heart-wrenching and disturbing story from Diana Traverse, a woman on Dakota Tipi reserve, who showed clear physical signs in her face that she had clearly been beaten.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister responsible for the Status of Women, who sat on committee last night and saw the physical evidence of abuse: Has the minister attempted to contact Ms. Traverse today to offer her support for the obvious abuse she has suffered?

Hon. Diane McGifford (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, no, I

have not, because I have a meeting already set up with Ms. Traverse and Ms. Prince for tomorrow morning.

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, Mr. Speaker, what is the Minister responsible for the Status of Women prepared to do today, given that Ms. Traverse left committee and was deeply concerned for her safety last night? Why has this minister not called her today to see how she is doing?

Ms. McGifford: I was present last night as a member of the committee and I heard the presentations from the citizens. As a citizen as well as a member of this Government, I found the stories stark and upsetting. As the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) has already said, at least I think he made the point that allegations made last evening will be forwarded to the proper authorities. Allegations, as the Minister of Justice has already said, have come from a variety of sources.

Mr. Speaker, I think what last night's meeting should have made apparent to all of us was the importance of healing, the importance that this community as a whole needs to heal, because although members opposite are talking about women, there are men and women on both sides of a very troubled community, men and women both, on both sides, who are in need of healing.

Mrs. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, when will this Government take action on behalf of the women and children to enforce the zero tolerance policy of government to ensure women and children on the Dakota Tipi reserve feel safe in their own homes?

* (13:50)

Ms. McGifford: As I was saying to the member, it is because of the fact that this community is in need of healing. I am sure members opposite would agree with that. It is because of this that the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Robinson) has written to his federal counterpart, Robert Nault, and requested mediation in order to facilitate and to initiate this healing process.

I want to assure members opposite that we take all our concerns extremely seriously, that

we are very concerned with ensuring our contractual obligations are fulfilled, and I hope members opposite realize it is the responsibility of the federal government to make certain there is a chief in place on this reserve who has the support of his people and who was elected by the people.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, I have a meeting with the women from Dakota Tipi tomorrow morning and I look forward to meeting with them tomorrow morning.

Dakota Tipi First Nation Women's Safety Concerns

Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, last night we heard from women from Dakota Tipi First Nation who are literally living in terror. This is a situation the Doer government has known about for months, yet there has been no action taken. I want to ask the Minister of Justice why he ignored the concerns of these women months ago until they finally had to come to the Legislature last night, show up in front of him with bruises on their faces and demand some action. Why is he now taking supposed action when he has had months to do that?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I will have to explain this to the honourable member that allegations of criminal misconduct, Mr. Speaker, are dealt with by law enforcement officials who are specifically recruited and trained in investigation techniques, in the handling of evidence, the writing of reports and the referral of these matters to the Crown Prosecutions office.

Where there are concerns about the conduct of police, there are in place processes to deal with that, including police commissions, including the Law Enforcement Review Agency which was adopted by members of this House in years before. That is the process. We oversee the policies of the Prosecutions unit in Manitoba and we help to fund policing. In fact, in terms of Dakota Ojibway Police Service, we are a funder in partnership with the federal government. So, Mr. Speaker, that is the role of the Province.

I might also add that the department pulled a meeting together with the community to meet

with DOPS so they could explore the different perceptions and issues that were being faced within that community.

Mrs. Smith: Mr. Speaker, the issue is the police force and the fact that the chief is paying off the police force to do his work. The fact of the matter is I would like to table a copy of a letter sent by the Dakota Tipi women to the Premier (Mr. Doer) on September 13, 2001.

This letter states, and I quote: We are requesting immediate assistance, financial, legal and RCMP to assist the band members who are under extreme duress from the lack of food, the lack of schooling for our children, access to services and verbal and physical intimidation.

My question is: Why did the Doer government not take action to address these legitimate concerns when this letter was sent to them?

Hon. Eric Robison (Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for the question. It gives us an opportunity on this side of the House to inform our colleagues in this House what we have done with respect to addressing this issue.

This issue goes back a long way. It goes back to 1972 when Dakota Tipi first became a First Nation recognized by the Indian Act, the federal government and the Department of Indian Affairs. It is not a new issue. Unfortunately, the community is indeed needing a lot of healing.

* (13:55)

We have asked the federal government, whose primary responsibility it is to concentrate on matters like this. I have contacted my federal counterpart. During the noon hour, I have had the opportunity of discussing this matter with Grand Chief Dennis White Bird who is concerned about this issue, and we both agree that a mediator has to be brought into the community. Even if an election were called tomorrow, the problem would still be there. We need to address all the factions in the community and bring about some harmony, some healing for the entire community, because no doubt they have to co-exist in the time to come.

Mrs. Smith: Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, the community is in need of protection at this time.

What action has the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) taken to ensure that the women who were courageous enough to speak out against Bill 44 last night would not be subject to physical retribution from Pashe and his regime today?

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say that equally we have received complaints from the other side, if I may term it that, allegations of abuse, inaction by the Dakota Ojibway Police Service, but I am quite sure the Minister of Justice has replied to those questions posed to him earlier.

I would like to table for the House, Mr. Speaker, letters that I have written to the Honourable Robert Nault, the federal Minister of Indian Affairs, with respect to the status of the community and who is the official chief of the community, a letter I wrote on the 17th of July. I would like to also table for the information of the House, a letter I have written to the same minister with respect to the need for a mediator in the community that should be appointed.

It should be a mediator who is acceptable to all in the community, because I think we as legislators here can make all kinds of recommendations, but certainly Grand Chief White Bird and I would make our recommendation to the federal government who we feel would be appropriate to deal with the many outstanding issues.

Now last night I understand the committee heard some very compelling information. That is one version. There are other versions, as well, Mr. Speaker, that are equally compelling. I think the issue has to be addressed by the mediator and we feel that is the best way our Government can deal with the issue.

Dakota Tipi First Nation Gaming Revenues

Mr. Harold Gilleshammer (Minnedosa): Last night, after hearing the concerns of members of Dakota Tipi First Nation regarding the accountability of gaming revenue on the reserve and the

former chief's influence over members of the police force, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) did the right thing and held up the legislation.

I would like to ask the Minister responsible for Gaming why he would direct members of Dakota Tipi who have concerns over the accountability of gaming revenue to send their concerns to the Dakota police service when this Minister of Justice knew about the special relationship between the former chief and the DOPS for well over a year.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister charged with the administration of The Gaming Control Act): I think it is very clear that any accusations regarding any impropriety, particularly any criminal activity, should clearly be referred to the justice authorities. That was something any responsible minister or anyone in this House would expect to happen.

I indicated before, within the matters we have been dealing with in terms of the gaming commission vis-à-vis our gaming commission and the gaming commission of Dakota Tipi that was set up by the previous government, that we have been working very hard over the last period of time we have been in office to bring that committee into compliance. We made significant progress. I can say to the member we are continuing to work with Dakota Tipi to avoid the situation we inherited when we came into government, in which the committee was not in compliance with the agreement they signed with the previous government in 1994.

Mr. Gilleshammer: This is a relationship and a situation that is today. You have a gaming agreement there. You have a chief who has an unholy relationship with the local police force and you still refer these people to the local police force. Why would you do that?

Mr. Ashton: I want to echo the words of the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs (Mr. Robinson) because, quite frankly, statements being made by this member are not only not helpful to the situation but are scurrilous in terms of dealing with a situation which is already sensitive enough. He is impugning the police authorities in that area. I want to say that I deal with matters

on their merit, and I want to stress that whenever issues are raised in terms of compliance with gaming commission regulations we have dealt with them. In fact, this committee has made significant progress in terms of coming into compliance.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

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

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Official Opposition House Leader): I would ask you, Mr. Speaker, to review the words spoken by the honourable minister. Maybe he could retract them. He knows they are ruled unparliamentary in *Beauchesne*. I will not repeat them.

* (14:00)

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Deputy Government House Leader, on the same point of order.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Deputy Government House Leader): I am not sure specifically the word that was used, but if there is any concern about the words I used, I think "irresponsible" would be more in keeping with a parliamentary phrase. I will withdraw, I assume, the word "scurrilous" which was not put on the record. I will withdraw that.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the honourable minister for that withdrawal. That should take care of the matter.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Minister, have you concluded your comments?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I would ask the minister to take some action and end this gaming agreement. Close the gaming palace on Dakota Tipi until an election is held and these matters are cleared up.

Mr. Ashton: I find it incredible that the member opposite was part of the government that signed this agreement signed by Jim Ernst and Darren Praznik in 1994, would get up and make comments like that when he should know, if he does not, the structure of the agreement that was put in place. I can tell when we came into government the First Nation was not in compliance with this agreement. We brought that, by working with the committee, into compliance.

The only remaining issue within the confines of this agreement signed by the previous government we are dealing with is in terms of the audits from '01, '02. I answered questions on that yesterday from the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach).

I want to say we are continuing to work on a daily basis to bring them into compliance. We are taking action to deal with the situation we inherited two and a half years ago in which they were not in compliance. We will continue to do the responsible thing which is to bring the community into compliance in terms of the gaming regulations.

The member should read the agreement he signed back in '94 and perhaps explain why they did not act on it.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I would like to remind all honourable members, when putting a question or answering a question, put it through the Chair. I ask the co-operation of all honourable members.

North American Indigenous Games All-Party Agreement—Recess

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. Tomorrow is the start of the North American Indigenous Games. It is an opportunity to recognize and salute the achievements of Aboriginal athletes and to celebrate the positive contributions of Aboriginal people to life in Manitoba. I would ask the Premier whether he will support an all-party agreement to recess the Legislature during the North American Indigenous Games to respect, honour and celebrate Aboriginal people and their achievements in Manitoba.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the member has already discussed this issue with the Government House Leader. I believe we have offered up some ideas on how we can operate and continue the work of the people in a similar way to what we did in the 1997 flood so we could both honour Aboriginal people and the Games, which we are proud to host, and I think all Manitobans are proud to host these events here in Manitoba, and also carry on the work that people have elected us to do in the House.

I do not want to interfere with discussions that are going on between the House leaders but I certainly think the model we used of co-operation to allow people to sandbag, to allow people to work in emergency situations in the '97 flood we think is the way to go. I know the member opposite was probably campaigning during that period of time in the 1997 federal election, but it did work quite well in this House.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, life has not always been easy for Aboriginal people in Manitoba, and I ask the Premier why his commitment is only partial. I ask the Premier for his commitment to show, as a Legislature, that we are fully committed to support and honour Aboriginal people in this province by having a full recess during the North American Indigenous Games.

Mr. Doer: Perhaps if the member did not ring the bell so much, we would have completed the work of the House.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Gerrard: Perhaps if the Premier had called the Legislature at the usual time, we would have got through before.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable Member for River Heights has the floor.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, surely, I ask the Premier, there is no better time than now, when we have concerning news, disturbing news from Dakota Tipi, to recognize the positive contributions of Aboriginal people, to celebrate those

contributions and to have a full recess during the North American Aboriginal games so that we can in fact recognize and honour and support Aboriginal people in this province.

Mr. Doer: We all should be supporting, recognizing and including Aboriginal people 365 days of the year. I am proud of the fact, Mr. Speaker, that we have worked very hard on this side of the House to have three exemplary members of First Nation communities sitting on the benches in the Legislative Chamber of Manitoba. I am proud of the fact we are working hard to improve ACCESS programs. I am proud of the fact that we are working to create more opportunities for Aboriginal people throughout our educational institutions. I think all of us should work 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year to include Aboriginal people in a future that is full of hope and full of opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, we are proud to host the Aboriginal games. I am certainly aware of the workload this Legislature has, some of which, by the way, has importance for Aboriginal people, like Child and Family Services proposals. I believe we are capable of working a schedule that would be similar to the Red River flood to allow us to continue to do what we were elected to do and at the same time, in the best of our collective abilities, host people from all over North America in the way we are so proud to do with the North American Aboriginal games taking place in our beautiful province of Manitoba.

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Screening/Testing Capacity

Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski (St. James): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Family Services and Housing.

Recently, questions have arisen regarding FAE and FAS. Could the Minister of Family Services please indicate to the House what improvements have been made to our screening tools and what the most recent data is in regard to FAS and FAE?

Hon. Tim Sale (Minister of Family Services and Housing): Mr. Speaker, we are fortunate to have two diagnostic centres in Manitoba, the

clinic for alcohol and drug-exposed children in Winnipeg at the Children's Centre and the fetal alcohol support team in Thompson, whose clinical abilities have been trained by the Winnipeg region partly by using our telediagnostic capacity, which our Government has expanded significantly.

Over the last three years, the number of diagnoses have stayed approximately the same at a total of around 100 each year, which approximates 0.75 births per 1000, either full or partial FAS-FAE. I think we all acknowledge that is probably an under-diagnosis because the visible symptoms of FAS and FAE effect are not always present at birth, particularly at the lesser severity.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, I can indicate we have more than doubled our STOP FAS sites, expanding to Thompson and The Pas, and that the women in those sites have an incredibly successful record of parenting their existing children, the new children they have had since and that they are achieving 70% abstinence either from alcohol or drugs and using reliable birth control.

Dakota Tipi First Nation Gaming Agreement—Termination

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Speaker, I just heard the words from the Premier (Mr. Doer) honouring Aboriginal people and, Mr. Premier, I want to tell you how hollow your words sound in light of the words that were uttered by the women from the Tipi Dakota Ojibway tribe in Portage la Prairie who pleaded with three ministers to hear their concerns.

My question is to the Minister responsible for Lotteries in Manitoba. Mr. Speaker, the presenters to the committee last night pleaded with the Government to have the casino closed because the revenues from that casino were not being directed where they should be. I would like to ask the Minister of Lotteries—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

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

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The member is just now heard to be putting a question. Would you please remind him that a question should contain one carefully drawn sentence as a preamble?

* (14:10)

Mr. Speaker: Order. On the point of order raised by the honourable Government House Leader, I would like to take this opportunity to remind all members that *Beauchesne* Citation 409(2): A preamble should not exceed one carefully drawn sentence.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: I would ask the honourable member to please put his question.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister responsible for Lotteries whether she will immediately move, under section 8 of the siteholder agreement with Dakota Tipi band, to terminate the Bingo Palace and the agreement between her and the band immediately as a result of what has taken place.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister charged with the administration of The Gaming Control Act): Once again, this member who was a member of the previous government should be aware of the agreement they signed and the structure they put in place, not just for Dakota Tipi but for every First Nations gaming authority in the province. In fact, I have a copy of that agreement here.

What the member would do wise to put on the record, Mr. Speaker, is that under that agreement essentially we have a situation that is no different than we have with any of the other agreements we have in place, indeed agreements that would extend to businesses or Assiniboia Downs. That gets to the root of what the basic issue they are supposedly raising is, which is an internal dispute over the post fees of gaming revenue.

I want to indicate that is an internal matter that is very much related to what the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs (Mr. Robinson) referenced earlier. It needs to be resolved by the

community, first and foremost, but also the Department of Indian Affairs.

I want to stress again, Mr. Speaker, the member should know the agreement his government signed in 1994. That is the agreement we are following and that is the agreement we have worked with Dakota Tipi to bring them in compliance with, something that did not exist two and a half years ago.

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

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

Mr. Derkach: First of all, I would like to table the siteholder agreement between Manitoba Lotteries and the First Nations peoples. Section 8 indicates the agreement shall be effective from the date assigned until terminated and may be terminated without cause or for a variety of reasons. One of those reasons I would like to highlight is No. 7: Engaging in conduct that is contrary to the public interest or harmful to the integrity or the reputation of a video lotteries scheme.

I would ask the minister whether or not, based on section 8 of the Lotteries siteholder agreement, she is prepared to terminate the agreement immediately so that the concerns of the individuals who expressed those concerns yesterday can be addressed.

Mr. Ashton: Well, Mr. Speaker, once again, I think this is very important and this is the responsible thing to do. When accusations are made that include anything that is criminal, that should be something we should be very careful in dealing with and make sure it is dealt with by the authorities. If that is the accusation being made by the member he would do well to refer any of the accusations to police. That was the response I gave. That is the response from the Minister responsible for Lotteries.

Any time any serious accusations have been raised, we do not act as judge and jury on that. What we do is we assure they are referred to the appropriate authorities. What we deal with is specific issues in terms of gaming compliance issues. I want to stress again that two and a half

years ago this gaming commission was not in compliance. We have worked to the point today, subject to providing the additional information on the audits, we made significant progress and they are now in fact in compliance with the gaming issues. These are other types of issues that should be referred to the relevant authorities.

Dakota Tipi First Nation Third-Party Management

Mr. Harry Enns (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, I tire from listening to the honourable Minister responsible for Gaming harking back to 1994 and the previous administration. We heard last night and we are aware. We were told in this House that six months ago a third party was put in place at Dakota Tipi to help clean up the mess we heard about last night and we are hearing about today. The person responsible who won that untendered contract is the Premier's (Mr. Doer) brother, David Doer. He was appointed six months ago. He was appointed six months ago to clean up the mess.

My question to him, never mind what was done in '94 by the former Filmon government, what is the First Minister's brother doing? He is being paid to clean up this mess? What is he doing about it?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister charged with the administration of The Gaming Control Act): I do not think you can get much lower than that, Mr. Speaker. The same individual who is a principal in Soaring Eagle Consultants was hired by the federal Department of Health to conduct audits.

I believe one of the other companies that is involved is also a company of which the former premier of this province, Gary Filmon, is a partner. No one is suggesting there is any tie in with Gary Filmon and the other company. For that member, who is the dean of this House, to get up and make that kind of guilt by association is irresponsible and unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. May I remind all honourable members that when the Speaker rises, all members should be seated and the Speaker should be heard in silence. I once again remind all honourable members and I ask for your co-operation.

Time for Oral Questions had expired, and now we will move to members' statements.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Dakota Tipi First Nation

Mr. Harry Enns (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, last night at committee was an evening that I would rather forget. In my 36 years I have heard many emotional appeals, many controversial issues brought to the attention of all of us as legislators. For those of us who were there it was an unbelievable evening of listening to what is really happening in parts of our province, in this particular instance at the Dakota Tipi community just south of Portage la Prairie.

Mr. Speaker, it was listening to representations from Third World representatives. It was like we have abandoned all vestiges of law and order. It was simply unbelievable. For this Government, as they did just a few moments ago, to hide, to try to shield themselves from any responsibility at all on this matter by referring back to agreements signed in '94 by previous administrations, we are talking now in the year 2002.

We were told last night that the individuals appearing before us, and, by the way, it took great, great courage for them to appear before us, that not one, not two but three or four ministers were notified by letter, by calls over a year ago about the situation at Dakota and not a thing was done about it.

Members want to chastise me because I have the temerity to suggest to them that this is a matter that is very close to this Government. Yes, the First Minister's (Mr. Doer) brother is charged with the responsibility of cleaning up the mess as a third-party intervener. They take umbrage at that. They come back and spout at us. They come back and spout at us the discussions about agreements reached five and six years ago.

The Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Robinson) acknowledged that the Soaring Eagle was recommended by the now thoroughly discredited chief, Dennis Pashe, and this is all that we heard about last night. It is a sad day, a sad day in Manitoba.

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

* (14:20)

Manitoba Threshermen's Reunion and Stampede

Mr. Harry Schellenberg (Rossmere): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise and recognize the 48th Grand Opening of the Manitoba Threshermen's Reunion and Stampede. This event will take place this week in Austin, Manitoba from July 24 to July 27.

Mr. Speaker: Order. May I ask all members that wish to have a conversation to please do it in the loge or out in the hallway. You cannot even hear the member who is trying to make a member's statement. I think that is very unfair.

Mr. Schellenberg: I would like to commend the board of directors and the many volunteers who make this event a great festival where Manitobans celebrate our pioneer achievements of our rural past.

Mr. Speaker, this festival is a time when we stop, reflect and celebrate our agricultural heritage. As we reflect, we have fond memories of our achievements and successes in the development of our agricultural communities across the Prairies. This Threshermen's Reunion is a tremendous opportunity for young and old alike to share history and stories, as well as learn about new technologies while enjoying the great variety of activities that are organized for everyone.

Mr. Speaker, as a Canadian history teacher of many years and having grown up on a farm, I appreciate and identify with the many exhibits which include: farm machinery, horses, buildings such as homes, churches, schools and businesses. Other activities include threshing and plowing demonstrations and evening rodeos.

Mr. Speaker, the one-room school, however, on the grounds of the museum brings back fond

memories of education on the Prairies. To me, personally, the one-room school is the most meaningful, because I began my teaching career in a one-room school which played a key role in rural Manitoba and served rural communities across Canada very well.

I must also commend this festival for the fine hospitality and sense of community that visitors experience.

I also encourage the agricultural community to preserve the sense of sharing and self-reliance that our pioneers fostered.

The museum and all the activities are a testimony to the evolution of farming and the development of life on the Prairies, and it also points out the role men and women played in building a strong province in a country as we know it today.

Mr. Speaker, members on both sides of this Chamber appreciate the important role the agricultural community plays in the life of Manitoba.

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

Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak of the 48th Annual Manitoba Threshermen's Reunion and Stampede which starts today in Austin, Manitoba and runs through to July 27.

For nearly 50 years, the Manitoba Threshermen's Reunion and Stampede has celebrated the proud tradition of Manitoba's agricultural community and has drawn countless Manitobans to Austin to enjoy everything that this annual celebration has to offer.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to invite all honourable members to take in the festivities, which include daily vintage parades, the Manitoba Horse Pull Association Show, home-cooked meals, to just name a few.

Another attraction which I am proud to sponsor for yet another year is the Central Canada's 24th Annual Fiddle contest which will take place on Friday and Saturday at 1:30 and

7:00 p.m. Other attractions at this year's Reunion and Stampede include the John Deere Jubilee, which features a machinery and equipment display tent; a John Deere Memorabilia Toy Show; as well as a raffle of a 1942 John Deere B tractor.

There are many other points of interest at this year's celebration, including the Manitoba Amateur Radio Museum, the Manitoba Clydesdale Classic and the Reunion Ladies Activity Display. I strongly encourage all honourable members and all Manitobans to make the trip to Austin, Manitoba for the affordable weekend of family entertainment that celebrates the agricultural heritage of our rural Manitoba.

For the 10th year in a row, I will be proudly taking part in the annual activities. I hope to see all of you at Austin this week.

Prime Meridian Trail

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake): It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today to tell of a very special event in which I took part on July 6 and 7 of this year. I am referring to the Second Annual Prime Meridian Trail Ride-a-thon, which was held in order to raise money for the upkeep of the trail, which is situated on the bed of the old CN rail line abandoned a number of years ago.

The ride began on Saturday with a pancake breakfast in Inwood followed by lunch at the hall in Narcisse and ended the first day in Chatfield. On the second day we stopped in Poplarfield for breakfast, had a nice lunch in Broad Valley and ended the day with a fine pig roast dinner in Fisher Branch.

I want to pay tribute to the people who cycled along with me this year. They included Inwood firefighters Richard Shered and Jeff Norris; chair of the Prime Meridian Trail Association Board Gerry Rechsiedler and his wife, Maureen; Rosemary Trachel of Manitoba Recreational Trails and Janice Podaima of the Fisher Development Corporation. Special mention must be made of Sheila Shered, who was attempting to walk the entire length of the trail in order to double her pledges.

All in all, approximately \$1400 was raised. On behalf of the Prime Meridian Trail

Association, I want to thank all of those who played a role in carrying off successfully this worthy event.

The Prime Meridian Trail is a vital tourist attraction for the Interlake, which attracts many visitors to our region. Public awareness events such as this will enhance our tourism potential in the years to come. I encourage one and all to join us next year in making it an even bigger event.

Dakota Tipi First Nation

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Last night we heard very disturbing and compelling testimony from residents of Dakota Tipi who fear for their lives. We heard a cry for assistance from members who have suffered violent attacks and been unable to get adequate assistance. In the presentations it was very clear that on this occasion the federal government has acted well in its areas of jurisdiction, but there has been a clear failure of the provincial government to live up to its responsibilities to ensure law, order and adequate policing services are available for those residents who need it on the Dakota Tipi First Nation.

Mr. Speaker, the presentations highlighted the challenges of implementing Aboriginal police services. The presentations also served to highlight the need, whatever else happens, to have approaches which will ensure the safety of all Manitoba citizens.

Today I called on the Premier (Mr. Doer) to recess the Legislature during the North American Aboriginal Games to recognize the positive contributions of Aboriginal people. Such a recess could also provide time for the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) to ensure that the situation at Dakota Tipi is addressed on an urgent basis and provide time as well for the Minister of Justice to make considered changes to Bill 44, the bill dealing with Aboriginal policing services, to address the issues raised in such a compelling and heart-wrenching fashion by the members of the Dakota Tipi First Nation last night.

MATTER OF GRIEVANCE

Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry): I rise today, and I must say this is the first time since being

elected as MLA that I have felt compelled to rise on a grievance. I am rising because—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Our records indicate that this session the honourable Member for Fort Garry has already used her grievance on December 6 of 2001.

The honourable Member for Tuxedo, on a grievance.

Dakota Tipi First Nation

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): I recognize the seriousness of using our grievances in this House. I feel as my colleague the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) mentioned that in his 36 years as a member for the Manitoba Legislature, he recognized the seriousness and how compelling the presentations were in committee last night. While I have not been here as long as the Member for Lakeside, I tell you, Mr. Speaker, I have never seen anything more compelling and more moving in terms of the presentations that we saw from the members of the Dakota Tipi First Nation last night.

We heard a presentation from Margery Prince and several issues that she is dealing with as the head of her nation. We heard from Edward Pashe, from Diana Traverse, from Sheila James, from Lorraine Elk and also had a presentation from a former colleague in the Manitoba Legislature, David Newman.

* (14:30)

These presentations were just so unbelievable, particularly the women who presented last night. When Diana Traverse came to the podium to speak about the series of abuse that she has suffered with for the last number of years in her life, it was absolutely unbelievable. When she came to the podium, we could see right away that she had physical signs, Mr. Speaker, that clearly showed that she had been abused. When she came to the podium, she was crying out for help. She wanted this Government to listen to her, to make them realize the kinds of things that she and other women and children are suffering from on the Dakota Tipi Reserve.

Last night we were debating Bill 44. This was to set up a police force on the reserve and

bring it into legislation. The police force is existing now, and these people came out last night to speak against the legislation. They wanted to speak against it because they feel it is not there for them; it is there for the former chief, Dennis Pashe, and that he is controlling this police force.

Mr. Speaker, when Diana Traverse spoke of going to the gaming, the lotteries on the reserve, she talked about how she had gone in to try and plead with these people so that the women and children could actually see the money that is being raised by the gaming on the reserve. She pleaded with the head of the lotteries on the reserve, and she claimed that she had been beaten because she had taken a stand against the former chief there, Dennis Pashe, and that this was wrong. So dissenting views on the reserve mean nothing.

Diana Traverse was subsequently beaten, and we could see that on her face last night. I was deeply disturbed. She told of other stories, and some of the other women spoke of other stories that they had encountered in the last while on the reserve. They had cried out for help from the police force on the reserve, and they cried out for help from this Government, and they were shut down. To me, that is disturbing. How anyone could sit and listen to the presentations that were presented last night and turn their backs, Mr. Speaker, this is unbelievable.

Diana Traverse left last night fearing for her life, as did Sheila James, as did Lorraine Elk, as did Edward Pashe, as did Margery Prince, and did any of those people get one phone call from any member of this Government to see how they are doing today, to make sure that last night the goons were not all over them and beating them up because they came forward and spoke their minds about what they say is really happening on the reserve? That is deeply disturbing to me, Mr. Speaker.

I cannot tell you how disturbing it is that the Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Ms. McGifford) was there, and she heard these presentations and had no response at all. It was just unbelievable. She did not feel compelled to even call Diana Traverse or the other women who took their own lives, who took their lives last night to come forward, who came forward

last night knowing that their lives could potentially be threatened upon returning to the reserve.

Mr. Speaker, I think that each and every one of those women last night who came forward and also Edward Pashe who came forward because his life was in danger as well, those people came forward because they realize the seriousness of this issue on the reserve.

The police force that is on the reserve now, the DOPS police force, Mr. Speaker, is being controlled by Dennis Pashe and, as they claimed in their presentations last night, his goons. How can women and children expect to lead normal lives and expect to have a hope for the future if when they are beaten up and they are left on the floor, when they call 911 or they call the police, it takes an hour and a half to get there, and then when they show up they say, well, you know, this is not really a serious issue? You know what? This is a serious issue, and this is an issue that this Government has decided to turn its back on.

Mr. Speaker, the presentations last night were compelling, and I felt very strongly that I had to get up on a grievance today about this issue because not just for the presentations and for the women and children themselves but with the way that the Government is effectively trying to sweep this under the carpet. The federal government does not recognize Dennis Pashe as the chief on the reserve, yet this Government does.

We heard testimony last night from people who say that Dennis Pashe's controlling of the reserve and the gaming funds and so on there, they do not know where this money has gone. They do not see it in programs for education for their children, for health, for health care. As a matter of fact, one of the presenters last night said that she had to bring her family into Winnipeg to a food bank because they could not afford to be fed on the reserve, and they did. One of the presenters did refer last night to Dennis Pashe's yacht. Now, I do not know, Mr. Speaker, if Dennis Pashe has a yacht, but this is what is happening on the reserve.

* (14:40)

The money from the gaming commission, when it was set up originally, that money was to

go towards education, health care and other programs on the reserve to see to it that the people on the reserve were able to live the lives that they should be able to be comfortable in living, safe lives, lives with proper health care, with proper police services so that when they need them, they are there for them. Not this, you know, when they really need someone to come forward and help them because they are in a very bad predicament after just being beaten by someone, to have the police service on the reserve turn their backs.

Yet this Government, until hearing the presentations last night from these people—I mean, Mr. Speaker, if those people had not shown up last night to give the compelling presentations that they did, I dare say that this legislation probably would have gone through, and that is shameful because of what is happening on the reserve. It took a lot of courage for those people to come forward last night and to speak their minds because there is a lot of danger facing them when they get back to the reserve, the women and the children. It took a lot of courage for them to come forward, but I dare say if they had not come forward, this legislation would have gone through, and this Government would have continued to sweep the very serious issues and problems with the women and children on the Dakota Tipi reserve under the carpet. That, more than anything, is the reason that I am standing before you today in a grievance.

We do our best as an opposition party to try and come forward and to seek out some of the things that happen, some of these things, these very serious issues, and what concerns me is what happens if something like this happens to slip through. Are these things going to continue to happen because this Government does not have the courage to stand up for people like the women and children on the Dakota Tipi reserve?

I challenge this Government to do the right thing in this case; to put this legislation aside, to work with the federal government, who does not recognize Dennis Pashe as the chief, and wait until a proper election is called on the reserve before they decide to pass such legislation.

Mr. Speaker, going back to the presentations of last night, and as my colleague from Lakeside

and my other colleagues who were there last night, we had trouble. It was so compelling, these stories that were told to us. I believe it is so important that we try and do something about this very serious issue.

I challenge this Government to do the right thing here and not just put this legislation aside, but do something for the women who are being beaten and for the children that are being beaten on the reserve, Mr. Speaker, and also put a police force in place right now.

Use the RCMP. Make sure the RCMP is accessible for these women and children when they need help because, when we left last night, the Minister responsible for Justice decided that, well, we will deal with this matter later. That is wrong because as soon as these people left last night their lives were in danger, and today who were they to call for help? Are they going to call DOPS? Are they going to rely on them to help them when it takes them an hour and a half to get out, and they say, oh, well, you do not really need our help anyway.

I challenge this Government today to do the right thing and ensure, if women, any child, anyone on the reserve wants service, that they are able to dial 911 and get the service that they need and deserve, Mr. Speaker.

An Honourable Member: Is it the will of the House to give leave to waive—

Mr. Speaker: Order. We are not there. I am still dealing with grievances.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, is there leave of the House to waive private members' hour?

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

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, would you canvass the House to see if there is unanimous consent to

set aside the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture and Food at 4 p.m., in Room 255, in order to consider the Estimates of Education, Training and Youth, with this change to apply for today and tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to set aside the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture and Food at 4 p.m., in Room 255, to consider the Estimates of Education, Training and Youth, with this change to apply for today and tomorrow only? *[Agreed]*

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

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

STATUS OF WOMEN

* (15:00)

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

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Chair, I would like to begin this afternoon, I guess, where we left off yesterday, because when I asked some questions yesterday, and perhaps I did not have them framed exactly correctly and so therefore my questions were ruled somewhat out of order. I have to say that the evidence of the rest of the day showed that, indeed, there was a need for concern and that the questions I was asking were, indeed, relevant to the issues that women in this province are being confronted with.

Mr. Chair, last night in committee we witnessed an unsolicited display of what happens when the rights of individuals are not respected by members of a community, and what happens

when we allow a lawless group to conduct their activities without being checked. We also noted what happens when a police force is in the pocket of a dictator chief who does not respect the law, and, who, in fact, takes himself as the highest authority in that community.

The most glaring piece of evidence that we saw last night was when, I believe her name was Diana Traverse, came to the podium showing clear signs of abuse, physical abuse. She showed signs of being battered, and yet she had the courage to come forward and to express her case clearly and very eloquently to the committee. She was not asking the committee to impose sanctions against anyone. She was pleading for help.

She had said, Mr. Chair, that she and the group of people that were with her, along with the Council of Women of Manitoba, had made repeated requests to the Minister responsible for Lotteries and the Status of Women for a meeting and were denied. They also told us that the minister said the only way that she would meet with them is if they would not talk about Lotteries. Now those are pretty grave accusations, and those are accusations that we as legislators had better take very, very seriously.

My colleague the member from River East can probably express the sentiments and the feelings of women like this much better than I can, Mr. Chair. But I can tell you as a member of the Legislature, a Manitoban and a parent, when I see this kind of evidence come before us, you cannot help but have your heart go out to those people to begin with. I think all of us, the minister included, would probably feel that way, as well. When you know that children are terrorized, when women are terrorized because of their stand on an issue, you must do something.

Yesterday, Mr. Chair, I asked the minister about a somewhat unrelated issue but nevertheless having to do with gaming. She did not seriously give me the time of day with respect to the concerns I was raising. As a matter of fact, it ended up in the House with a vote and almost ended up with another vote.

Now, Mr. Chair, I am not going to profess that I know how to place my questions precisely

and as eloquently as I should, and I do try to follow the rules of the committee and of the House, but what I was raising on behalf of not only my constituents—and I have to tell you I have five reserves in my constituency. The people there are having the same struggles in many respects as what we saw evidenced yesterday, not to the same extent by any means, but there are people in these communities who are having difficulties, who need help.

So, when we come to committee and we ask for help from the minister and when people came before her last night, what appalled me most of all after those presentations were made was the fact that this minister did not ask a single question. This minister did not offer a single word of comfort to any of those presenters who, by the way, I think six out of seven were women. Even if the minister had uttered a word of compassion for what these women had gone through, that would have given some evidence that the minister truly cared.

This afternoon when we asked questions in the House, Mr. Chair, the minister, who was asked by my colleague the Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) and my colleague the Member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Smith) about the incidents and about the events of last evening, the minister, as Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Ms. McGifford), did not respond. So I have to ask the question about the seriousness of this minister in terms of her responsibility as the Minister for the Status of Women when she will not even respond to issues that are raised that clearly are in the realm of her responsibility.

So I want to begin this afternoon by asking the Minister responsible for the Status of Women why she chose, No. 1, not to give any kind of comfort through her words in committee last night and, secondly, why this minister did not take any action early this morning to assure herself that the no tolerance for violence concept that we all, I think, agree with and cling to would not have been invoked with respect to these women. *[interjection]*

Now, Mr. Chair, I hear from the Member for Dauphin-Roblin (Mr. Struthers)—

An Honourable Member: I have made an impact already.

Mr. Derkach: —who says—

An Honourable Member: Where have you been?

Mr. Derkach: —where have we been? Well, Mr. Chair, where has this Government been? Where has this Government been? Because this Government knew about this issue way back last September. These pleas have not come just as of yesterday. We raised this issue in the House when it was brought to our attention on July 16. *[interjection]*

Now, the Member for Dauphin-Roblin can take this lightly, of course. I know he does not care because he told the people in Dauphin: So what? I can go back to teaching, so I do not really give a damn, were his words, and maybe that is where he should be.

So, Mr. Chair, I go back to this issue, the issue of the violence against women and the issue that I asked yesterday, and I want to go back to the minister and ask her why she did not offer any words of comfort to the women who presented last evening, why she was silent and why she has not taken any action on the issues that were raised with her yesterday or last evening up until this time.

Hon. Diane McGifford (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): Mr. Chair, in his remarks, the member made reference to terror and said that he did not like to think of women and children living in terror, and I would extend that. I do not like to think of women, children or men—I do not like to think of anyone living in terror.

I know that I have recently been following the newspaper articles on children soldiers and the terror that characterizes their lives and the kinds of maimings and the kinds ofcrippings that those children have endured, Mr. Chairperson.

I do not like to think of men, women, children, anybody living in terror. So I think that

the member and I can agree on the horrors of terror.

* (15:10)

As far as why we voted yesterday, I know the member made reference to that in his remarks, we voted because he violated the rules of the House. He can cast himself as somebody who is not too polished, as he has tried to do here, but the member has been a member of this House since at least 1988. I am sure he knows the rules very well. He knows that it is not legitimate, and it violates the rules to ask questions about Lotteries when he is speaking to the Minister for the Status of Women.

Now, I just happen to be both the Minister of Lotteries and the Minister for the Status of Women, but today he should think of me only as the Minister for the Status of Women, because that is what these Estimates are about. That is why I have these staff members here. That is how he should regard me. He should not think of me today here as the Minister for Advanced Education. Nor should he think of me in any other capacity than the one that I am here for.

He had made reference to a series of requests for meetings. I know there was a request for a meeting in April which came up very suddenly, and I had to go to Toronto to a meeting of CMEC, a group with which I know the member is familiar. I did tell the member in the House today that I will be meeting with women from Dakota Tipi tomorrow. That meeting has been organized for some time. I am pleased to say that staff, both from the advisory council and the directorate, will be with me.

I guess I would like to talk a little bit about the situation at Dakota Tipi, but, beforehand, I do want to assure the member, assure all members that I was present, as the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) has indicated, in the meeting last night, in the committee last night. We heard several bills and we heard several presentations. I believe there were four presentations by women and two presentations by gentlemen. I believe that Edward Pashe and David Newman were the presenters. David Newman, of course, we recognize because he is a former member of the House.

As a member of government, as an MLA, as a citizen, of course I found the stories that we heard from all speakers, men and women, to be upsetting. Upsetting is perhaps putting it mildly. They were stories that detailed very, very disturbing and troubling times in the community.

Something else that was part and parcel of the stories that the women told and that the men told were certain allegations. I have been assured by the Minister of Justice that the scripts will be forwarded to the proper authorities so that any allegations will be investigated. I mention this because the member has suggested that I am not doing anything, and, of course, it is not my responsibility to forward those allegations, it is the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh), and he is doing that. You see, what we need in this situation is a concerted effort by a number of ministers, and a number of ministers are working on it.

Let me proceed. One of the points that the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Robinson) made in the House today, and I believe perhaps the Minister of Justice made this remark too, is that allegations have come from a number of factions. There are a number of factions in this particular community, and both sides. This is a divided community. This is a community basically at war with itself.

A number of allegations have come from one side, and a number of allegations have come from the other side. Last night we heard allegations from one side, and they were extremely upsetting, and I am sure if we were to hear the allegations from the other side tonight, we would find them extremely upsetting.

I make the point about the community being distraught, about the community ailing, about the illness of the community because I think it makes apparent another point that my colleague the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Robinson) made in the House today, Mr. Chairperson, and that is the need for healing. The dysfunctional nature of this community is so extreme that the only solution is broad healing. Otherwise, the war will continue.

I think that the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs made the point today that even

electing another chief will not solve the problem without the healing. The factions will break out again because people are at loggerheads. People are at war with each other, if you will. Towards this end, my colleague the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs has written to his federal counterpart, Robert Nault, and he has requested mediation in order to facilitate and initiate a healing process in that community.

Now, I think that is doing something. That indeed is taking some action, and we look forward to hearing back from Robert Nault. I know that members opposite will probably appreciate hearing back, too, and would probably appreciate to hear that there is a mediator. My colleague has made the point to me that this has to be a person of stature, an individual who will command the respect of all persons in the community.

So, Mr. Chairperson, I certainly support the efforts of my colleague, and I certainly want to do my bit. One of the things I am doing, of course, as I have said on the record, is I am meeting with the Dakota Tipi women tomorrow. I believe, on Friday, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) has a meeting with the Provincial Council of Women, and I will almost certainly join him, time permitting, my schedule permitting, to meet with the Provincial Council of Women.

You know, Mr. Chairperson, I do think it is important to make the point that it is not gender that is dividing this community. This community is divided. It is a family that is torn apart, and there are men and women on both sides. So I know that members are here and are suggesting that they are championing the rights and lives of women and that women are the ones who are affected, and, of course, some women are affected, but men and women are both affected.

Now, Mr. Chairperson, I am told by my colleague the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Robinson) that this particular issue has been brewing since 1972, and I suppose brewing and continuing to grow and fester. It was in 1972, I believe, that Dakota Tipi was first recognized, now, I think Mr. Dennis Pashe

was named the chief in 1972, or it could have been his father. I am not quite clear on that.

What I am clear on is that there has been long-standing conflict and dissension in this community, that there has been allegation of wrongdoing on both sides. Of course, there were allegations of wrongdoing and dissension and conflict and wife abuse and child abuse and all kinds of things when the members opposite were in government. I did not notice them getting too agitated about it then. I suppose better late than never. So here they are.

* (15:20)

My colleague the Minister for Aboriginal and Northern Affairs tells me that he has spoken to Grand Chief Dennis White Bird, and that both he and the Grand Chief agree on the necessity for a mediator. I think this is important, because the Grand Chief and my colleague the Minister for Aboriginal and Northern Affairs are more familiar with the issues and problems on reserves than any of us. They both come from these communities. They are both experienced individuals. They have both occupied leadership roles. Obviously, the Grand Chief is in a leadership role. They understand the Aboriginal culture. They understand their people. They are the best possible champions for the people.

They say what is needed in this community is a mediator, and they say that there are serious allegations on both sides. They assure me that the divisions in this community are not based on gender.

So I put forth the suggestion, I endorse the suggestion of my colleague the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, and I would ask members opposite to support that decision and to give some respect to the Grand Chief and to give some respect to my colleague, who is so experienced in these matters, and to come on board. Maybe they would like to send letters of their own to Robert Nault. Maybe they have names to suggest for mediators. I am sure that the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Robinson) would be pleased to hear from them.

So that is where I stand. I stand in support, side by side with my colleagues who are trying

to solve the problems here, side by side with my colleagues in government who have been concerned about Aboriginal people for a lot longer than members opposite seem to have been and have come from the communities themselves.

So I hope that members opposite will think about the suggestion that my colleague put forward and give that suggestion a thought and support the minister.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chair, it is very disheartening to hear from the Minister responsible for the Status of Women that she would prefer to stand with her colleague, who has made it very clear in the House that he supports Dennis Pashe as the chief on the reserve, rather than stand with the women who have been abused and battered and whose children have been terrorized on the Dakota Tipi reserve.

The minister cautioned me about the fact that I should be asking questions once again that relate only to the Women's Directorate rather than the Lotteries. But, yet, the two are intertwined on the reserve and the minister just cannot see through that.

Mr. Chair, I would remind also that the minister has responsibility and the Directorate has responsibility to work and to influence government decision making to ensure that the unique needs and concerns of women are integrated into public policy.

That is what is at question here, Mr. Chair, is that the minister is not intervening on behalf of these women who have come to her, who have pleaded with her, who have pleaded with the Minister responsible for the Gaming Commission (Mr. Ashton), who have pleaded with the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) to intervene to ensure that the money flow that has currently been going to Mr. Pashe will not be going to him, because those monies are being used for him to hire people who are indeed victimizing these women on the reserve.

Mr. Chair, I refer the minister to comments made by the Honourable Eric Robinson on July 16 when asked whether or not he still observes and acknowledges that Dennis Pashe continues

to be the chief on that reserve. I remind the minister that the federal government has now washed its hands of Dennis Pashe, and has put in a third party to ensure that the money flowing from the federal government is used for the purposes that it is intended to be used for. It is only this Government, only this minister, who refuses to take the same action or similar action that was taken by the federal government.

Mr. Chair, when you look at what the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Robinson) is saying, one has to question his motive and what connections he has perhaps in this community, because he says, therefore, Chief Pashe and council are officially the leaders of the community until otherwise notified by the Department of Indian Affairs.

That notification was given by the federal minister that Chief Pashe was no longer the person in charge, and that there would be a third party put in place to control the finances of that reserve, so that the money that is being afforded to that reserve by the federal government is going to be used for the purposes that it is intended to be used for.

So, Mr. Chair, it seems to me that there is quite a glaring inequity here in how the federal government is treating this reserve and how the provincial Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs is treating this reserve.

The Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs made it clear, and on the record, that he chooses to recognize an individual who has been banished, if you like, from his responsibilities by the federal government, and yet this minister chooses to recognize him.

Yesterday, we saw the women come forward to the committee, and the women indicated very clearly at committee that they are—[interjection] Oh, the member from Dauphin says that is all crap. The member of Dauphin says that the women who came forward yesterday to put their concerns before the committee, that was all crap. Mr. Chair, I take it from the words of the member from Dauphin who sits across—

Point of Order

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. A point of order, the Member for Dauphin-Roblin.

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin-Roblin): Mr. Chairperson, the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) can construe anything anyway he likes. He can make up all he likes and try to put it on the record, but I want—*[interjection]*

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. Just one person speak, the person on the floor. If others want to speak, I will recognize you.

Mr. Struthers: The part of this that is crap is that the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) has been accusing the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Robinson) of somehow benefiting personally in this whole escapade. He put it on the record in his last statement.

I think he should have the courage, should have the backbone to tell us what his accusations are instead of some smear campaign that he has become more accustomed to around this place. If he has an accusation, I say the Member for Russell should put it forward, and then we can examine that. But I do not think he has the guts to do it, Mr. Speaker.

* (15:30)

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

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): On the same point of order, Mr. Chairperson, I saw the minister specifically give the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) a nod to try to encourage him to take the Member for Russell off track. As the Member for Russell stayed on track and was talking about the devastation that the women from Dakota Tipi presented last night, the Member for Dauphin hollered out, "That is crap." I heard it clearly, and I think it shows the calibre and the disrespect of members on the Government's side of the House on a very serious issue, an issue that this Government should be taking seriously. If they choose to try to derail the discussion and protect the minister from having to answer some very serious questions about women, I think that shows a significant disservice to the whole process that we undertake in this Legislature.

Mr. Chairperson: The Member for Russell, on the same point of order.

Mr. Derkach: On the same point of order, Mr. Chair. The member from Dauphin-Roblin is trying to do damage control here because they are embarrassed at their actions and lack of action as a result of last evening and the result of this issue. The member, I know it slipped, but it really shows his attitude towards these women when he said from his chair that what the women were saying yesterday was crap. I will send that comment far and wide because that is what he said from his chair, and I know that he would like to take those words back, but he did put that on the record. Now he raises a point of order, but my response to his point of order is that indeed he did put this on the record. He deserves what he is going to get, and we will make sure that people far and wide know exactly what he said about them.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. We should not use points of order for debate. It seems like we are using that for debate. If you wish to speak, I will recognize you.

The honourable minister, on the same point of order?

Ms. McGifford: Yes. Well, Mr. Chair—

Mr. Chairperson: New information?

Ms. McGifford: Yes, Mr. Chair. I am truly scandalized at the remarks that the members opposite—

Mr. Chairperson: Excuse me. From both sides I hear people speaking, and I have only recognized the minister to speak. So I only want to hear the person that I recognize.

Ms. McGifford: Well, first the member from—

Mr. Chairperson: I have not recognized anyone yet.

Ms. McGifford: Sorry, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: We can only have one person speaking, the person that I recognize.

Ms. McGifford: Yes. The member from River East has a vivid imagination. I know that

members opposite used to see Reds under beds, now they see nods when they do not take place.

Anyway, Mr. Chair, I do want to point out that I deeply resent the scurrilous remarks of the member from Russell. I know the member from Dauphin to be a champion of the rights of women, and he would not have said anything like what was said. Now the member opposite, the member from Russell, lost his hiring privilege in 1991, his credibility in 2002 when he made personal attacks behind the cover of the Legislature on certain employees, and today he has lost his integrity. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: I thank the minister. We are using points of order for debate. I would just like to say the honourable Member for Dauphin-Roblin (Mr. Struthers) has no point of order, but I would like to caution all members to pick and choose their words very carefully.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: Excuse me, I would like to recognize now, give the floor to the Member for Russell. Continue.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chair, I was talking about the Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Ms. McGifford), and her responsibilities as the Minister responsible for the Status of Women, to stand up for women who come forward in a public way to express their concern about how they are treated, how their children are treated, how their families are treated.

These women came forward in a very public way in committee last night, and the minister says that she stands with her colleague the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, who said on July 16, and I quote, therefore, Chief Pashe is council, and council are officially the leaders of the community, until otherwise notified by the Department of Indian Affairs.

That notification was given by the federal minister some time before that. So I ask the motive of this minister, I ask the motive of this Government to continue to recognize a chief who has been replaced by a third party on both issues, the financial issue and the health issue. That chief and band council have been replaced,

and yet this Government, this Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs continues to recognize that chief who has now been outlawed. This minister says she stands with her colleague the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs.

Ms. McGifford: I was standing with the women.

Mr. Derkach: She does not stand with the women, Mr. Chair, who were abused, the women who are battered, the women who came forward with scars on their faces from being battered. She does not stand for those women; she stands with her colleague the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, who still supports Chief Pashe.

Mr. Chair, the reason we raise this concern is because we have an issue before us that I have never seen in front of this Legislature in 16 or 17 years that I have been here. I have never seen this kind of an issue. I have never seen a woman with scars come before a committee and plead for help. She pleaded with the Minister of the Status of Women; she pleaded with the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh); she pleaded with the Minister responsible for the Gaming Commission (Mr. Ashton) to do something.

She did not say go after the guy who beat me up. She did not say that. All she was asking for the Government to do was to exercise its responsibilities and, No. 1, to curtail the gaming agreement so that the source of money could be cut off from the people who are using it against these women. That is what they were asking for.

So, I ask, Mr. Chair, why the minister, who is supposed to be standing side-by-side with those women, is not doing that. Instead, she says she stands with her colleague the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs.

Mr. Chairperson: Honourable minister, continue.

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chairperson, as I was saying, I believe the member has taken the words of the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Robinson) out of context. He may have quoted a line or two, but he did not

quote the minister entirely and completely, because it is, of course, a very delicate question for the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, as it is a delicate question for everybody, but particularly for ministers like the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs and like the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh), because it is extremely important that these individuals not appear to take sides. As I have said and, I think, spent some time indicating to members opposite, there are many factions in this community, many factions who are at odds with one another, who are in conflict with one another.

* (15:40)

You know, the Member for Russell says, well, you did not stick up for these women. I think I did. I think I listened to those women with an open heart and an open mind. I am meeting with those women tomorrow. As I indicated, though, there could be another faction of women come in tonight from the same reserve and tell some very different stories. It would be my responsibility to listen to those women in the same kind of way.

So I think what the members are not recognizing is that this is a very factious community. Consequently, one needs to be open to all parts of this community. That certainly is the responsibility of the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs.

Now, I believe what the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs has maintained, and this is a bit different from, new information perhaps for the members opposite, is that although Robert Nault said he is going to invoke section 74 of the Indian Act, the information that the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs has been able to obtain by phoning the office is that he has not yet invoked it. I think he said, I believe he indicated that since section 74 of the Indian Act, the federal Indian Act, has not yet been invoked, although communication has gone forth that it is going to be invoked, until it is actually invoked, Dennis Pashe is the chief.

I think the members opposite could do a great service to Dakota Tipi instead of creating a ruckus at this table by phoning up Robert Nault,

and saying, please hurry up and invoke this section 74 so we can get down to business in the province of Manitoba. But why will they not do that? Because there is all this political grandstanding, this newfound role as champion of women, champion of Aboriginal affairs. So that is why they are not doing that.

They could help this matter along by phoning Robert Nault. They could help this matter along by embracing the decision of Chief Dennis White Bird and my colleague the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs to promote the idea of a mediator, which could heal this community, not put the community at odds, but actually try that very difficult work of healing. But then there would be no news and members would not be able to come to this table and carry on in the way in which they are carrying on.

I do want to say, and I am going to end rather quickly, but there are a couple of other things that I want to say. One of them was that the member from Russell said that Diana Traverse was there pleading with the Minister for the Status of Women, pleading with the Minister for Gaming (Mr. Ashton), who was not, of course, part of the committee, so it would be very hard to plead with him. Of course, he could do that through Hansard, I suppose.

But really what Diana Traverse was there for was to oppose a bill that was before the committee. That is what she came to address and that is what she addressed. That is what she came to address. Diana Traverse is going to be in my office speaking to me tomorrow morning, as I have told the member several times. So she was there last night along with her colleagues in order to address a bill. Let us be clear as to why Diana Traverse was there.

The other thing is I really find it offensive when the member opposite puts nasty, condescending remarks about my colleague the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Robinson) on the record when the minister himself is not here. I know he likes to hide behind the privilege of the House and the immunity that the House gives him, and he will say any old thing, as people in this committee can hear. He is not very careful about what he says. I

have had that experience with him before, have it every day, sometimes every day, Mr. Chairperson, but my colleague is not here, and I do want to put on the record that I think it is offensive to speak about people in that nasty way when they are not present.

Just to kind of sum up and to review, the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs was careful in what he put on the record because he needs not to choose sides. He needs to be in a position of balance. He is one who, along with Chief Dennis White Bird, wants to recommend a mediator. If he is going to be part and parcel of that recommendation, of course, he cannot be associated with one faction, and he cannot be associated with another faction. He needs to have, and I know that my colleague the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) will greatly appreciate that, he needs to have what the 19th century renaissance novelist Herman Melville called the "equal eye." That has always been his position.

Mr. Chairperson, as he said in the House, since section 74 of the Indian Act has not been invoked, although Robert Nault said he is going to invoke it, my colleague has no choice but to recognize Chief Pashe. So, with those remarks, I am sure members opposite wish to continue the Estimates of the Status of Women.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chair, I would like to ask the minister: Who will be attending the meeting tomorrow morning with the minister, besides the council and the Women's Directorate? Which women from the community will be there?

Ms. McGifford: Well, Mr. Chair, who is attending the meeting tomorrow: Kim Clare, who is chair of the Manitoba Advisory Council; Theresa Harvey Pruden, ADM from the Women's Directorate; my special assistant, Doreen Wilson, will be present. We will have Diana Jones, a woman from Policy, and the Minister of Family Services and Housing (Mr. Sale) has offered to attend and quite likely will have somebody from Family Violence.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, I said besides staff. Which women from the community will be attending?

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, I do not have a complete list from the community. I know that two names, Diana Traverse will be present and—who else?—of course, Margery Prince. There are several other women from the community, but those are the two that stick with me right now.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chair, will anyone from the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba be there?

Ms. McGifford: No, Mr. Chair, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) and I are meeting with the Provincial Council of Women on Friday morning.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chair, did the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba make a request to accompany the women from Dakota Tipi?

Ms. McGifford: I am told that the Provincial Council of Women did want to come to the meeting, but I had asked my assistant that we meet only with the women from Dakota Tipi.

Mrs. Mitchelson: But, when I wrote to the minister, it was as a result of the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba writing to our Leader and our caucus indicating some concern about the issues that were going on at Dakota Tipi, and about how the women had issues and concerns. The Provincial Council of Women indicated that they had been advocating for and working with the women on Dakota Tipi for several months and were really concerned about the women's issues. They asked for a meeting with us. We and several members of our caucus met with the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba and the women from Dakota Tipi, and, as a result of that, I wrote to the minister, because they had indicated that they had requested meetings with the Government without success. So I wrote to the minister.

Because the Provincial Council of Women have been advocates and have been working with those women, I wonder why the minister would not meet with the group together. Why would she say, no, we will not meet with you; we will only meet with the women from Dakota Tipi?

They are women who have been working together for months. Why would she deny them the opportunity to meet together?

* (15:50)

Ms. McGifford: I want to remind the member that she is not in charge of my meetings at this point, and I will make my own decisions about whom I meet with and when.

Mr. Chair, as I have said, we have chosen to meet with the women from Dakota Tipi tomorrow and with the Provincial Council of Women meeting on Wednesday.

Mrs. Mitchelson: It seems like the minister has got a cadre of about 10 or 12 people from government and her ministers and colleagues, and yet she denied the women of Dakota Tipi from having their advocates, the Provincial Council of Women, come to that meeting.

Are they going to have two or three or four women from that community who have been abused and treated in the way they have and not allow them to have their advocates at the table? I find it absolutely disturbing, Mr. Chairman, to think that she would want to divide. Then what is she afraid of? What is she afraid of as the Minister responsible for the Status of Women? This is unbelievable.

Also, the women from Dakota Tipi indicated that the minister would only meet with them if, in fact, they agreed not to raise the Lotteries issue. Was that one of the prerequisites or pre-conditions of the minister agreeing to meet with those women?

Ms. McGifford: There are six or seven women from Dakota Tipi meeting with us tomorrow morning. The members have been talking about these women and the speeches they made last night. Mr. Chairperson, they certainly were very powerful women, who were certainly not—

An Honourable Member: Powerful women? When they were beat up?

Ms. McGifford: Powerful women as they spoke, and I have every—settle down, Len. Come on. Take a deep breath. You will be okay.

Mr. Chair, I have every confidence that we will have a very productive meeting.

Mrs. Mitchelson: The minister did not answer my question. Did she place the stipulation on those women that they could not discuss Lotteries at this meeting? Was that one of the conditions she put on meeting with them?

Ms. McGifford: I have stipulated that I am not talking about Lotteries in the Estimates for the Status of Women.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I am asking a very direct question of the minister. When she agreed to meet with the women from Dakota Tipi, did she say that she would only meet with them on the condition that they would not discuss the Lotteries issue?

Ms. McGifford: I am not speaking about Lotteries at this table.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Well, Mr. Chairperson, I am asking a direct question. Did she put conditions on the women of Dakota Tipi before she would agree to meet with them?

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chairperson, I asked the women of Dakota Tipi to submit an agenda of items that we would discuss.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Did the minister or anyone from her office or staff indicate to the women from Dakota Tipi that there would be certain issues that they would not be allowed to discuss at the meeting with her?

Ms. McGifford: I asked that the women submit an agenda for the meeting. I think that is a very common thing with ministers. I did it with the women from Dakota Tipi, and they were happy to submit an agenda.

Mrs. Mitchelson: If the minister could just answer yes or no and clear the air, let us know, did anyone indicate to them that there were certain items that they could not put on the agenda?

Ms. McGifford: As I have said, I asked that an agenda be submitted, and the women complied.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Well, Mr. Chair, this is absolutely unbelievable. We have a Minister responsible for the Status of Women who indicates that there is a community that is having great difficulty and that there is a healing process that needs to take place, Mr. Chair, and that there needs to be a mediator appointed, although the federal government decided that no money would flow through the hands of Dennis Pashe until a proper election was held in the community. They took the appropriate action and put the dollars that flow from the federal government into third party hands to manage the affairs of the money that flowed from the federal government onto that reserve.

This minister and her Government have refused to do the same with Lotteries revenue. Now the minister says we need a mediator because both sides need to come together, and we need an equal level playing field. Well, where is the level playing field when Dennis Pashe controls the lottery dollars that are flowing on reserve, and he refuses to give the women and the children money so they can buy food? They have to come into the city of Winnipeg to a food bank in order to sustain themselves. Where is the level playing field? How do you mediate when one side has all the money flowing to them and the other side is impoverished, in poverty, cannot feed themselves, cannot feed their children and are beaten on a regular basis? They are oppressed, Mr. Chair, and yet the minister says we need a mediator because we need a level playing field, and I think she used the word "equal eye." I am not sure, I did not read the book that she talked about.

Where is the equality when the person that has been in control still is in control, when the federal government has recognized and realized that he should not have the dollars flow through his hands to support his community, yet this minister and her Government are saying, well, that is okay, we want to bring both sides together? We will leave all of the money in the hands of the chief, who has been alleged to have the police force in that community in his back pocket, and he is paying them. We have oppressed women that cannot feed their children, that are being beaten, that are being abused, that their children are fearing for their safety. These

women are fearing for their lives, and the minister says we will mediate it.

Well, great solace, great comfort to those women and those children. I find it absolutely disgusting when we have a minister who sits here and will not answer a direct question, is trying to gag those women and saying I will meet with you, I will be your advocate, but we will only be able to discuss certain things, and if you want to discuss other things, you are not welcome in my office. You are not welcome in our Government's offices. That is absolutely unbelievable. Then, when she tells me that the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba who have been working with and helping these women, helping to empower these women to speak out and stand up for their rights, have asked to be a part of that meeting, the minister says: No, I will not meet with you together. You have to come at a separate time.

Mr. Chair, I would like to ask the minister how she believes that is a fair process, how she believes that by telling women, demanding, dictating to women that they can come into her office but only under her conditions, that that is dealing, and advocating and listening to women that are oppressed, that are living in poverty, that are living in Third World conditions right in our own backyard. She does not have the common courtesy or decency to give them a full hearing and listen to all of their issues, and then take that information back to her colleagues around the Cabinet table who can make some decisions. Why, in fact, she would continue to flow money to those individuals in that community that are using that money in order to oppress and keep those women down.

Ms. McGifford: Well, Mr. Chair, there did not seem to be much of a question there. But I do bring to the member's attention, one more time, that it is not uncommon for ministers to request an agenda before a meeting, and I have requested an agenda. There is an agenda for this meeting, and there are several women coming and that is the end of the story.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Again, I find it absolutely unbelievable. We have a member of the Legislature, a minister of a Crown, a minister responsible to advocate on behalf of the Status of

Women, a person in a position of power and authority who can make a difference.

Mr. Daryl Reid, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Mr. Chair, I find it unbelievable that she would place these kinds of restrictions on women, vulnerable women, women who do not have the ability, do not have a penny in their pockets, are not being given adequate support by a person in their community, a person who said we will not give you welfare. Take your kids and go somewhere else to get enough food in your household to feed them. We do not care what you do. We believe that if we keep you oppressed and poor, that we can control.

* (16:00)

This is one of the worst cases of that kind of control and power that I have seen, and you have women crying out. You have women crying out for a government who knew last September what was going on in Dakota Tipi, who knew and have had other women in the community, the Provincial Council of Women, who have had some real concerns about what is happening right here in Dakota Tipi, and this is under this minister's watch.

I know that the minister may smirk and smile and turn her head sideways and think that this is a silly issue, but I want to tell her that it is not a silly issue to many women throughout the province of Manitoba. It is not a silly issue to many Aboriginal women throughout the province of Manitoba, and it is not a new issue.

Mr. Chair, when we look at the attitude of this Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Ms. McGifford), who is dealing with some of the most vulnerable women with very vulnerable issues in our community, and we see the kind of attitude that she has, the way she tries to divide and conquer, the way she looks at her office as being a place where she must have control and she must dominate, it sounds like she is a bit like Chief Pashe, if she can dominate and control the agenda and divide the women and say, no, I will not meet with your advocates. I will meet with you under my conditions, in my office, under the circumstances that I dictate;

then you can have my ear and you can walk into my office.

Well, Mr. Chair, I find it absolutely incredible. Quite frankly, the minister is part of a party that prides itself on their stands on dealing with women and women's issues, and I want to indicate to you that from what I have seen in the way this minister has handled the women from Dakota Tipi, I see that much of what her party talks about is all words and no action.

She believes that the flowery words are good enough: We will consult; we will mediate; we will bring in justice. But when? But when, Mr. Chair? These women brought issues to this Government's attention back last September. The Provincial Council of Women have been advocating on their behalf, have been working with them, could not get a meeting with government, but met with the Opposition a month and a half ago.

As a result of the serious issues, I wrote to the minister and asked her to set up a meeting. I had to wait until questions were asked in the House, until she took the issue of setting up a meeting seriously, but when she did, she put conditions on the women. She put those women down and said, you cannot bring the Provincial Council of Women, your advocates, with you, or I will not meet with you. There are certain issues we cannot discuss, or I will not meet with you.

Now, Mr. Chair, I find that absolutely astounding, and I think that the minister owes these women an explanation. I would like to ask the minister: If we asked the Provincial Council of Women whether they might want to attend the meeting tomorrow morning with the women from Dakota Tipi, would she agree to that request?

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, I notice that members opposite have suddenly become converts to the Status of Women. It certainly was not in evidence when they were in government. Certainly, there was no evidence that they were champions of Aboriginal people when they were in government. They certainly, when they were in government, demonstrated no interest in the Dakota Tipi question. But, just speaking about the status of women, I notice that when they

were in government their concern for the status of women did not prevent them from firing a thousand nurses, did not prevent them from trying to privatize home care when most of the workers, I think 90-some percent were not only women but many of them immigrant women who lived on very low incomes. It certainly did not prevent them from instituting the welfare snitch line.

Point of Order

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Daryl Reid): Order, please. The Member for River East, on a point of order.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chair, this does not do much for the women who are being beaten, abused and oppressed as we speak under this minister's watch.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Daryl Reid): Madam Minister, on the same point of order.

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, on the same point of order. My point was exactly that the members opposite did not do much for women when they were in government.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Daryl Reid): It is the ruling of the Chair that there is no point of order; it is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Daryl Reid): Madam Minister, to continue.

Ms. McGifford: Yes, Mr. Chair, I was pointing out that members who suddenly have become concerned about the lives and rights of women did not demonstrate this enthusiasm and zeal when they were in government. I pointed out the welfare snitch line which of course our Minister for Family Services disbanded almost immediately. It encouraged dissension among the recipients of social assistance. I remember when the member opposite was Minister of Family Services and she was proposing workforce. It certainly did not seem to me that she was particularly interested in the lives and rights of women when she was interested in workforce, workfare, pardon me, workfare. She also was

part of a government that denied families the National Child Benefit. Her regime took pay equity to court and did not find enough money to fund child care. So you know there is no record there. I really do not understand why this minister feels that she can get on her high horse and preach to everybody else.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Daryl Reid): Is it the will of the committee to take a five-minute recess? [*Agreed*] Agreed, five-minute recess. We will reconvene at 4:15.

The committee recessed at 4:10 p.m.

The committee resumed at 4:23 p.m.

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable minister had the floor before the break.

Ms. McGifford: Yes, Mr. Chair, and I was just talking about the fact that members opposite have suddenly become converts on the status of women. Of course, their conversion is appreciated because the more champions we have in this province, the more champions of the lives and rights of women, the better for all of us.

I do want to note, Mr. Chair, that their passion and commitment, zeal and enthusiasm for the status of women was not really in evidence when they were in government. I was talking about some of the things that they either did or they did not do. They, for example, fired a thousand nurses. I do not see that as really championing the causes of women. I mean, women need jobs; Manitoba needed nurses. That was not really very helpful. They tried to privatize home care, and I had the percentage, but overwhelmingly the percentage is women and many of them immigrants, but that did not stop them; they tried to privatize it. But the opposition of the day was extremely strong and opposed it, and the health care workers themselves went on strike, so they had to back down on that one.

Members opposite instituted the welfare snitch line. It does not seem to me that was in

the interests of anybody. It just encouraged a sneakiness and false reporting, and our Minister of Family Services and Housing (Mr. Sale) was quite disturbed by that, and as soon as we came into government, he quite rightly cancelled it, and we are proud of that action. Well, when they were last in government, just in their dying days, they proposed the workfare bill. I am sure that members opposite remember that. They did, however, have the good sense not to proclaim that bill, which was a good idea.

I was talking about how they denied families the National Child Benefit which is particularly hard since families on welfare certainly need it. Earlier in their mandate they took pay equity to court. Well, what a way to champion the rights of women. Take pay equity to court. Anyway, they did it.

Their record in child care was pretty dismal. They introduced a \$2.60 payment which was required by poor women who were using subsidized child care, very hard for them. There were insufficient spaces. They also had a low minimum wage.

Our Minister of Labour (Ms. Barrett) reviews the wage frequently, once a year, and has made promises to do that on a yearly basis. That certainly is in the interests of women.

They reduced ACCESS programs at post-secondary institutions. Many women, particularly poor women, and I might add particularly Aboriginal women, were greatly affected by this because ACCESS programs are programs that attracted many Aboriginal women. I am glad members have seen the light. I am glad they are now going to be onside when it comes to women's initiatives but, as I say, it is a late conversion.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chair, very briefly, you know, the minister I think will be embarrassed by her comments on the record when she reads them back some day to her grandchildren because the point of fact is that we are asking questions about a current situation which is occurring in this province which probably is unfolding in some way as we sit here in this Legislature.

We have asked as a result of the information that has been brought to our attention by the women from Dakota Tipi that some action be taken by this Government. This Government may choose not to act or they may choose to act in a specific way, but they are the Government. This is the Minister responsible for the Status of Women. We are asking her about what action she is prepared to take to ensure that the safety of the women and the children and their families is secure on Dakota Tipi.

Because from the evidence that was presented last night—yes, we were only shown one side of the story, that is true, but if there was another side to that story why did it not come forward? Where were those people who could present to the Legislature their side of the story? Why did that side of the story have to be given to the members of Government in brown envelopes, as was alleged by Mr. Newman? If that in fact is an open process, then where were those people who were representing the other side of the issue?

It is hard for me to imagine what the other side of the issue is when I am confronted in the committee as a member of that committee, or member of the Legislature, and the woman who is appearing before us is pleading with the minister who is sitting in the committee, and she is saying look at the evidence on my face. That is pretty stark for all of us. The minister said she was moved by that as well. If she was moved I am asking her what action she is prepared to take on behalf of these women to ensure that when they go to bed tonight they can do so with the feeling of security for themselves and their families.

I thought about the women going home last night. If the people from the other side, the people who they were alleging to have done what they had done to them, were at all listening, I wondered what their lives would be like when they went to their homes, to their beds and to their families. I ask you around this table what you would feel like going home to a situation where there was uncertainty, insecurity and indeed fear for the lives of your children and yourself.

So, Mr. Chair, what will the minister say if one of these women should happen to be beaten tonight or today, should happen to lose her life or one of the lives of their families? What is this minister going to say at that juncture? Because we have raised this issue with this minister. We have asked her for some action on behalf of these women.

We can go on with political rhetoric here forever and we can have a he says-she says show, and then we can go away from here and think we have done our job, but we have not. What I am asking the minister to do is to take some action on behalf of these women. Now, she says, oh, this is a born-again approach by the Conservatives. She can call it what she likes, Mr. Chair.

* (16:30)

Mr. Chair, I can go through a litany of things that our government did when we were in power, to enhance the Status of Women in this province. Maybe we did not do enough. Maybe we should have done more. Maybe this Government needs to do more. We are calling on this Government, at this point in time, to do something with respect to the situation that was brought to this Government's attention back in September. I think the Government shows some lack of respect for these people because, since September 11, the minister has not met. That is 10 months. These people have been waiting for a meeting with this minister for 10 months. This situation is not new to them.

Mr. Chair, perhaps it should have been acted on longer ago than that, but what is it, in fact, evident, before then? If the members say, yes, it was, then why did they not act on this situation two years ago, if, in fact, they had knowledge of it? The Minister of Family Services (Mr. Sale), who has some responsibility in this area, as well, says he knew about it 10 months ago and knew about it two years ago. I ask why did this Government not act on that matter two years ago, if they knew about it? *[interjection]*

Why do they tolerate this kind of action being perpetrated on that reserve? The Minister of Family Services chirps from his seat about his Estimates. Well, I will tell him why he has not been in Estimates. Number one, they did not

come back into the House until the end of April. Number two, they would not call Estimates. They would continue to call Bill 14 because they were so mismanaged in the entire government. That is why his Estimates are still outstanding. We will have time to get to them, in August and September, or October. Let him be patient. We will get to them.

Mr. Chair, the situation before us now is the situation that came to us yesterday in committee. Maybe it was good for us to act 10 months ago, two years ago, whatever time frame. This is the second-best time. We are asking this minister to act on it now. We are asking this minister what steps she is taking to avert any further abuse, to avert any further battering of women, of children, to avert any more harassment, to avert any more destruction of property on that reserve of these people. What is she doing to stand side by side with the women of Dakota Tipi reserve today?

Ms. McGifford: The member asked a number of questions, and I will certainly try and cover them. I do want to begin by telling the member, these brown envelopes, I never received a brown envelope. So, just to put that out, I do not know if other people did or why they did or if members opposite did, just to put that out.

The member also wondered why the other side was not present last night to make presentation to, I think it was, Bill 43, 44. I cannot remember the number of the bill of the honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh). That would seem to me to be because Mr. Newman probably did not lobby the other side to come out. So I would think that might explain why they were not there.

An Honourable Member: You are speaking on behalf of them. You must know.

Ms. McGifford: The member says I am speaking on behalf of the other side, but I want to make it very clear, Mr. Chair, that I am not speaking on behalf of the other side. I am not taking sides in this issue, but I suspect the other side, as we have been calling it, may not have even known that the committee was sitting, that there was an opportunity for presentation, may not even have known that particular bill was

before the Legislature. So I think that is probably why they were not there, because, you see, as I have said several times, and here I want to make reference again to the fact that, if this issue is to be dealt with, many things are required.

I am told by my colleague the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Robinson), a colleague for whom I have great respect. I am told by my colleague that this has been an issue since soon after 1972, when this community was first recognized. My colleague the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs says there has been a long-standing conflict, a long-standing history of dissension, a long-standing history of allegations of wrongdoing, and he says the allegations have come from both sides. I think the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs is a person who knows Aboriginal communities in Manitoba pretty well. I think he has been to all of them. I think he understands the culture. I think he is deeply, deeply committed to his people. This is a very painful experience for him.

* (16:40)

The Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, as I have told members, has written a letter to Robert Nault, the federal minister. Actually he has written two letters to Robert Nault. One letter was to ask for clarification, I believe, vis-à-vis section 74 of the Indian Act and whether it had been invoked. I have explained to members several times that there is quite a bit of misunderstanding as to whether it has been invoked, or whether, in fact, Robert Nault, as we now understand it, wrote to say that it would be invoked. But it has not yet been invoked. I understand invoking is rather a lengthy process and may even require ultimately an Order-in-Council, but I could be a bit wrong there, but it certainly is, I understand, a lengthy process.

What I understand Mr. Nault has done is to serve notice that section 74 would be invoked, but it has not yet been invoked. Consequently, this was the reason that my colleague the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs said that he did not really have a choice but to recognize Mr. Pashe as chief until something concrete happened federally. I know it was his saying this that inspired the Member for Russell

(Mr. Derkach) to put some pretty unpleasant remarks about my colleague on the record. It led to a bit of a confrontation between my colleague from Dauphin and the Member for Russell. I hope that we have resolved that issue and that the Member for Russell has understood the wisdom of the words from the Member for Dauphin and will not make those kinds of remarks about my colleague the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs.

The Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs is the person that we in this Cabinet look to for guidance on Aboriginal matters, because it is after all his ministry and it is after all not only his avocation, but his vocation. He is deeply committed to his people.

Anyway, he wrote a second letter to Robert Nault asking for a mediator, that a mediator be appointed to help this community. I think we have made the point and I think the minister made the point in the House today that this community has been at loggerheads for a long time, that there is healing that is needed in this community.

After consultation with Grand Chief Dennis White Bird, my colleague the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs thought that the best solution, the best way to go forward, the best way to try and begin to solve the problem that has been brewing on this reserve for years and years and years was certainly there, and experiencing difficult times when the members opposite were in power. Anyway, the two men decided that the best thing was to write to Robert Nault and ask that a mediator, an individual of some stature who would enjoy the respect of all sides in the dispute in the community, be invited to the community to begin to do the work of healing.

When the members say, well, what are you doing? Well, I am supporting my colleague. I am supporting my colleague because I think he is the person who knows more than any of us about the ways in which this matter can best be resolved. I am sure members opposite agree that the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs is a man of great wisdom when it comes to these particular issues.

So that is what I am doing. I am doing that. I was at the committee last night. I listened very carefully to the presentations. I will be meeting with some members of the community tomorrow. I am meeting with my colleague the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) on Friday morning.

So we in government realize that this is a complex problem, serious problem. And we know that complex and serious problems require complex solutions, multifaceted solutions. It simply is not enough to say well you do something, or somebody else do something. We have to think carefully. We have to move carefully. We have to keep all the community on side in this issue. We cannot alienate any members, otherwise healing becomes impossible.

So what we are trying to do as a government is to address a complex problem with many facets. We are trying to work together as a group of ministers to work together with the community. We are trying to work with the federal government and we are working, at this point, towards the idea of mediation and restoring community health through that process. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, I listened intently to what the minister had to say. I know and listened to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs today when he commented in the House that there has been a long-standing issue of unrest on this reserve going back to 1972 when it was first established.

I think there is a difference today, though. I know, just from my experience and my discussions with women in First Nations communities on reserve, that there have been significant issues of abuse, of oppression, of poverty, and I have listened very carefully many times to what they have had to say.

I do know that in the days when I was the Minister responsible for the Status of Women, women on reserve were not prepared to come forward and to speak out. They would talk behind closed doors to other women, but they were not prepared to speak publicly. We know that women in Aboriginal communities still have not progressed the way women have progressed

throughout the rest of the province. And we are moving forward and are taking steps in the right direction, and we still have not achieved equality.

But we, many of us, have moved forward much faster than those women in Aboriginal communities. I know of the heartbreak that they experience, the abuse, the fear for their children and all of the issues that do exist, but in those days it was very difficult, unless women were prepared to come forward to speak out, very difficult to resolve a lot of those issues.

I know that this minister has probably experienced that, too, in some of her discussions. I think women tend to talk to women, to share with women, and I just really have to say that I am proud of the few women in the Aboriginal community that are starting to speak out, are starting to stand up and are starting to make their voices heard.

I think we saw something last night at committee that we have not seen before, where women stood together and came out and spoke publicly about the issues that they are facing. I have to say that it took a lot of courage on their part and I know as they left, some of my colleagues that talked to them after their presentations heard from them that they had some fears when they went home that they might experience some retribution for having spoken out. But they did stand up together and they spoke out.

So I think that that is something new and I think that is something that we as women should all applaud. We should applaud that and we should say it is time. It is time that we support you when you speak out and that we try to move forward together.

No one is saying there have not been lots of things that could have or should have been done in the past. And I know that many times the minister today likes to go back to our 11 years in government. I know that the NDP were in government several times since 1972, and the issues were not resolved.

But I think the biggest difference today is the fact that women on reserves in Aboriginal

communities are starting to become empowered, are starting to speak out and are finding the courage to explain and express to the rest of our Manitoba society what they have been experiencing for many, many years. As a result of that, I think it is important that we do not try to isolate them, that we do not try to put them down, that we do not try to segregate them.

* (16:50)

I know that the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba that has been advocating for these women, supporting these women and encouraging them to move forward, have been shut out of a meeting with the minister tomorrow morning. Most of those women, the majority of those women are non-Aboriginal. They are non-Aboriginal women who have joined forces and are holding hands with Aboriginal women and encouraging them to speak out.

It is extremely unfortunate that we have a minister who would want to divide that bond that has been built between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women. I do not know whether she is thinking that, if she can get Aboriginal women in a room alone without the support of their advocates who are non-Aboriginal women, she may be able to control the agenda, that she may be able to listen and hear only what she wants to hear.

She may, by that move, have set these Aboriginal women back considerably, and I think that is extremely unfortunate because if, in fact, we are to see some of the issues within our Aboriginal communities resolved, we are going to have to stand together side by side, and as they develop the courage to speak out and stand alone, and sometimes it is a very lonely place to be, we have to be there to support them.

I just wanted to put on the record that I think the kinds of actions that this minister has taken by refusing to meet jointly with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women are setting back the cause of Aboriginal women greatly. I am not expressing to be a holier than thou, or not wishing that maybe I could have or should have done more when we were in government. I am not sure that is the purpose here. I think the purpose that we all should have, the goals that we all

should have—should be to support each other, to stand with each other and to work with each other to improve women's circumstances right throughout the province, and I am not sure that the kind of thing that has been done is really advancing the cause of women on reserves.

As we see a group of four, I think it was, last evening who made representation and other women who are in the same circumstances here, that some other women in the province have the courage to stand up and to speak out, I think we are going to see more of that into the future. One by one, we know that in communities right throughout our province, we have third-world conditions, right here in our own backyard. It is not something that any of us should be proud of. It is not something that any of us should stand for or tolerate. I think it is something that we need to recognize, that we need to be able to speak about, and we need to encourage those who are living in those situations to come forward and help them to understand that if they do, we will be there by their side working with them to try to make things better.

You know, I think sometimes when you are poor, when you are oppressed, when you are beaten, when you are not sure of what you are going to feed your kids the next day, I understand maybe why there are issues around solvent abuse, drug abuse, alcohol abuse. Maybe those are the kinds of things that take away some of the pain, and I have no question in my mind that there is a lot of pain and a lot of anguish.

I think it took great strength last evening for those women to come forward. I would hope that the minister would reconsider. I know it is late. I know that her meeting is tomorrow morning. I am not sure what time it is. Maybe the minister could share that with us, but maybe she could reach out tonight and call the Provincial Council of Women and apologize and say that she did make a mistake and ask whether they might be there alongside. I am not one that advocates segregating and getting Aboriginal women just in a room and feeling or thinking that we are going to solve the problems. I think it is important for us to have those women that have joined together in solidarity with the women on Dakota Tipi, to have an opportunity to be in the room to support

them and to express their support in a very visible way.

So I would ask the minister now whether she might consider calling the Provincial Council of Women. I know that she may have difficulty reaching them at such a late time, but would she call them and would she ask that they might join the women from Dakota Tipi at the meeting tomorrow morning?

Ms. McGifford: Well, we have already discussed this issue, and the member has heard from me on this matter.

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Mr. Chairperson, I was deeply disturbed by the presentations that came forward last night at committee and so disturbed I felt compelled to use my one and only opportunity this session to put a grievance on the record and deliver that in the House this afternoon. I feel very, very strongly about this issue and with the women who came forward last night, there were four women: Margery Prince, Diana Traverse, Sheila James and Lorraine Elk, who had the courage to come forward about this issue. I congratulate them for doing that, because that was probably one of the most difficult decisions that they had to make in their lives. With the threats that have been going on and so on, on the reserve, and in the presentation that they delivered and the presentations last night, it was quite something for them to have the courage to come forward and tell their stories about what is happening on the Dakota Tipi reserve.

I was particularly taken aback by Diana Traverse's presentation where when she came forward she showed physical signs of abuse, and it was difficult for anyone in the room to overlook the sign of physical abuse in her face. She told her story, and it was just so disturbing that when she had cried out for help like she did, and she and many women have on the Dakota Tipi reserve, the police force was not there to help them out. This is why they felt compelled to come forward last night and tell their stories about what is really happening on the reserve.

Margery Prince, who is the interim chief and council of Dakota Tipi First Nation, was elected, and she had sent a—I believe it was in December

of 2001 she was elected as the interim chief by the members on the reserve—letter to the Premier (Mr. Doer) on September 13 of 2001 where she said, and I quote:

Dear Premier Doer: As has been reported in the media, many of the members of Dakota Tipi reserve have been under attack by the man who calls himself chief, Dennis Pashe. He not only has forced many of the residents to go without food, gas and the necessities of life, he has also hired the Manitoba Warriors to intimidate the elders and the rest of the members.

The letter goes on, Mr. Chairperson, and what Margery Prince asked for from the Government back in September of 2001 was that she, on behalf of the women and children, and indeed all people on the reserve, she said, and I quote, we are requesting immediate assistance, financial, legal and RCMP, to assist the 50 band members who are under extreme duress from lack of food, schooling for our children, access to services and verbal and physical intimidation.

This was in September of 2001, and the stories that we see that have happened since then, the gaming money that is supposed to be there for the purposes of education, for the purposes of health care for these people and for different programs for the women and children on the reserve, are obviously not making it to these people for the programs that they are supposed to be there for. Margery Prince wrote this letter to the Premier. Obviously, this is still going on. I guess, as the Minister responsible for the Status of Women, in that, certainly, Margery Prince, representing many women and children on the reserve, I would like to ask the minister why her Government has not taken action since this letter has been written to the Premier and why action has not been taken. Obviously, these things are still taking place on the reserve. The issues are still outstanding. Why is this still happening?

* (17:00)

Ms. McGifford: I know that the member talked about the courage of the women in speaking last evening. The Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) talked about how Aboriginal women were speaking up more than they had

done in the past and commented on this. My experience of Aboriginal women is that they have been speaking up for themselves for some time. I remember, years ago, during the regime of the previous government, that Diana Traverse was speaking up because she was part of a group of women that occupied the Leg grounds and had her home on the grounds. I think it was a child custody issue at the root of that problem. The Member for River East, I think, remembers it because she was in government. Diana Traverse is indeed a brave individual, and has been speaking up for about 10 years. I will look forward to speaking to her tomorrow.

As well, I wanted to assure members and maybe broaden their horizons a little bit when it comes to the Status of Women. I wanted to assure them that, in September 2000, when my department sponsored an economic summit which involved many Aboriginal women, it was a great success, well attended. Many Aboriginal women were present and spoke about their experiences. It was a kind of opportunity for women to share stories. The Member for River East has talked about that being extremely important. It was. It was a very empowering experience for many women. I remember an elder from near Portage, Gladys Cook, who spoke to us about her life story. Her life story was remarkable. She was a remarkable woman. Aboriginal women in the community have been speaking up for many years, I think, and have very powerful voices. I recognize that.

As well, I have made reference a couple of times to the women's health consultations. I have pointed out that the consultations have taken place in Winnipeg, in Brandon, Thompson, in Lac du Bonnet and Dauphin and that we hope to travel to The Pas in the fall. Aboriginal women have been present at all of those meetings and have spoken very eloquently on behalf of their communities and have spoken about women's health issues and the whole gambit of issues. What sticks with me most recently is, in Dauphin, a group of women travelled from reserve communities to Dauphin. They talked considerably about diabetes and how common it is in their communities and, well, several other issues. I remember the diabetes one because it was not one that we had heard much in the other consultations. They did assure us that it was

quite common in their community, and that will be part of the report that we make ultimately to the Minister of Health.

I certainly congratulate the women for coming out last night and for their speaking out. I certainly recognize the women who have spoken in the past at the economic summit, at the health consultations.

Many of the issues the member cited with regard to Ms. Prince writing to the Premier (Mr. Doer), I believe, about health issues, about social assistance, et cetera, et cetera. These are issues that are related to the federal jurisdiction.

I understand, because of these issues being outstanding, that is why the federal government took the unusual step of bringing in a third party to administer those services. As I understand it, I know members have been speaking quite glowingly about the federal government, so I am assuming and my knowledge is that those parts of daily life at least have been corrected.

What is the problem is the ongoing issues with violence and dissention. That is, of course, why my colleague the honourable Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Robinson) wants to work with the federal minister and name a mediator who can work with all parts of the community because he recognizes there is no government that can go in and fix it up.

What needs to happen in that community is people need to learn to live with each other. They need to learn to bury their differences. They need to recover from the scars, recover from the wounds, find a way to live together, respect one another and improve all of their lives. That is the goal of members of this Government, to participate in that kind of, first, survival, I guess, and then recovery in the ways we can.

Mrs. Stefanson: Aboriginal women have been speaking up for years, I suppose, about these issues.

An Honourable Member: I am sorry, I cannot hear you.

Mr. Chairperson: Excuse me. Would you speak into the mike—closer?

Mrs. Stefanson: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Can you hear me now?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Mr. Chairperson: Yes.

Mrs. Stefanson: Okay. Yes, Aboriginal women have been speaking up for years. I guess my comment would be that this Government has been in government now for more than two and a half years and the issues are ongoing. Yes, there are many issues to deal with but these same issues seem to be coming to fruition. So I have several questions around this for the minister in terms of what they have done and what they plan to do in the future as these issues continue to come forward.

The minister discussed the fact that this is federal jurisdiction and so on when it comes to women on a reserve having money to feed themselves and their children. I beg to differ, Mr. Chairperson. I think it is the responsibility of all governments and indeed all citizens to ensure that women and children are not treated the way they are.

I believe very strongly that just passing the buck on this issue is irresponsible on behalf of any government representative, and that these issues need to be addressed, regardless of what level of government you are at, especially when you are the Minister responsible for the Status of Women.

Mr. Chairperson, the minister mentioned there are many women who have come forward over the years, but there were four women who came forward last night who have very serious real issues right now that need to be addressed. My concerns are, right now, to make sure their concerns are addressed.

I would like to ask the minister: When she plans to meet with these members tomorrow, what is her plan for action to make sure the women and children on this reserve will be taken care of and the abuse will not continue, that they will be properly fed and educated and have the

opportunity to continue on with the jobs and so on they hold on those reserves and are not discriminated against? Because I believe that is the responsibility of this department and of this minister. Passing the buck to the federal government is just not the answer.

Ms. McGifford: Just for a point of clarification, is the member saying it is the responsibility of the Minister for the Status of Women to provide clothing and food?

* (17:10)

Mrs. Stefanson: Mr. Chairperson, I think it is the responsibility of the Minister responsible for the Status of Women to advocate on behalf of these people, to ensure that they are comfortable and able to live the lives that they deserve to be able to live in their homes.

Ms. McGifford: I am meeting with the women from Dakota Tipi tomorrow and meeting in concert with the Minister of Family Services and Housing (Mr. Sale). As I have indicated, staff from the directorate and from the Manitoba Advisory Council, we look forward to hearing what the women have to say to us.

Mr. Chairperson, as far as a plan of action, it is really not possible to predetermine what that will be because we have not met with the women yet. My idea is that we need to hear directly from them, and we will hear directly from them tomorrow.

Mr. Chairperson, I have indicated that this Government believes that healing needs to take place on the reserve and that the Minister of Northern and Aboriginal Affairs (Mr. Robinson) is working with other First Nations leaders in the province. I cited Grand Chief Dennis White Bird with whom my colleague has consulted. They have indicated that what is needed is healing in the community, because my understanding is now that the federal government now has a third party working on the reserve. The members opposite have been speaking glowingly about the work of the federal government.

My understanding is that social assistance, et cetera, education has been restored so that those services are there. I am not quite sure why

the member is asking that the Minister for the Status of Women in the province of Manitoba provide those services, because I understand food and clothing would be part of the federal jurisdiction and would be part of this third-party arrangement that has been made. I know that members talked about Soaring Eagle, and we know that Soaring Eagle has been appointed to look after health issues, so I understand that health issues are being cared for in the community.

However, to get back to the specifics. Tomorrow we do have a meeting. The Minister of Family Services and Housing is joining me, and we have a representative, I believe, from domestic violence prevention, and I know members will appreciate that. We are there to listen to people and to hear what they have to say. We are not going into a meeting with a prearranged plan of action. We need to hear what these women have to say to us. So it is a listening meeting, Mr. Chair.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I know it is really important to listen when you do set up meetings to hear what people have to say, but I think that maybe the minister may have some hint of what these women will be saying tomorrow, given that she sat through the presentations and heard first-hand already the kinds of issues that these women are going to be raising.

One of the significant issues, I think, that they have raised is the issue around policing, and I think it was clear in their presentations. The minister may have a different opinion. Their presentations seemed to indicate that the money that is flowing to Dennis Pashe, still, from the Province is going to fund a corrupt police force that is part and parcel of the problems and the issues that the women are dealing with on Dakota Tipi.

So that has been heard. I wonder if the minister has looked into that. She has heard that. If in fact there is any substantiation of those allegations, I would venture to guess that the safety of those women is in jeopardy as we speak. I hope she is not waiting until after the meeting tomorrow to hear that very same issue in order to start some sort of investigation or put

something in place, given that she already heard that last night.

Ms. McGifford: Of course, last evening the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) said that he would hold his bill for further consideration. Of course, it is the Minister for Justice who is more concerned with policing issues. He assured members that several investigations were before the justice system and allegations will be investigated by the justice system and not the Minister of Justice, of course. He also, I think, said this was in the House today, I think he mentioned that there were matters before the bench.

Mrs. Stefanson: I thank the minister for her comments. Just in sitting in on the committee last night, which I know the minister did as well, I think quite frankly it would be very difficult to sit through those presentations by those women and not be moved by the situation that they are in. We can call them allegations and we can call them whatever we want, but, as human beings, which we all are as well, it would be very difficult to sit through those and not feel some compassion for what these women are going through on a daily basis on the reserve, the women and the children. There are many aspects and many components to this, but the bottom line is that these women are not able on the reserve to live safely on the reserves because of a corrupt police force. When they need a police force there to help them out, they have not been offered the services that they need. We heard several stories to back that up last night.

I would just hope that the minister could at least—I know she is meeting with some of these members tomorrow in a meeting—but certainly to say that it is impossible at this stage without listening to what these members have to say. You know what, we sat through very compelling presentations last night where we heard the stories. I know the minister heard the stories because she was there. I am not sure why we have to keep listening to the same stories over and over and over again before we take action on behalf of the women and children on this reserve.

So I guess I ask the minister, given that she has already heard the first-hand testimony from

these women on the reserve who she will be meeting with tomorrow morning, why is it not possible to at least frame some sort of a plan of action and do the right thing here for the women on the reserve and make sure that they can live safely in their homes and that they do not have to live under the threat of a corrupt system?

Ms. McGifford: As I have said, I do look forward to hearing from the women tomorrow. I look forward to having them in my office and hearing from them in a less public arena. I mean, sometimes things come out in different circumstances. I think it is extremely important to be respectful and sensitive to the needs of the women and to recognize that these women have ownership over the issues. I want to hear where they want to drive the strategic directions of their needs. I do not want to go in with a pre-determined plan. I know that the Minister for Family Services and Housing (Mr. Sale) would share that idea.

So we are going to meet these women with open minds. I see nothing wrong with an open mind, and in fact I think it is probably conducive to a better meeting. So that is my response.

Mrs. Stefanson: I just find it unbelievable that we can sit through these presentations last night and that these people had to leave last night with the threats that they have already lived with, and even more so because they had the courage to come forward after living in this type of a society knowing that they were going home last night. They were living in absolute fear of going home last night as to what might happen to not only themselves but their families.

Mr. Chairperson, I cannot imagine living in that kind of fear. We have already talked about the courage of these people coming forward last night and telling their compelling stories, but I cannot imagine having the courage to come forward, as these people did, and knowing they would go back to their communities in fear as to what might happen to them today.

* (17:20)

There are several issues here, and I understand that, that it goes beyond just the status of women and that this issue in and of itself is

beyond just an issue for just this department. There are some very, very serious issues going on in the reserve. It is not just the women and children who are at risk. There are many other people living on the reserve who are at risk, as well, because of the system they are living under there.

I just think it is unfortunate, though, after listening to these presentations last night, how this minister would not be going to talk to her colleagues, to the Premier (Mr. Doer) and to the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) and demanding that, when these women went back to their communities last night and were in fear, demanding that her colleague the Minister of Justice take action right away to ensure the safety of these people, of these women.

I guess I would ask the minister: Did she have a conversation with her colleague the Minister of Justice last night to ensure that when these women did leave, that they could go home last night and not live in fear as to what might happen to them as a result of the courageous move of theirs in coming forward last night?

Ms. McGifford: Unlike the member opposite, I do know what it is like to live in fear. I do not need to go into my personal circumstances, but I could go into some more public circumstances and tell the member I did work for several years as a sexual assault counsellor. I was also the director of a women's resource centre. So I have had relationships with many women whose lives have been dominated by fear. I do know what it is to live in fear.

I would suggest to the member opposite, it is in retrospect of course, but if she finds herself dealing with women in the future, women who she believes whose lives are endangered, I really do advise her to suggest that those women go to a shelter. I realize a shelter is a short-term solution, but it is a solution, in the short term. It is a service that governments provide for women whose lives are endangered.

Mr. Chairperson, what is really happening on this reserve, I have reiterated it time and time again and it stems from my conversations with the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Robinson) who knows the reserve better

danger, more or less, on that reserve. That is why there needs to be a healing. That is where he sees the solution. That is where he believes things need to go.

I have assured the member, both members at the table today and several others who were at the table and are no longer, that I believe the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs has insight into these issues. I think he has come up with the best possible solution yet. So I support that.

Mrs. Stefanson: I appreciate the minister's comments, and I appreciate all that she has done in the past before in her previous jobs and what she has done for women. Certainly, I hear where she is coming from in terms of that area, but I guess when we are talking specifically about the women who came and presented to our committee last night, the minister suggested if I come across women who are in fear that we should suggest that we find some shelter for them.

I guess what I am saying is that these women were living in fear last night and that is why they came forward. I would ask why this minister has not found a way or a means to find some sort of a shelter or something for them to protect them from what is going on.

Ms. McGifford: Actually, I said, to be precise, I had suggested to the member opposite if she encountered women whose lives were in danger, I suggested that she might refer them to a shelter, because I think most women live with fear. I think many women I know are afraid to go out at night, and I think women live with various degrees of fear.

* (17:30)

But, if the member opposite thinks a woman's life is in danger and if her conversations with the individuals from last evening suggested to her their lives were in danger, I suggested that she should refer them to the safety of a shelter. I know there is a shelter at Portage.

So the member is asking why I have not found a shelter, but indeed my colleague down

the table, the Minister of Family Services and Housing (Mr. Sale) does fund shelters, so that is something that is available. So the answer to the member's question is that is a service that we offer.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I do not know how closely the minister listened. I would believe that she did listen very closely and her heart went out to the women that made the representations last night at committee. I was just wondering whether the minister, I understand she did not make any comments or ask any questions, whether she took a minute or two to go over and introduce herself to those women and offer any support or services, given that I believe their presentations were very compelling and that they were from the heart and that there was some concern expressed about their safety.

I am just wondering, in her role as the Minister responsible for the Status of Women, whether she made the effort to introduce herself and just make any recommendations or suggestions to them.

Ms. McGifford: Actually, Mr. Chairperson, I do know the women, and, so, no, I did not introduce myself.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I heard the minister speak earlier about how healing is the only option, and I believe that there is a significant amount of healing that does need to take place in that community and that her Government was not choosing sides. They felt that a mediator would be the best solution, and I tend to agree in a lot of circumstances that mediation is a very positive option.

But, again, Mr. Chairperson, I know that the violence certainly has escalated in very recent time at Dakota Tipi. We have seen lots of newspaper articles. There have been lots of issues that have been forthcoming, and I guess that is why representation has been made to the Government. When they felt they were not getting an ear from the Government and came to the Opposition and asked for our ear, we listened and then advocated on their behalf to try to get a meeting with the Government and with the minister.

So I guess when the minister indicates that they have not chosen sides, I think her comments ring a little hollow, because this Government

and this minister have chosen sides when they continue to flow significant revenues to one side in this dispute, and when that one side can use those revenues to their advantage to control or manipulate or oppress the other side, I am not sure how the minister can sit in her place and indicate that they have not chosen sides.

Has the federal government done everything right when it comes to Aboriginal people over the years? Absolutely not. Has the minister, in this instance, by putting in a third party to manage the funds for education and social services, done the right thing? Yes, he has, in this instance. He has shown that he is taking responsibility and is showing some leadership.

In that way, both sides are on a level playing field, and they are equal in respect to not having money to buy power and to buy control, but the provincial government has not followed suit in areas of their jurisdiction or areas of their responsibility. Can the minister explain to me how she believes there is a level playing field between both sides in this dispute by continuing to flow significant revenues to one side that can buy power and buy control?

Ms. McGifford: Indeed, the expression "level playing field" is an expression coined by the member opposite. It is not one that I ever used. What I said was that my colleagues and I recognize that there are many factions in this community and that there is conflict amongst members in the community and that, if we are to be useful, it is important for us not to take sides. Whether all factions are on a level playing field or not is not something that government can control, but it is important for us to not take sides. That has been the aim of the Minister for Aboriginal and Northern Affairs.

As I have said several times, the person who I think is the one most intimately acquainted with aboriginal culture, who understands his people better than any of us at this table, he believes that it is extremely important for us as a government, if we are to be useful in the solution to this terrible issue that we are dealing with, if we are to be useful as a government to the resolution of this violence and damaged community, then he believes it is important that

we not take sides. That is what we have struggled to do.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Maybe the level playing field was something that was coined, and the minister has already admitted that it is not a level playing field, I guess, by her comments. I heard her say in her answers that government does not control. Well, government does control Lotteries revenues that flow to the reserve, and right now many perceive this Government to be taking sides by continuing to flow Lotteries revenues to one faction, which is a word that the minister has used, in this violent dispute. We do know that money has the power to control, to influence and to corrupt.

I guess, I am asking the minister then: If she is saying that they are not taking sides, why has not she followed the leadership? Why has not her Government followed the leadership, in this instance, that the federal government has set? I preface my words again by indicating that, by no means, do I think the federal government has done a very good job on Aboriginal issues over the years.

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable minister.

Mrs. Mitchelson: No, I am not quite finished yet. Can I finish my comments?

Mr. Chairperson: I am sorry. We misunderstood you. Conclude your remarks.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thanks, Mr. Chairperson. It may have sounded like I was finished, but I was not quite.

So I would argue that the provincial government does have some control because they are controlling and deciding where the money is going to flow and to whom that money is going to flow. As I said earlier, money does give one side in the dispute an upper edge. It gives them the ability to control, to manipulate and to buy power, especially when it is in the hands of someone that can manipulate, can deny and can buy off certain support. So I would say that, opposite to what the minister has said, that the provincial government does have some power and some authority and is by its actions and by continuing to flow Lotteries dollars to Dennis

Pashe, that they indeed are taking sides in this dispute.

* (17:40)

If they truly wanted a fair, mediated solution like they are talking about, and I tend to agree that if we could bring both sides together, or all factions together and truly on a level playing field provide a mediated process that would find a positive resolution, we would all be better off. But indeed, we do have a government at the provincial level that is controlling where the money flows, has made a decision on who that money is going to flow to and in essence have supported power control on one side of this issue.

So I would ask the minister whether part of the resolution and part of the mediated process that she talks about as being the solution to help heal the community, that part of that process would be, on a temporary basis until things get resolved, to have a third party manage the dollars that flow from the Province to that community. Then, truly, there would be a level playing field, and truly a mediated process could be a very viable solution.

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, I do want to return to the question of level playing field because I think when the member began her remarks, she said that I had admitted there was not a level playing field. In fact, what I said was I did not know if there was a level playing field. I think it is an important emendation because, if what we have in the record is I admitted it, it somehow suggests that I knew something and denied and then finally I changed my mind about it. So, just for the record, I do not know if there is a level playing field at Dakota Tipi. I do not know. Just to put that very clearly.

I also want to return to the whole question of government's aim, Mr. Chair, because the aim of our Government and again, we are greatly influenced by the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Robinson), who is the most experienced person when it comes to Aboriginal culture. The aim of this Government is not to alienate any group because we believe if mediation is to ultimately work, then it is extremely important that we, as a government, if we are to

be helpful, that we as a government have not alienated any of the factions. I do reiterate that every group from this community and there are, I understand, at least two and perhaps more than two, every group has made allegations about the other groups.

I know, earlier, the member from Tuxedo was talking about DOPS, and all of the various groups have also complained about DOPS, so it is not as if DOPS is in anybody's special graces. DOPS has been criticized by all groups. We, in government, think it is extremely important that we try to keep positive relationships with all the members of the community.

Of course, we have talked about mediation several times and I am pleased to hear that the member from River East thinks that mediation may be a good idea. I will certainly let my colleague the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs know that. I do not know if the member is speaking for herself or if she is speaking for her caucus, but I am pleased to hear that she thinks mediation may be a good idea and that she recognizes the importance of healing for the community, and recognizes that, I think, by endorsing the idea of a mediator, recognizes that what we need in this community is someone who can approach the community, who has respect from the various persons in the community and can somehow bring them together. I do not know, sit them down at a table, work in whatever manner—

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. Oh, excuse me. I thought someone wanted the floor. Thank you. Could you continue, minister?

Ms. McGifford: Yes. I think the member was merely indicating that she may like to ask a question in the near future.

Where was I? I was talking about the fact that the member from River East, and I cannot speak for her colleague from Fort Garry, but would assume—

Mrs. Mitchelson: A point of clarification, I do want to indicate that a mediated solution is always a good solution, but there was a caveat on my part. That caveat would be that there is a level playing field and that the money that the

provincial government is flowing to one faction on Dakota Tipi is managed by an independent third party so that there is a level playing field and both sides are on an equal footing.

Mr. Chairperson: I thank the member for the clarification. Honourable minister, continue.

Ms. McGifford: I think it is extremely important when a mediator is appointed if indeed Mr. Robert Nault, the federal minister, agrees with the concept of mediation and agrees with my colleague the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, also with Grand Chief Dennis White Bird. I think it is important when the mediator, if and when the mediator is appointed and especially given the extremely difficult circumstances of mediation in this troubled community and the importance of healing and bringing people together, I think it is important that this individual be given a free hand, be asked how best this individual can work. I certainly do not think a person should be constrained. What I think is important is that this person be able to work in the best way that an individual can. As I say, I am pleased that people like the idea of mediation. This Government's aim is community healing. That is what we are working for, a healthy community in Dakota Tipi.

Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry): I wanted to come today to put some comments on record and to ask some questions. Today in the House I heard a lot about the community needs healing. No one would disagree that communities in trouble do need an opportunity to heal. Before they can heal they need protection. They need problems solved so they can look back and get over the trauma that they have been through.

At this point, I must say that we cannot even begin to think about healing when women are being terrorized, women and children are being terrorized on a daily basis. From the marks on this one lady's face last night it was very clear that she had been brutalized. She had been beaten up. When you hear about tires squealing late at night, I know with women in particular we fully understand. It is not a sexist remark. It is just that a lot of us have held our babies in our arms, and fathers too, putting them to sleep. There is supposed to be a calmness around the

house as they go to sleep so they will be able to sleep well, be healthy and be in a nurturing environment. We heard last night there was no nurturing environment. One of the presenters actually said they could not prepare for the presentation simply because there was an incident the night before and they were up attending to it.

One young mother talked about having her three little ones in the house and at five-thirty in the morning having an intruder crash through her sunroom window to get into her house. She related how she was afraid that she would be stabbed or beaten or raped or some harm would have come to her children. We heard story after story after story.

Here in the Legislature this Government has talked about child poverty. It has talked about the need to revitalize the inner city. It has talked about the need for support for young mothers who are pregnant. I think it is to the tune of \$80 a month if they are pregnant I believe that was put in through Family Services' end of it. I must say I do not generally agree with that solution without any accountability attached to it, but generally speaking, you know, this Government has said clearly that it needs to protect women and children. It needs to make sure that they live in a nurturing environment. But, you know, political speeches do ring very hollow until you put things in place that protect people. The phraseology, like it is a healing community or we need to put a mediator in, all those things, well, before you can do all that, you have to settle the situation down.

* (17:50)

When mothers are coming in fear of their safety, in fear of their children's safety, when they cannot receive their welfare cheques, when they are not allowed to go to school, when one mother who was the secretary of a school was intimidated and removed from her job because she was going to testify against someone who had assaulted a member of the band, when you have those things occurring, there is a big problem. The Status of Women is something that, to my understanding, is in place to champion the needs out there of women and children and families.

Last night we all, I would say, I would hope that all of us were very touched by the stories and by the heartfelt relaying of trauma that these women had to go through. We also learned that the money from the VLTs, from the gambling initiative out there, was not getting through to the community. Clearly, that was not happening. The women stood up in front of the microphone and they said, you know, one family had to come in, many families, they said, had to come into the Winnipeg Food Bank to get food to eat. I mean, when you say there is a level playing field out there, I do not think when you have women and children that have no money and no means to support themselves—

Point of Order

Mr. Chairperson: On a point of order, the honourable minister.

Ms. McGifford: Thank you, Mr. Chair. On a point of order, I want to make the point that I did not say there was a level playing field. I made that point with the member opposite. I do not know if there is a level playing field.

Mr. Chairperson: On the point of order, the Member for Fort Garry.

Mrs. Smith: Well, clearly, being there last night listening to this, there is not a level playing field out there. It does not even come close. So members on our side of the House understand clearly there is definitely not a level playing field.

Mr. Chairperson: On the point of order raised, there is no point of order.

* * *

Mrs. Smith: So, having given a bit of background to my question, the thing that comes to mind is that we here in the Legislature in governance have a responsibility. It is a hard thing to do. We have to have the courage and the spine as many women have all across this country to stand up and say this is not right. We are going to take action immediately so no one is hurt or killed in that community as a result of this terrible violence that is going on. It is not a matter of sitting in communities and passing it on to someone else or talking in round tables about what the solutions will be. There are

solutions there. This Government has the RCMP in this province. The RCMP is just a little better than two miles away from this particular community. There are people who can go out there in government and take a look and put plans in place. The VLT question can be addressed just by the decision of the minister in this Legislature.

So there are things that can be done, or members on the opposite side of the House can decide to do the neutral thing, not ruffle any feathers, not get involved, say, well, this does not matter, just one of those things that happens. But clearly we have to get tough on crime. What is happening with these women and children is a crime. The Criminal Code is there, but when there are allegations, and I say it is allegations, that the police department is part of the problem, not part of the solution, those allegations have to be investigated. When we had letters dated as far back as a year ago talking about the seriousness of the situation in the Dakota Tipi environment, clearly that is where we have to stop and wonder why it went on this long.

The bill that was put forward, Bill 44, was a bill that I am sure had the best of intentions in many ways. Members on this side of the House, on the face value of the bill, felt that indeed it had some merit. It was not a bill that we had started out thinking we would oppose, but as we started searching and finding the problems that were out there we became very clear that this bill could not pass. It was not something that we could do until the solution at Dakota Tipi had been resolved. It has not been resolved. The Government has to take action.

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

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

* (14:50)

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Stan Struthers): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 255 will now resume consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture and Food.

We are currently considering item 3.4. Agricultural Development and Marketing (e) Irrigation Development. The floor is now open for questions.

Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie): Now, we are adjourning or recessing this particular section at four o'clock today. Could I have clarification for the record as to why this has been requested?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food): Mr. Chairman, I requested that we defer the Department of Agriculture and Food for two days while I attend a meeting for which I have paired.

Mr. Faurshou: I understand. Okay. I appreciate the minister representing the Province, and in any event, hopefully those deliberations will conclude and she will be able to join some of the folks that are attending the Manitoba Agricultural Museum and stampede that is going to be held at Austin these next few days, as well as Swan River, as the minister herself said that it is taking place this weekend.

I would like to ask the minister, we had been discussing at length the request for support from the federal government for \$85 million over the next 10 years of which the minister put on the record yesterday that if supported by the federal government would provide the Province with additional 50 000 acres of irrigated area for production in Manitoba. Did the minister consult with or take opportunity to peruse the documentation that was tabled in 1988 entitled The Assiniboine-South Hespeler Area Study and some of the recommendations that that particular document provided?

Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski, Madam Chairperson, in the Chair

Ms. Wowchuk: You know, we had this discussion yesterday, and I want to make the member aware, as I did yesterday, it is the Department of Conservation that is responsible for water and planning of water. It is the Department of Conservation that is doing the water strategy in conjunction with other people. It is the Department of Conservation that is doing the study of the Assiniboine River.

What Agriculture does is we identify the needs and the requirements for the agriculture industry to flourish. It identifies the amounts of water that we need, and we work with Conservation. We have done that. We have identified with the industry, with Simplot, the number of acres that are going to be needed, the amount of water that is going to be needed, and that is what we are working on.

The member talks about the dam and has expressed his interest in that. But I can tell the member that our needs are imminent. We need that water, and it is very short term. The kind of dam that he is talking about is a very long-term project and one that would not be able to supply the water for irrigation as quickly as we need it. That is why we are looking at options, and it has been identified that there is a lot of water on the Assiniboine River that is not being used now and there are other tributaries that have water in them. We are also looking at water retention and working with producers on that. So there are a variety of ways to capture and keep water so that it is available for agriculture use.

* (15:00)

Mr. Faurshou: I appreciate the minister trying to dodge the questions by saying that they are in another portfolio, but I am wondering whether the minister is in fact comprehending the seriousness of the questioning that I have engaged her in the last number of days. Even the minister herself has acknowledged that with the current planning, the current request for federal support is only going to end up with a maximum of 50 000 acres being added to current day irrigated acres here in the province of Manitoba. She has also acknowledged that with the rotational requirements that her department has suggested for potatoes and the need for the first shift 20 000 acres, which through four-year rotation, would in fact require 80 000 acres; two shifts, 40 000 acres of production for J.R. Simplot. Ultimately, the total would be 160 000 acres, and we are talking a second shift within four years.

Is the minister going to address the shortfall between her own plan for an additional 50 000 acres and her acknowledgement for the need for an additional 160 000 acres? How is it that she

has not acknowledged the need to address this shortfall? I am once again asking for her to address this shortfall.

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chairperson, there is no shortfall. I am not sure where the member is coming from. I told him that the plan was for 50 000 acres. Surely the member understands that it is 50 000 acres annually. If you figure that out, that is 150 000 acres. So we have talked about this many times, and I hope he would give our department and people in the industry more credit than that.

Surely he is not saying that the Department of Agriculture staff has not got the capability to figure out how much potato acreage is going to be needed for the operation of the Simplot plant. I can tell him that there have been very extensive discussions with Simplot and with the other processors in the area, and the department is well aware of the amount of acres that are needed, and that is the discussion, the proposal that has been put forward to the federal government to indeed address and meet the needs.

The member, who is from the Portage area, knows that you cannot grow potatoes year after year, that you have to have a rotation, at least a three-year rotation. That is what has been worked out, that, on one piece of land one year, you grow potatoes, and, next year on that piece of land, you grow wheat. The year after that, you grow Canola before you go into wheat again. I am not quite sure what the member is trying to imply, but I want to give him full confidence that this department does know what they are doing and they are working with the industry. We are working to have adequate acreage under irrigation to meet the needs of the plant.

Mr. Faurchow: Forgive me, Madam Chairperson, for misinterpreting. So, therefore, my understanding now is that the minister has committed this Province to bringing on stream an additional 50 000 acres annually of irrigated acres for production here in the province of Manitoba for a 10-year period. Thereby, she is saying that there will be, come 2012, an additional 500 000 acres of irrigated acres here in the province of Manitoba.

I know, by the study here that was done extensively by the Pawley administration, that

they mapped out all of southern Manitoba, and the number of acres that they had identified for irrigation was 319 000 acres as available, and have the soil texture and climate available for producing special crops, the 319 000. So 500 000 acres, that is an incredible feat.

Ms. Wowchuk: Again, Madam Chairperson, the member is wrong. The member did not hear, so I will correct the record for the member.

What I did say is that we have put a proposal to the federal government for \$85 million over 10 years to have available 50 000 acres annually for production, \$85 million over 10 years that will result in an additional 50 000 acres available annually.

Mr. Faurchow: If there is only 50 000 acres more of acres available under irrigation annually, and you are working on rotation and you require an additional 160 000 acres available annually, how does 50 000 cover 160 000 available annually?

Ms. Wowchuk: Quite simply, Mr. Chairman, if you irrigate one year out of three, two years dry land crops are planted, and if you have 50 000 acres available every year, there is a total of 150 000 acres available.

I can assure the member that, if there was a problem with these numbers, Simplot would have raised the issue. Our department and Simplot and the producers have worked through this carefully. Simplot is quite comfortable with the numbers that have been identified, that there will be adequate for production for them and for the other facilities in the area that also require additional production.

Mr. Faurchow: Well, I will leave this topic at the present time because other colleagues want to speak of other issues, but I will state unequivocally that the individuals to which the minister has referred to have also spoken with me and have raised significant concerns as to whether this will, in fact, happen.

I am really curious of the minister's knowledge about irrigation. I am an irrigator. I know what it takes to irrigate. You do not move equipment around very easily at all. It is stationary. So

you are contradicting yourself. When you say you are adding additional 50 000 acres annually, the equipment does not jump from A to B to C to D. It is there. Once it is set up, the pipes in the ground, the pivots fixed there, it stays there.

So how do you move all this around? Yes, there is portable irrigated equipment, but it is highly inefficient, and not one single potato producer or special crops producer wants to rely on portable irrigated equipment because it costs three times more than a fixed in order to apply a given amount of water. So the minister, in my eyes, as an irrigator, as a professional agronomist, as a producer, she is out to lunch.

Ms. Wowchuk: Well, I will thank the member for those comments, and I will tell the member, Madam Chairperson, that I have more respect for the departmental staff than he does, because, if he is saying the minister is out to lunch, he is saying that the departmental staff and the agronomist in this department are out to lunch.

So I would ask him to have more respect for the skills and the expertise and the knowledge that are sitting around this table with me right now because it is these people who work every day with the industry and these people who have worked with Simplot, and I can assure the member that we have discussion, and we have said that we will work with the industry to ensure that there is a supply for the plant when it opens, and there will be a supply as they expand. So I can tell the member that I have confidence in the work and the staff at the Soils and Crops Branch and other parts of the department. I have confidence in the work they do.

* (15:10)

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): First of all, my apologies to you, Madam Chairperson, for giving the impression that the need for irrigation is probably less than what is actually needed. I think we need to ensure that we understand the substantive infrastructure costs that individual farmers must make once the supply of water has been identified and how to get to the supply of water. I think that was the essence of my colleague's question to the minister, my colleague from Portage la Prairie. His area of agriculture, and his area of agricultural expertise, I believe, far exceeds that of the minister's.

With all due respect to the minister, the minister comes from an area where irrigation is simply not heard of, and the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Faurschou) was born and raised into it, grew up in it and has farmed in the irrigated area all his life. So nobody knows better than my colleague from Portage la Prairie what the needs of the irrigators are, what the costs of implementing an irrigation system on a farm is and how the operations of irrigation systems today in the modern era of agriculture actually affect the economy of the province and the economy of regions such as the Portage region.

I think it is imperative that we recognize that, as I said yesterday, when industries such as Simplot make the commitment to spend anywhere between \$150 million and \$180 million to build a processing plant, it takes the co-operation and understanding of the producers first of all. They are the primary suppliers of the product that will be processed, secondly, the on-time delivery of the product to the plant on a year-round basis, on a 365-day-a-year basis, but it also needs one other ingredient. That is the long-term planning that these producers must do in order to be able to assure the supply of the product to the processor.

I am not sure that the minister quite understands that process. This is not a year-to-year type of a planning process or a month-to-month type of planning process. This is a planning process that must develop five, sometimes ten years in advance. For instance, our farm, and we do not irrigate, but, when we plan our whole production process, we take a look at the five-year, at the ten-year and the twenty-year operational planning for our operation.

I think those that irrigate and operate in perishable products, such as potatoes, take even longer-term views of this. Their investments are on a longer basis. For instance, to build storages, to accommodate the capacity that will be required by Simplot are major, major investments. They are multimillion-dollar investments for individual farmers. I think the minister must understand that when those kinds of financial commitments are made by individual producers, they want to be assured of a long-term water supply.

I heard what the minister said, that we have developed a ponding system that has worked relatively well, but it was done during a period of time when we had significant rains that saw our streams flow periodically in the springtime when it would allow farmers to pump water into those pond holding areas and actually maintain a sustainable amount of water to allow them to irrigate during peak production periods of the growing season. I think that is admirable. I think that system was developed because no other water supply was there.

We asked yesterday whether the minister had given any thought or whether the Government had given thought to developing the Pembilier dam system. If the two Pembilier dams were developed in conjunction with North Dakota, on the Manitoba side and North Dakota side, that would provide a very substantive amount of water for irrigation purposes, industrial and recreational purposes right across the southern portion of the province.

My biggest fear is this, that we are going to end this wet cycle that we are into. It will come to an end. Then we will enter a drier cyclical time period. When that happens, we will find that the towns in the Red River Valley have all been drawn into one system that utilizes water out of the Red River. When that Red River quits flowing, if there is not an adequate supply of water to keep that river system flowing, there will be serious, serious repercussions to Manitoba's economy.

I would hope that the minister will give some serious consideration to bring this to the attention of her colleagues in Cabinet, that we need to now start planning for the construction of that water retention ability on the Pembina River that will give southern Manitoba the ability not only to irrigate but to keep the growth pattern that has developed there over the last 20 years. Winkler, for instance, has become a city. Morden is growing. Altona is growing. All the towns in the valley have experienced at least static position to significant growth patterns over the last two decades.

I think we in the province do not often pay enough attention to what is happening there. We just take for granted that the revenues that are

generated out of that area will keep flowing and that we do not have to return a huge amount of investment capital into that revenue generator. That has been a problem not only for this administration but the previous Pawley administration. The previous Filmon administration really did not make a great deal of investment of any kind in the infrastructure. We did. I think there has been more highway construction, roadway construction over the last 12-13 years in southern Manitoba than we had seen for a while. Again, that becomes cyclical because of the party system that we have and where they are elected and where they want to deliver their programs. I think we all realize that and respect that. However, I think it is time that much of that be set aside. From a government standpoint, we recognize the potential.

This coming month on the 15th of August I will be meeting with the Governor of North Dakota. The reason for that meeting is to talk about the Pembilier development and the potential on the Pembina, among other things. I truly believe that it is time we get on with the development there. I have had a number of meetings with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers over the last two years. They will tell you a different story this time around. If they had put out a report today, it would be different from their previous report that we have seen, simply because of the different criteria application that both levels of government on both sides of the border would insist on, if another study was done of the Pembina. I think the potential, not only for recreation and flood water mitigation, is such that you would have a dramatically different cost-benefit analysis than we had a while ago. I wonder if the same thing would not apply if we did the same thing on the Assiniboine River and the Souris River as well.

When we did the land and water strategy back in 1988-89, it became very apparent, we did a rough cost analysis for the province of Manitoba if, for instance, the Pipestone dam was built, the Souris dam was built, a dam on the Assiniboine and a dam on the Pembina at the time, and I believe, for about a quarter of a billion to a half a billion dollars in capital construction, we could have virtually drought-proofed all of southern Manitoba. When I talk about southern Manitoba, I talk about anything from Russell

south to the U.S. border. I believe that, had we done that, had we initiated that, instead of spending the huge amounts of money that we have spent on flooding, we might have seen a different Red River Valley in 1997.

* (15:20)

We initiated an engineering study, hired a group of engineers to do the analysis of what the flood mitigative values would have been on the '97 Red River flood, had the Pembelier system been in place, the two dams. They indicated that, on the dike at Winnipeg, we could have lowered the flood water levels by a foot to a foot and a half if that system would have been in place. Now I found that very interesting because a foot lower water on the dike at Winnipeg would have had a dramatic impact and a dramatic lowering of the fears that we had of the breaking out of the dike and would have had a dramatic impact on the floodway system. I believe that those kinds of things should be discussed on both sides of the border. They should become part of the greater discussion in the Red River Valley from South Dakota right into Manitoba, including those downstream of the city of Winnipeg.

We should do a proper analysis, and as I understand some of the work is starting now, to do a proper analysis of the land levels and water levels and how to mitigate some of the run-off during flood levels, as well as being able to store a much greater amount of water to give us better flow systems through the Red River system and keep it flowing on a more regular basis than it does now. I think, Madam Minister, if you and your Government would then do the cost benefit in the Red River Valley or of the whole southern Manitoba region, of an expanded agricultural system, based on different criteria than we have in the past, we would find a significant economic benefit on that investment, if we would do the cost-benefit analysis. We would find a significantly greater benefit than we have seen in the past.

I just wanted to put that on the record because I am a very strong believer in this, and I think we have not paid enough attention over the past 50 years as to what the potential could be or might have been. So I am going to leave this

whole water area because I think we have spent a significant amount of time.

I want to, however, talk a little bit about the effects of the drainage laws that this Government has put in place and how that is affecting the day-to-day operations of many farms and how significant the damage can be if we, in fact, applied the law as it is written. So I want to ask the minister whether she is satisfied that the legislation that she brought forward, or her Government brought forward, in response to an action that was taken by an individual farmer who won his case in the court—and the Government actually made the decision to say, nay, you will not win this case; we will put in place different laws, and therefore we will rule anyway.

Now, that drainage law, as I call it, has given a totally different relevance to individuals being able to manage their farm operations as they should in order to gain maximum productive capacity out of this land.

The second one that I think has had a very significant impact is the federal government insisting that anytime any kind of drainage or even clean-up actions were initiated, that the Fisheries and Oceans people must come and give their blessings to any kind of project.

So I want to ask the minister whether she as Minister of Agriculture has expressed any concerns to her Cabinet and her Government about the restrictive measures that have been put in place in the day-to-day operations of a given farm as far as the changes that her Government made to the drainage laws in the province.

Madam Chairperson: Just for clarification, could the member please tell the committee what line he is referring to, the Member for Emerson? Could the member please clarify for committee what line you are referring to?

Mr. Jack Penner: Does it matter?

Madam Chairperson: For clarification.

Mr. Jack Penner: We are still dealing with water issues and irrigation matters and drainage, still on the same line.

Madam Chairperson: I just was not clear. Thank you.

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chairperson, the member covered a wide range of issues, and I will try to address some of them.

But one of the points that I do want to raise to correct the record from yesterday, the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Fauschou) kept referring to an irrigation committee of Cabinet and kept asking about an irrigation committee of Cabinet and when that committee was meeting. I did not clarify the record yesterday for the member, and I think it is important that I do, to tell the member that the committee that he was referring to, there is no such committee. He indicated that there was an irrigation committee of Cabinet that the Premier (Mr. Doer) had appointed, and I just want to set the record straight for the member.

Cabinet deals with irrigation issues when they come up. The water strategy falls under the Department of Conservation, and when issues affect agriculture, Agriculture is involved. When it is conservation districts, Intergovernmental Affairs is involved. But I would not want the member to put wrong information on the record, that the Premier has appointed an irrigation committee of Cabinet.

The member talks about drainage issues, and drainage issues are very contentious issues in the agriculture business. We always have to be conscious of what is happening, that what one farmer is doing is not having a negative impact on another farmer or a community down the road. That is why the idea of conservation districts is so important, because there is planning done on a much larger area. I am very pleased that our Government, under the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Ms. Friesen), has expanded conservation districts.

But I also want to say to the member that we have talked about building a sustainable future on water, a proposed strategic plan for Manitoba, and under this plan that the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin) has put forward, he is seeking advice on drainage and how the management of drainage can be handled better, how we can develop a clear plan on how drainage can be

developed by working together with local organizations, with local governments and the provincial government all working together. So our Government under the Department of Conservation is presently seeking advice on this very important issue.

The member also asked about the issue of Fisheries and Oceans, and, indeed, the increase of staff of Fisheries and Oceans in Manitoba and their interest in fish habitat has put additional cost and additional burden on municipalities and on individuals who are working to improve drainage in the province.

Mr. Jack Penner: Madam Chairperson, this whole area of drainage, the only reason I raise it under this item is because land drainage and irrigation go hand in hand. You must have a good drainage system on irrigable land or else you are in trouble because, if you irrigate and put substantive amount of water on and you get a rain right after that, you can have very significant damages. So you must have a proper drainage system in place in order to be able to irrigate properly and do so. Similarly, all other farms, at least in the Red River Valley, must have drainage systems on their farm that need to be properly maintained on a yearly basis and even monthly basis.

The seven-, eight-inch rain that much of the southern end of the Red River Valley experienced just a few weeks ago, I think, were a clear indication that, if we had to apply for licenses to get the water off the land, you would have seen crop insurance claims that would have gone straight through the roof. However, many of the farmers did what they normally do, and they just took their tractors and ditchers out onto the fields and got the water off the land as best they could, as they should. I mean, that is part of the good management of a farm. So a great deal of crop, I believe, was saved by breaking the law.

* (15:30)

In essence, Madam Chairperson, those farmers, if you would have prescribed the letter of the law, would have broken the law every day because none of them had permits to go out there and drain their farms. That is the reason I raise this. I think this Government needs to look at

that law and change it so we do not make criminals out of our farmers because that is the last thing I think that the minister intended or her Government intended, for them to become law-breakers, and I do not think we want to be there in the long term. That is not in the best interest of good management on the farm.

I want to ask the minister whether she would be willing to pass this line, as we have previously done, and agree that we might come back at a later date and then move onto the next item on the agenda, the Food Development Centre. I understand that she has had staff here for the last couple of days that have been waiting patiently to deal with this matter, and I certainly am willing to accommodate that. It is unfortunate the minister did not indicate this before.

At the same time, Madam Chairperson, I wonder whether the minister might agree to bringing back the Veterinary Services and some of the livestock—I want to deal, on Monday, with some of the livestock issues that were dealt with when I was not here, and whether the minister might want to bring back some of the staff for that.

Ms. Wowchuk: That is fine. Just go ahead and pass that.

Mr. Jack Penner: I understand, Madam Chairperson, we are going to be starting at 10 o'clock on Monday morning with Estimates.

An Honourable Member: If that is agreed to, yes.

Mr. Jack Penner: Yes, that is fine with me. I have no problem with that.

Madam Chairperson: Section 3.4. Agricultural Development and Marketing (d) Soils and Crops is still outstanding. Would you care to—*[interjection]*

3.4. Agricultural Development and Marketing (e) Irrigation Development \$1,072,500—pass.

3.4.(d) Soils and Crops (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$3,004,300—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$1,023,700.

Mr. Jack Penner: Just one point I want to make here is I see slight reductions in virtually all the lines here in Agriculture. I find that concerning because we have I think an agriculture in this province that needs a lot of attention and is going through massive changes. As the minister has a number of times accused me of supporting the deletion of the Crow rate and how that is affecting agriculture. She is absolutely right; it is changing agriculture immensely.

It has always been my contention, and I want to put this on the record, that we would have a vastly different Manitoba had we never had a grain transportation subsidy. The subsidy was not paid to the farmers. The subsidy was paid to the railways. It was agreed to. The Crow rates were set when the railways were first built and brought in. There were large land settlements made, as we all know, and I am not going to go into that history, but had we never had an equalized railway or rail transportation system and the agreement to ship feed grains east we would have a different western Canada. I am convinced of that. I think we are seeing a dramatic change in western Canada, but nowhere greater than in southern Alberta and in southern Manitoba.

We are seeing massive changes. We are seeing the livestock industry come into its own and I think we have just seen the tip of the iceberg. We are recognizing the benefit of the livestock industry from two aspects: that we can now revert back to what we used to do 50, 60 years ago. You can go to a much greater degree of natural farming than we have in many, many years. We are becoming less and less dependent on commercially produced fertilizers. We can now use natural fertilizers as they were originally intended to be used.

I find it very interesting that government today is being very apprehensive about that. Some of the laws they are bringing about setting up the restrictive measures to allow this natural evolutionary occurrence is surprising to me and many other farmers when we want to revert back to organic food production. We are truly getting there on many farms these days. When I talk about the evolutionary, I talk about the total productive evolutionary process on farms, whereby you raise one level of livestock in one

area of the farm, use that effluent as fertilizer to produce beef, for instance, and cause a much greater capacity of grazing and much greater productivity on land that was very often deemed very marginal. Now it is producing a very significant return per acre from beef production. It is being done with natural products.

I think the consumer is not fully aware of what is really happening and how organic many of the farms are truly becoming. I know the minister and her Government now, when they were in opposition, constantly talked about the huge factory farms. I found it also very interesting about many of the minister's colleagues when the PMU industry was being harassed by one of her colleagues and much of the rhetoric initiated. Again, the factory farms were the target. Today's factory farms are only a larger version of what happened before. Many of them are family operations, larger family operations than they were, but that has been driven by economics, in large part by policies that she and her Government are putting in place, forcing larger and larger expenditures on the farm by legislation. Every time you put in place legislation that is restrictive, you will see a greater degree of cost being generated to the primary producer. That person has nowhere else to go but to expand.

With a smaller margin on each unit of production, there must be an expansion to keep enough money flowing to feed a family. I think that need should be recognized by this minister and her Government. Their philosophy, their political philosophy is much, much different than what their actual practices are. I think that is astounding to many people on the farm. The family farm that they talk about is no longer being talked about by the minister. They were so strong on the maintenance of the small family farm, and yet we lost 5000 of them last year. They are gone. They are history. They will never come back under her watch, and I find that very interesting.

Having said that, the reduction in the line over line here in this part of the Estimates is a concern, as it should be to all Manitobans and all producers of food.

So we will move on to the Food Development Centre, if that is the wish of the minister.

* (15:40)

Madam Chairperson: 3.4. Agricultural Development and Marketing (d) Soils and Crops (2) Other Expenditures \$1,023,700—pass.

4.(f) Food Development Centre.

Mr. Jack Penner: Well, basically the questions I have about this is the news announcement that the minister made quite a to-do about how the unique, I think they called it, liquid food processing facility in partnership with Great Plains Aseptic Processors would in fact come about. I would like to ask the minister how far along we are in the expansion of the Food Development Centre as we speak today.

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chairperson, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce the general manager of the Food Development Centre, Ms. Pat Scott, who has joined us at the table. I would like to indicate to the member that the Food Development Centre is a centre that I see as a very, very important facility as we look to build on the products that we have produced on Manitoba farms. I see this as a base for many, many industries and very much look for the expansion of the facility and the addition of the Tetra Pak line to help with the packaging industry in this province. I can indicate to the member that the Food Development Centre expansion is in the design stage with Great Plains Aseptic to confirm the details of the things that they need in the facility. It is moving along in that sense. We are working with an engineering company on design to ensure that we address all of their needs. When that is complete, it will go to detail design.

Mr. Jack Penner: What sort of time lines might the ministry indicate, Madam Chairperson, to this committee? What kind of time lines is she looking at for the start of the construction of the food facility?

Ms. Wowchuk: It is our hope that the plans can progress and the design can progress to a point where we would see the beginning of construction this fall. That is our hope.

Mr. Jack Penner: Madam Chairperson, in the minister's view, what is the potential for this

Food Development Centre and the expansion that is taking place now? I understand when the first announcement came out, it appeared to me that in large part what this whole new process would be directed at would be liquid packaging. Can the minister give me a bit of an overview as to what kind of liquid products we would produce in this province and use this packaging process for?

Ms. Wowchuk: The announcement of the Food Development Centre will contain two parts to it and one of them is the aseptic processing and packaging. In that part, we look at processing and packaging products of fruits and vegetables: soups, sauces, liquid foods, but not juices. Those are the kinds of things that would be developed there, but the major investment is on the other side of the Food Development Centre where there will be investment into research equipment, renovation of the existing facility, because the investment on the packaging side is about \$1.4 million, and the balance of the investment is on the other side of the facility. It is our view that when this development is complete, it will result in development of products that will lead to about 100 jobs a year, not in the facility but in new jobs that are created because of the work that is done at the Food Development Centre.

I want to clarify the record. I keep getting the name of this company mixed up and it is Great Plains Aseptic Processors and the technology is Tetra Pak.

Mr. Jack Penner: Madam Chairperson, I think you have the same problem that some others do with the wording, whether it is a septic or aseptic, and that has different connotations, which I appreciate. I will not hold that against you. I think all of us that come from different ethnic origins have different pronunciations that we use from time to time on certain vowels or words or parts of words. I know the German comes out different than the Ukrainian and it comes out different than English sometimes. I truly appreciate that. I have to sit and think sometimes or just pause and think sometimes when I want to use a word whether it is actually the right word to use even. But I can always go back to German, as my neighbour said. One time he said—he was an Englishman—when I am stuck, I am stuck; you can always switch gears. So I

think all those of us who speak second or third languages are fortunate in that manner. We can always switch to those words.

Could the minister tell me what the amount of investment will be by Great Plains Aseptic Processors? How much of the investment will actually be theirs and how much will actually be government investment?

* (15:50)

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chairperson, what we will be investing is about \$1.4 million into the building, which the company will then rent from us. Great Plains Aseptic Processors will be investing \$4.5 million.

Mr. Jack Penner: Does that mean, then, that the Great Plains Aseptic Processors will be leasing the building once it is complete from you and will be installing their equipment in this building, or will the department or the Government be also buying the equipment or financing the equipment in some way for lease-back to Aseptic Processors?

Ms. Wowchuk: We will be building the building. They will be putting their equipment in it and leasing the space from the Food Development Centre.

Mr. Jack Penner: I am not sure that I heard correctly. The Province will be building the building and the company will install the equipment and will be leasing the building.

Ms. Wowchuk: That is right.

Mr. Jack Penner: The development side of the centre will remain under the operation of the provincial government.

Ms. Wowchuk: Yes, the Food Development Centre is a special operating agency. After the renovations are done and the investment is made, it will still remain as a special operating agency.

Mr. Jack Penner: I wonder if the minister could explain to the committee then how the centre will operate. If, for instance, a producer comes in with an idea and/or a product that they would

like to have some assistance on developing into a marketable product, will that development centre still function as it did before and allow for that co-operation between an individual processor or producer to develop the product to a marketable standpoint and will not have any involvement with Aseptic Processors?

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chairperson, the Food Development Centre will operate as it will now and producers will be able to come in. Not only will they have what they have now, but they will have new research equipment, a far broader range of things that they can do with a product there. The other plus is that it will have CFIA certification so that meat products can be developed there. The aseptic processing will be another tool for producers should they develop a liquid product and want to use that technology in their product, but it is not a requirement. That will just be another tool for the processor.

Mr. Jack Penner: Madam Chairperson, that is really where I was trying to head. I am glad the minister said that.

I wonder then how much liquid, how many liquid food products we produce in the province today.

Ms. Wowchuk: The production that we have now in Manitoba is mainly flavoured waters and juices, but we do not have any packaging facilities to go into those other areas. So this will be another tool for those processors that are looking at developing other products.

I have had the opportunity to look at many products that are packaged in other countries, and it can vary from cream soups, to gravies, to sauces. So a wide variety of products are being packaged in this type of product, and we see this as another tool that will allow our processors to diversify into many, many other products.

Mr. Jack Penner: Will this packaging product, Madam Chairperson, have an application for more solid food such as meat products and/or other? Will it be able to be applied to those kinds of products, as well?

Ms. Wowchuk: The packaging will have the capacity to deal with liquid foods, but the Food

Development Centre will have the ability to deal with the development of a wide variety of foods, and particularly, once it has its certification to be able to do meat, dairy, cheese and fish products, there will be the opportunity to develop products like that, that we have not been able to develop before. But this technology is for liquid products.

Mr. Jack Penner: I have no idea what sort of process is being planned by Aseptic Processors, what kind of packaging material they are going to be using for this liquid. However, it appears to me that in the province of Manitoba today there is very little production of, for instance, juices such as apple juices or berry juices or those kinds of things. They would have to be either imported or manufactured here or brought in, such as orange juice and all those kinds of things. We do have some drink products that are being manufactured here but on a limited basis, I believe.

So I am not quite clear as to what this package is. This must be a specialized packaging system that we can actually bring in large amounts of juice or liquid products and package it, or hope to be packaging it here in Manitoba, and then distributing it to some other markets somehow in order for me to be able to see the value of this whole process.

Ms. Wowchuk: I want the member to know that Aseptic Processors is a private company. They are the ones that have done the research on it. They are the ones that are bringing in the equipment and they have the confidence that they can attract the kinds of products that will go into these packages. They are not looking at the juice market. They think that the juice market is quite saturated, although there might be some specialty juices.

* (16:00)

But I should tell the member that—he said he is not familiar with it. If you look on the grocery shelves you see the packages, the square packages that juice comes in. I have seen samples of packages that contain gravy, that contain corn soup, potato soup, carrot soup. So, when you

look at what we have here in Manitoba, we have a wide range of products that can be developed.

As I say again, this is a partnership with a private company that has studied the market and believes that there is an opportunity here and they are making the investment. We are making the investment in the building, but we are also making the investment on the food developments side where there will be new technology, new equipment and a broad range of opportunities for people to build on the products that we have here in Manitoba and some of them will take advantage of the packaging process.

Mr. Jack Penner: Madam Chairperson, is the Food Development Centre currently working with producers to develop new products that are not on the market, or how many new products, maybe is the best way to put it, are we working with currently that are in the developmental stage?

Madam Chairperson: Madam Minister, one quick response, please, before we change over.

Ms. Wowchuk: I can tell the member that last year there were 13 new products developed. It is anticipated that there will be about 15 new products developed each year. I also want to tell the member that Aseptic Processors is part of Tetra Pak and it is anticipated that Tetra Pak has product lined up and that once the facility is set up, there will be product for them to put through to that system. Again, it is investment in the private sector and we are working with them to encourage additional value added in this province.

Mr. Jack Penner: I wonder, Madam Chairperson, whether we could pass this line and that would relieve the staffperson of having to come back.

Madam Chairperson: Is it the will of the committee? *[Agreed]*

3.4. Agricultural Development and Marketing (f) Food Development Centre \$1,764,400—pass.

Resolution 3.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding

\$16,485,400 for Agriculture and Food, Agricultural Development and Marketing, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2003.

Resolution agreed to.

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. As was agreed earlier today in the House, this section of the Committee of Supply will now move from consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture and Food to consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Education, Training and Youth. Is it the will of the committee to take a short recess? *[Agreed]*

Ten minutes, fifteen, twenty? Fifteen minutes. *[Agreed]*

The committee recessed at 4:04 p.m.

The committee resumed at 4:33 p.m.

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND YOUTH

Madam Chairperson (Bonnie Korzeniewski): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. We will now move on to the consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Education, Training and Youth. Consideration of these Estimates left off on item 16.1.(b) Executive Support.

The floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Harold Gilleshammer (Minnedosa): I was reviewing the minutes of the last meeting we had on June 25, so it has been roughly a month since we gathered here to start this process. We dealt with three things, and I would like to just maybe spend a few minutes on each of those three things before we proceed.

The first thing was the class size and composition. Almost daily, but certainly weekly, I am getting questions, mostly from trustees, about the Government's intention on the issue of class size and composition. As the minister knows, one of his options is to do nothing. If, in fact, he does nothing, then the class size and composition, come November, becomes an arbitrable item in negotiations.

We talked about the report done by Glenn Nicholls. It has been a while since I have been

over it, but, generally speaking, it was thought, and I believe, that Mr. Nicholls did a very thorough, comprehensive job of the whole issue of class size and composition and in many ways I think pointed a direction for the Government to go on this in terms of putting more attention to that issue, particularly at the primary area so that class size and composition would be more manageable at a time when youngsters are just starting into the education system and where they probably get that grounding that they need.

Those first three or four years I think determines the attitude of the child towards school and towards teachers. My experience has been that if that is a positive experience, the child probably will do well as he or she progresses through the system. So this whole question of class size and composition is particularly important at that level.

I realize that this can be a complex situation where so many teachers are assigned to a school and administrators have to draft a timetable, put students in classes and proceed with the school year and the education of those children, but I guess my point is teachers and trustees and some parents are actively concerned about this issue and what direction the Government is going to take.

I wondered if the minister could give us some indication of that today.

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Education, Training and Youth): I thank the member for his question. The discussion around the issue of class size and composition that has been undertaken in the province over the last really essentially year and a half with the commissioning of Dr. Glenn Nicholls to undertake a commission on this issue, has been, I think from our perspective in terms of the gathering of data and the analysis of the situation as it exists in the public school system in the province of Manitoba, that the wide-ranging consultation that Doctor Nicholls undertook in many communities throughout the province.

I do not have a copy of my report before me right now, the class size and composition report, that Doctor Nicholls authored, but I know that he was in communities in every region of the

province. There were some 5000 teachers that made individualized representation to Doctor Nicholls in the course of his work. There were very well-attended public meetings in communities throughout the province that involved parents, trustees, teachers, students, community members generally. I know that Doctor Nicholls undertook extensive discussions with all of the major stakeholder groups in the province as part of his investigation into class size and the issue of class size and composition in Manitoba.

Indeed, the Nicholls report, in terms of its scope, is unprecedented in Manitoba. This is the first time that we have had, in this province, extensive process of collecting data, collecting opinions, having public discussion on this issue. I am really quite privileged to have been able to have Doctor Nicholls undertake this exercise on behalf of the Province of Manitoba, and indeed, on behalf of education in the province of Manitoba, with a view to enhancing educational opportunities for young Manitobans because the report is, first and foremost, all about the education of children in the province and the report is first and foremost designed to help us focus on the main issues of education of our children and on where our priorities should be.

* (16:40)

I was very gratified and very pleased, as the Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer) also noted, that Doctor Nicholls, in his analysis, stressed that our priorities should be on the early grades, on children of special needs. I think the early years are very important in terms of setting the sorts of experiences that children moving into adolescence will have in the public school system. I think it is a very important time in all of our lives.

I remember as a child attending Park School. Park School is no longer in existence in Brandon, but I was fortunate to live right kitty-corner, a block from my elementary school, and still have very, very positive memories and recollections of positive experiences that have defined my life. Issues of community, importance of community, importance of neighbourhood and importance of love of learning, I suppose. Those early experiences in our lives, I think, are fundamental, and Doctor Nicholls,

again, corroborates that sort of anecdotal experience that many of us have had that the early grades are of significant importance around the issue of class size and composition.

The insights that Doctor Nicholls gave into the reality of the classrooms of Manitoba, I also thought, were important. Doctor Nicholls's report indicates that we have very, very few classes in this province with large numbers of students: 98 percent of the classrooms—again I do not have the paper in front of me, but some 98 percent notionally of the classrooms in the province of Manitoba—I have it here; it is fine—in elementary schools, 98 percent of the classes have fewer than 30 students. I note that is an extraordinarily good figure.

We have a difficulty in comparing this data with other jurisdictions as well, because not only is the Nicholls report and this analysis an historic first in Manitoba but we have, by virtue of the Nicholls report, the most thorough collection of data and research based on class size and composition in Canada. It is the most current document on this issue in Canada.

Indeed, many provinces have no real sense of the issue beyond the anecdotal. So I think the Nicholls report does us a great service in terms of developing public policy and understanding the realities in the classrooms of the province.

As I said, Doctor Nicholls noted that in elementary schools 98 percent of classes had fewer than 30 students. I was just conferring with Doctor Levin and note that Tony Blair, one of the many initiatives the government in Britain has put in place over the last number of years of this current administration in the United Kingdom was a class size limit of 30 students. So we are in fact in reality very, very well-served in terms of the number of students in classrooms.

Doctor Nicholls notes that the vast majority of classes in Manitoba are of reasonable size. Certainly, I was very pleased to have that understanding myself, as minister, that indeed we were at very good levels in terms of the number of students in classes.

I also note Doctor Nicholls's conclusion on the secondary grades and the older years in the

public school system, that 93 percent of those classes had fewer than 30 students. So I think we have in Manitoba a class size ratio that is I would daresay second to none in Canada, particularly at the early years where it does, I think, make so much of a difference to children. We have 98 percent of our classes with fewer than 30 students.

Another conclusion that Doctor Nicholls noted in the early years, I am glad the member made reference to the early years, that the average class size in our province is fewer than 22 students across the system as a whole, which I think is extraordinarily positive and points to the fact that in Manitoba we do have, if not a leadership position in Canada in terms of these numbers, certainly amongst the best, if not the best student-teacher ratio in the country.

The early childhood focus that Doctor Nicholls noted in his report as being of significance is something that, as a government that has initiated the Healthy Child Initiative, was something I felt also to be particularly noteworthy and beneficial, I think, because, as we as a government in Manitoba continue to invest in early childhood development and the Healthy Child Initiative, touching on issues such as FAS-FAE, nutrition, support for young mothers and young children, both in utero and until the age of three or the entry to the public school system, is something as a government we have put considerable energy on. I am privileged to be part of a Cabinet committee that is under the leadership of the honourable Minister of Family Services and Housing (Mr. Sale) that places considerable emphasis and considerable policy development on issues of preschool children and those who are in utero.

This sort of analysis that Doctor Nicholls gives us I think gives us further support and further reason to continue using, again, the best research data available, as supported by Doctor Nicholls and others in the field in the early childhood area. Dr. Fraser Mustard, in particular in Canada, gives us further support and further heartens us as a government, by investing in early childhood initiatives, by focusing on where we can make a difference for children's growth, development and education. Doctor Nicholls's report clearly indicates that, at the early

childhood level, this is significant in terms of class size and composition. It does provide us as a government with some direction, some support and corroboration for what we have already undertaken as a government and some insights as how we can continue as a government both in the early childhood area, preschool, but also in this portfolio that I am currently honoured to serve in to the development of initiatives in the early years in the public school system.

Indeed, we are as a government and as a department very interested in the early years of a child's experience. The public school system is a place where we want to spend considerable attention and develop policies and practices based upon the best research and data available, the best practices that are available in the field. I think that Doctor Nicholls's report in particular is noteworthy in highlighting early childhood development as being critical to the future well-being of children in Manitoba.

So, again, the Nicholls report is a substantive document that was well over a year in the making. Doctor Nicholls did work on his report for over a year. There were thousands of Manitobans that were part of that process. Every stakeholder group in our public education system, many communities, innumerable parents, students, teachers, thousands of Manitobans participated in this process. Doctor Nicholls has provided us with a thorough and thoughtful consideration of a whole range of complex issues and a broad range of complex issues. He has called on government to begin to formulate plans to address the priority issues as identified.

* (16:50)

My first priority, as I have said in the House and in Estimates previously, is to discuss the report thoroughly with trustees, with teachers, with parents within the realm of the interest groups in education, the provincial bodies, the Manitoba Teachers' Society, the Manitoba Association of School Trustees, the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents, the Manitoba Association of School Business Officials, the Manitoba Association of Parent Councils, individual members of those provincial bodies, communities to discuss this report thoroughly with all interested Manitobans and to discuss the entire report, the whole report, the body and

substance of the entire report, all of the recommendations. I know that we are not at a stage where broad conclusions can be reached as yet.

I have had, as the Member for Minnedosa has had and others of my colleagues have had, representations made to us both formally and informally. I think that is a healthy thing. I think it is a positive situation in our province where we have a debate on public education that is informed and educational in and of itself. I certainly appreciate and value the many diverse views and opinions that are put to me as minister by educators, by communities, by their provincial organizations when they are so represented or by virtue of the fact that we have interested Manitobans who are interested in education. I do not intend to pre-empt the outcome of those discussions that, as I said, are ongoing.

Doctor Nicholls, again, provided, I think, yeoman service to the people of the province of Manitoba. He has developed and written the most comprehensive and modern current reported analysis on the issue of class size and composition in Canada. I think we are well served, that Manitoba is a national leader in this. There are a number of recommendations and a number of situations. There are a number of priorities that Doctor Nicholls identifies. These are being discussed broadly throughout the province right now. As I said, Doctor Nicholls worked on his report for over a year and has provided a thorough and thoughtful consideration of a broad range of very complex educational issues and has called on us to begin to formulate a plan to address the priority issues.

The first priority is to discuss this report broadly, and I do intend and have undertaken to discuss the whole report. I have a meeting set with the Manitoba Association of School Trustees. This is one item on the agenda within the next couple of weeks. We discussed this when I met with their president and executive director. It would have been maybe two weeks ago. It is something that is on the agenda of most provincial organizations right now, which is, as I said, something, I think, that is healthy because we are interested in an educational debate and discussion around enhancing educational opportunities for young Manitobans in this province.

I expect that, in due course, there will be a position of government that emerges from the work of Doctor Nicholls, but we have had the report for a little over two months, eight or ten weeks now. Doctor Nicholls worked on this report for over a year. Thousands of people were involved. Literally dozens of communities and school communities were involved. I think it is, not only in the public interest, but also prudent and considerate and respectful not to preempt the outcome of discussions and, rather, to have a thorough assessment of how the field feels about the entire Nicholls report and the recommendations therein contained.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Perhaps, to sum up, you have not made up your mind yet. Is that correct?

Mr. Caldwell: Well, I appreciate that comment, and I have a big grin on my face as I speak right now, but that would be correct.

We did, two years ago, when we undertook to take a commission on class size and composition, knew that it would be an issue of considerable interest in the province of Manitoba broadly, but not only in school communities, not only with school communities, but broadly in the province. So, when we undertook this exercise two years ago as a government and had Doctor Nicholls, as the commissioner, undertaking this exercise on behalf of government, I knew intrinsically at that time, even though it was early in my days as minister, and my colleagues knew, I think, intrinsically, that this was an issue that was going to involve a lot of thought, a lot of focus, a lot of sincere consideration by, not only government, but, as importantly, those who were making presentations to Doctor Nicholls and those whose views were going to be shared with all members of the House and the department and so forth.

Just in conclusion, Madam Chair, I expect that, in due course, there will be a view of government put forward, but we are certainly not at that stage yet. I think the report, as I said, over a year in the making, deserves and should have a thorough discussion of the entire report and the priorities and suggestions made therein.

Mr. Gilleshammer: As we get into the final days of the House, the minister is well aware

that there is a sunset clause in previous legislation that will kick in. I would just urge him to ultimately be up front on the issue and not allow it to simply come into effect by doing nothing.

Moving on, we talked about political staff the last time. It was the second thing we talked about. You have an EA, Jamie Skinner, is it, and an SA, Annalea Mitchell. Have you had any other political staff prior to these people coming on staff?

Mr. Caldwell: Yes, Jamie Skinner is my EA, and Annalea Mitchell is my special assistant. Jamie has been with me for about a year. For the year previous to that, I had as my executive assistant, Jonathan Richert who has recently been taken on by Davis & Company, a law firm in Vancouver. He spent the last year in Tokyo working for another law company. He is back in Canada again. Maybe we can get him back to Manitoba at some point in the future.

Six months previous to that, I functioned without an executive assistant. Upon being appointed to the minister's office, it was quite some time before I hired political staff. I thought it would be prudent at the time to have an understanding of the job and the portfolio myself as the new minister before making any hiring decisions for staff. I think that that is likely, from my perspective, I think a reasonable thing to do.

I would like to say I have been very privileged to work with Jamie. More recently, she just drove me back from Brandon where I was attending a funeral just half an hour ago, approximately, and spends a lot of time on the road with me. Her parents live in Brandon—Brandon West, I might add. I also note that my colleague Scott Smith, his EA is a Brandon East resident, so that kind of works out very well for both of us in Brandon being concerned about the constituency. It is nice to have a broader perspective on Brandon, one that you would not necessarily get if you just had people from your own constituency working with you. But Jamie is a real pleasure to work with.

* (17:00)

Annalea Mitchell, of course, is always a delight day in and day out, brings joy to the

office at every occasion and certainly works very, very, very, very hard, as do all people in the Department of Education.

Jonathan, as I said, left last year to pursue his legal career in Japan and more recently in British Columbia.

As I said, for the first six months before that, as I was coming to understand the department myself and understand the different branches within the department and making myself familiar with staff in the department and the responsibilities, I did not choose to hire any political staff until I had my own ministerial understanding of the job.

Mr. Gillehammer: So that completes the political staff, the two incumbents plus Jonathan Richert. There were not any other political staff that worked for you at any other time?

Mr. Caldwell: No, I do not think so I should mention, it is not political staff, but I did not acknowledge at the beginning of our session today, I am joined by Doctor Levin again, but also Tom Thompson from the department. I did not acknowledge you, Tom. Tom is not political staff. Tom is a consummate civil servant, as is Doctor Levin.

Mr. Gillehammer: The third thing we talked about when we met a month ago was the boundaries. I would like to go back to that to ask some questions on the amalgamation of school divisions. We talked about some of the views of this on the part of your deputy and certainly other colleagues. I do not think we need to go back there, but there were certainly diverse views indicating the thoughts of those individuals on school boundaries at that time.

Recently, you talked about the \$10-million savings and referenced that there would be 150 trustees displaced or positions not there. Earlier, you talked about 100 trustees. Can you just focus in on that number for me? How many fewer trustees will we have after October 23?

Mr. Caldwell: This is the first time I have actually had a chance to put any comments about The Public Schools Modernization Act, Bill 14,

that was passed in the House last week. I appreciate the question.

I want to begin in answering the members question which I appreciate by expressing my disappointment, again, in the level of debate around personal vilification that took place towards my person but, certainly, toward other persons indirectly during this discussion. I had the opportunity to read the concluding comments of the Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed) in the House. I was quite taken aback by the tone and mean-spirited nature of the attack the member put on the record.

Others can read Hansard and see what remarks the member made, but certainly I thought they were not deserving of a place in the House where all members are honourable members. Certainly, the factual content and the veracity of some of the assertions the member made left much to be desired, as well as the mean-spirited tone and vilification that seemed to characterize his remarks.

Now, having said that, it is my first opportunity to put comments on the record after the debate. In terms of trustees, the limit on the number of school trustees in the province will result in a reduction in the number of trustees from 445 trustees to 311. That reduction of 134 trustees, there will be, I expect, other changes that will flow in the future but those are the precise numbers we are expecting come October 24 after the divisional elections throughout the province.

Mr. Gillehammer: Has the minister attached a cost reduction to the fewer trustees that will be in place?

Mr. Caldwell: The Norrie report attached a cost factor per trustee. I do not have my copy of Norrie here. I will bring it when we next come into Estimates to give the estimation of Norrie in the early nineties. Notionally, I think it would be more prudent to refer to Norrie and bring that back in with me when I return to Estimates in the days to come, but they certainly are in the thousands of dollars per trustee. Depending on the division, they can be upwards of \$10,000 and \$20,000, but in the range of thousands of dollars per each trustee.

It is not only the honoraria or salaries that are associated with trustees that are a factor here, it is the support cost for the maintenance of trustees, the sundry items. We all, as parliamentarians and those who serve on provincial or local boards, have ancillary costs, whether that be travel, meals, secretarial supports, copying, all those charges. But I will refer to Norrie after our Estimates and bring back those numbers for the member if he wishes.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes, I would appreciate it if you could bring them back next day. I am interested in that.

You also are putting in place administrative limits of 4 percent, 4.5 percent and 5 percent. What is the estimated savings that will be generated through the cap on administrative costs?

Mr. Caldwell: I am just reviewing some of my notes here and the deputy is assisting me. Notionally, the cost system-wide is \$6 million from administrative caps, \$6 million to \$7 million. A lot of this is determined, of course, by individual decisions that the new school divisions will make in their budgetary processes, that is, in the three- to five-year period which has been the experience of other jurisdictions who have undertaken this exercise in the past. During that three- to five-year horizon, the rationalization of administrative staff, the consolidation of departments, the consolidation of operations in school divisions such as transit, finance, those administrative functions of school divisions will be defined by decisions that the board itself makes.

* (17:10)

The boards themselves certainly are not expected to spend to their cap. They are expected to spend at or under their cap, and I would hope that divisions would make decisions that would even enhance the redirection of resources flowing from board and administrative functions to classroom and educational functions.

The deputy is still looking for the numbers. I was going to relate to the member the percentages spent on administrative functions around

the system today. Maybe I will let the member ask another question and take a look myself here too.

Mr. Gilleshammer: The \$6-million savings, that is an annual savings you are anticipating from the caps that have been put in place? *[interjection]* Do you want me to repeat it? The \$6-million savings that you referenced by using administrative caps, that is on an annual basis? There would be a \$6-million savings?

Mr. Caldwell: First, I think that we should clarify that the exercise is about redirecting resources in the Education budget. We are redirecting Education resources from administrative functions to classroom functions. I do not think that using the word "savings" is accurate. I certainly have not used that phrase myself, because there will be money that will be I suppose notionally saved from an administrative function and then spent on a classroom function.

But, really, this exercise is fundamentally about redirecting resources and redirecting education dollars from non-educational functions or ancillary educational functions in the case of administrative functions. It is, however, a \$6-million annual redirection of resources. It does have the caps. The administrative caps do have a relevance for all school divisions in the province. The caps were something, I suppose in the Canadian context, perhaps pioneered by the Government of Alberta a number of years ago. I know that in my reading and in my conversations around this issue, Alberta has been the province identified as leader in this. I do have their press release from some place in the mid-nineties around this issue where the Government of Alberta talks about the administrative caps that they have in place in that province and the redirecting of resources pursuant to the implementation of those caps.

In Alberta, of course, in terms of economies of scale, there is a very different reality. You know, I will note as well, Madam Chair, while I have got the floor, I have got, and I will share this with the member, a news story from the *Winnipeg Free Press* from October 2001, noting that the Alberta government reduced the number of school boards in 1994 from 141 to 57 school boards, quite a dramatic reduction in 1994, and

reduced the number of trustees from some 1200 to 460. This is the point about the caps. The Alberta government ordered that no more than 4 percent of the budget could go to trustees, administrators and office costs.

Of course, in Manitoba we have taken somewhat of a more moderate and balanced approach to this question by recognizing that rural Manitoba has somewhat different needs from urban Manitoba, and in turn northern Manitoba have somewhat different needs from both rural and urban. So we do have a cap ratio of 4 percent, 4.5 percent and 5 percent. To put those caps into some context, for the amalgamating divisions, I do have, from the FRAME document, statistics on the percentages expended on administrative costs as percentage of budgets from the amalgamating school divisions. I will just review these for the member.

In Southwest Horizon School Division, the new school division of Southwest Horizon, which is the current Souris Valley School Division and Antler School Division, the current administration costs as a percentage of the budget for the Souris Valley School Division is 5.4 percent; the current administration costs as percentage of the budget for Antler River is 5.7 percent. So there will be some work to do there.

In the Pembina Trails School Division, which is the amalgamation of the current Assiniboine South and Fort Garry school divisions, the current administration costs as percentage of budget for Assiniboine South is 4.9 percent; the current administration cost as percentage of budget for Fort Garry School Division is 5.7 percent.

In Border Land School Division where Boundary and Rhineland, Red River school divisions and Sprague School District are merging, the division amalgamation costs as a percentage of budget for current Boundary School Division is 4.8 percent; the current Rhineland School Division at 5.2 percent; the current Sprague School Division is 6.2, and the very small part of Red River that is amalgamating in the Border Land School Division is a non-applicable figure because it is just the community of Letellier that is in that merger, a merger involving four school divisions. Incidentally, there are a number of school divisions

in the province, this being one of them, that have more than the merger of two school divisions. In this case there are four divisions merging.

In Mountain View School Division, which is a merger of three school divisions—the Dauphin-Ochre River School Division, the Duck Mountain School Division and the Intermountain School Division—the administrative cost as a percentage of budget for Dauphin-Ochre River is 4.9 percent. In Duck Mountain, again this is Duck Mountain being non-applicable because it is an apportioned figure of Duck Mountain. Duck Mountain is joining with more than one division. So that is not applicable. Intermountain, the administrative cost, as a percentage of budget, is 5.2 percent. There are substantial administrative redirections to be anticipated by this legislation, by The Public Schools Modernization Act. There is substantial work to do, obviously. The three- to five-year time horizon is the expected horizon for this to occur. That, as I said, has been the experience in other jurisdictions in Canada that have undertaken this exercise.

I just want to go on a little here to again put these figures on the record for the member: In Frontier School Division, which involves the merger of Duck Mountain, Churchill School Division, Snow Lake, Lynn Lake, Leaf Rapids with Frontier, the division administration cost, as a percentage of budget for Frontier, is 6.4 percent; in Churchill, 8.3 percent; in Snow Lake, 7.1 percent; Lynn Lake, 7 percent; Leaf Rapids, 7 percent.

Moving forward, the Prairie Spirit School Division, which is the voluntary amalgamation of the current Prairie Spirit, which is the former Pembina Valley, Tiger Hills with Mountain School Division, the administrative cost, as a percentage of budget for Mountain, is 7.9. Prairie Spirit is 5.5. The point, I guess, I am making is that there are administrative numbers across the system that are currently higher than the expected cap on these costs in the years to come, again, redirecting resources from administrative functions to educational classroom functions.

In the Park West School Division, the current Pelly Trail and current Birdtail school divisions, administration costs, as a percentage

of budget for Pelly Trail, is currently 5.1 percent, and Birdtail is 5.5 percent.

* (17:20)

In the Red River Valley School Division, which is the current Morris-Macdonald School Division merging with a portion of the Red River School Division, the portion excluding Letellier, administrative costs, as a percentage of budget, is 5.2 percent current.

If the member will indulge me, I am just about done with this. In the River East Transcona School Division, the amalgamation between River East and Transcona school divisions, the Transcona urban portion of the Transcona-Springfield School Division, the administrative cost, as a percentage of budget, is 4.5 percent.

In the Louis Riel School Division, which is the current St. Boniface and St. Vital school divisions, administrative costs, as a percentage of budget in St. Boniface, is 4 percent, right on the money, as it were. In the St. Vital School Division, it is currently 4.6 percent.

In the Sunrise School Division, the present Agassiz School Division and the Springfield portion of the Agassiz-Springfield school division, the current administrative costs, as a percentage of budget, is 3.6 percent. I hope that they maintain a lower level than the caps as that amalgamation moves forward. I would like to note that it is lower than the cap in that division.

Prairie Rose School Division, which is the merger of White Horse Plain and Midland school divisions, the administrative costs, as a percentage of budget, in the 2001-2002 budget year, for White Horse Plains, is 4.9 percent, and Midland is 4.6 percent.

There will be some considerable work undertaken by school trustees in the years to come to move forward with the expectations as laid out in The Public Schools Modernization Act. I know as a government we are committed to working with school divisions and certainly committed to our record of investing in the public school system. We have a commitment as a government to provide increases in provincial

support at the rate of economic growth. In the last three budget years this has meant a little over 8% increase in support to the public school system. We have in fact exceeded the rate of economic growth in terms of the provincial dollars granted to public schools in two of our first three public schools funding announcements.

There is a strong commitment to support provincial investment in our public school system. We will be working with school divisions and have been working with school divisions since coming into office and will be working with school divisions far into the future to continue our partnership in managing not only the resources that are required to support the public education system in this province but the professionalism to support educational excellence in terms of our programs in the schools of the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Can you provide me with a clear definition of what administrative costs mean? I presume there will be a definition of administrative costs that will apply to all school divisions across the province who have to live within these administrative caps and divisions, will have to make decisions based on the numbers the minister just read into the record on changes. I say to him that in some cases clinicians are assigned to schools as opposed to the division office. I am just wondering if there is a clear, concise definition of administrative costs that he could share with me or give me a copy of.

Mr. Caldwell: Madam Chair, the administrative costs or the administrative functions are defined in FRAME. The FRAME advisory committee has been very helpful in discussing and clarifying and defining what should be categorized or what should be accounted for in terms of administrative costs.

There was a fairly active and vigorous discussion in the last year around this issue, as we have been working as a department with our partners in education around curriculum support services, a function that was perceived broadly to be administrative at one point and has been refined to reflect the fact that those positions and those functions directly assist the classroom teacher, and, by direct implication, the quality of

the educational experience for children in Manitoba schools. We will continue to work within the context of FRAME for transparency and for accountability in the categorization of administrative costs.

I have expectation, just again, given the dynamic nature of this portfolio and indeed public education in the province, that we will continue to work within the FRAME, for lack of a better word, framework, and continue to work with the advisory committee to address any issues or any challenges that may emerge as a consequence of the administrative caps. But we are, I think, working within the established institutional framework or the established framework for concluding or accounting for public education dollar expenditures. In short, these will be defined in FRAME and indeed are.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Is the minister able to table today or tomorrow a one pager of what the administrative costs will be, just a definition of them?

Mr. Caldwell: Yes, we can table the definition tomorrow or the next sitting of the Estimates Committee, if it is tomorrow or Monday or Friday, as the case may be, or Saturday or Sunday, as the case may be.

An Honourable Member: I appreciate that.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I have commented a number of times on the new boundaries and how, without announcing any criteria, the minister announced these boundaries. I suppose interested people have been trying to figure out what the criteria were. Can the minister indicate who actually drew the boundaries?

Mr. Caldwell: I am not sure who drew the lines on the map, but in terms of the lines that were drawn on the map, there were very few lines that were actually drawn because the amalgamations that took place essentially respected existing school division boundaries. There were a few exceptions to that fact.

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

We have mentioned the amalgamation of Dauphin-Ochre River with a portion of Duck

Mountain School Division and Intermountain School Division. There are others as well. The Red River School Division, part of it is going towards the new Border Land School Division and part of it is going towards the new Red River Valley School Division, but in essence there were very few lines to draw.

In fact, in terms of this discussion on amalgamation in the province, that is one of the notable things that set this exercise apart from the conclusion of the Norrie report. While the Norrie report did lay the foundation and the context for this discussion to take place in Manitoba over the last decade, Norrie concluded and recommended, in terms of the map, that all school divisions in the province would be affected, and all school divisions would have substantially different borders.

* (17:30)

While the majority of the Norrie Commission's report recommendations were adopted into this announcement and subsequently the legislation on The Public Schools Modernization Act, the mapping itself is defined by Norrie and the division of boundaries in such a fashion that would have caused 100% disruption, or at least 100% activity in every school division in the province of Manitoba with consequential complexities around collective bargaining and harmonization of salaries and disposition of assets and community upheaval and bus routes; this exercise was to make a meaningful and positive difference in the redirection of resources within the ability of the public school system to accommodate this meaningful change without disruption in the classroom.

That was, I think, the only major diversion in my view, at any rate, the only major diversion from Norrie in this exercise that we have just completed in the province. Sixty percent of the students in the province of Manitoba were unaffected by any merger. In Norrie, 100 percent of the students would have been impacted by any merger. One hundred percent of the school divisions would have been involved in a merger, and it is not just a merger of existing boundaries, but rather a pretty massive redrawing of boundaries right across the province—in the context of the city of Winnipeg, to the extent of basically dividing the city into quadrants.

The member may appreciate that amalgamation, modernization and consolidation, whatever phrase we want to use to describe a consolidation—in the 1920s, "amalgamation"; in the fifties and sixties, our chosen phrase "modernization" in terms of schools governance and schools boundaries. We felt an approach that was sensitive to existing realities on the ground is sensitive to the very hard work and very difficult community challenges this sort of exercise presented, not only in this exercise but presented in the late fifties and early sixties, and presented in earlier decades, in the twenties, around consolidation, was such that it was in the public interest and in the educational interest of students to undertake meaningful change without absolute disruption or absolute impact on every school division in the province of Manitoba.

I cannot tell you who drew the map in terms of the section, township range and legal delineation. I suppose someone in legal services translated the map into the existing school division boundaries, but I can tell the member there were very few new boundaries drawn, very, very few new boundaries drawn. That was in juxtaposition or in high contrast to the Norrie report, which called for it in 100 percent of the province. Again, from my way of thinking, my view, my perspective, that was virtually the only substantive area in terms of Norrie where there was a significant divergence.

I read back in the House at one point during the debate earlier that the first recommendation of Norrie was that the Department of Education and Training, today the Department of Education, Training and Youth, undertake a leadership role in supporting public education in the province. I am quite proud in saying this Government, indeed, with our unprecedented investment in capital and historic levels of investment in operating and active engagement with educators throughout the province, we are taking an active leadership role in public education in Manitoba. That corresponds with the first recommendation of Norrie.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, the Norrie Commission, of course, was very transparent as to the membership and the staff they had involved with it. I just want to know whether it was a Cabinet committee or a departmental working group or a

group of caucus members who actually formulated the new boundaries.

Mr. Caldwell: In a very real sense I think everybody was involved in this process of drawing boundaries. We undertook an 18-month rather exhaustive consultation with school divisions, with trustees throughout the province. There were a number of pieces of correspondence I sent out from the department asking school divisions to undertake over that period of time extensive community discussions and consultations with not only the communities the school divisions had within them but also intra-school divisions so that neighbouring school divisions at the regional level would discuss with each other the issue of boundary modernization.

That was an 18-month process I promoted as minister very vigorously. I know some regions of the province undertook that exercise with more vigour and more engagement than others, but it was a sincere exercise that was expected of elected trustees around the province. That was part of this process in terms of how divisions merged. We did have a number of voluntary amalgamations take place as a consequence of that year-and-a-half-long process before the November 8, 2001 announcement.

Post the announcement, of course, we knew the broad outlines of the new divisions. Certainly the divisions that were formed are coincident with the November 2001 announcement with, again, a few notable exceptions.

The issue of municipal status in eastern Manitoba for the Pine Falls, Pinawa, Whiteshell area, I understand, from discussing this with trustees in the new Sunrise School Division is moving along quite well in terms of the trustees working together in eastern Manitoba to see that merger come to a completion, but it is not in completion yet. There still are issues to resolve around municipal status, but the trustees, to their credit, are working together in the best interests of students to facilitate the coming together of those educational entities.

We had a small adjustment in boundaries in the Transcona-Springfield merger with Sunrise and with River East as a consequence of a number of meetings in my office, a number of

meetings in the municipality with a variety of different officials, municipal officials, parents, the elected board members themselves. Some adjustments were made as a consequence of those further consultations.

We had some adjustments in the Duck Mountain area of the province based upon the same sort of community input as a consequence of the announcement of early November 2001, with similar representations made from municipal officials, parents, educators, communities, to adjust the boundary in accord with the wishes of the communities affected.

Madam Chairperson in the Chair

So there was and has been, I think, in Manitoba certainly, this is the longest amalgamation exercise that has been undertaken in Canada, tracing a point back from the 1993-94 Norrie Commission beginnings of this discussion and concluding with legislation last week with the passage of Bill 14, The Public Schools Modernization Act.

I know we are still discussing it right now, and I appreciate the chance to discuss it. It certainly, as I said, was not an easy exercise to undertake. It presented considerable challenges. I feel like I paid a relatively high personal cost in terms of the vilification that I underwent and others of my colleagues underwent in the House and as was facilitated outside of the House by certain parties. But I have made mention of that earlier in this discussion.

* (17:40)

But we have certainly, again, been highly committed to a respectful, engaged discussion with school communities, with broader communities, with municipal officials, with educators and with the public of Manitoba around this issue really since the first weeks of coming into office.

I had occasion to reflect on this with Nick Martin, the journalist with the *Winnipeg Free Press*, last week when he was interviewing me on some other subject. I recalled to Nick when we were talking that one of the first stories that he did with me as a rookie MLA and a rookie

minister of the Crown—it would have been in the first few weeks after coming into office at a time when I still had no political staff and no deputy minister—was on Norrie and the division amalgamations and the discussion around school division amalgamations that had been taking place in the province for a number of years. I think it was early November or late October, and I still remember the headline, because, as a fellow coming from Brandon and the relatively quiet life of Brandon City Council to the relatively noisy life of an MLA in the Manitoba Legislature, a minister in the Manitoba Legislature, the headline was something to the effect that: Caldwell Dusts off Norrie.

There was quite a bit of interest subsequent to those remarks from the field. There were a lot of calls. There were a lot of further questions and I got a real appreciation as to how interested the public was in this issue, how interested the field was in this issue, how strongly views were held around the issue of school division modernization, boundary modernization around the province, pro and con. I must say, mostly pro. I had many, many more people urging me on with advice to redirect resources from boardrooms to classrooms and merge school divisions, many more advocates for that sort of process than there were those opposed to that sort of process. I suppose that is partly the consequence that, throughout Canada, this exercise took place a decade ago and in Manitoba we have just concluded it in the last week.

Obviously, there are very strong editorials written on this issue. My home community in Brandon wrote a number of editorials on the issue urging action and in fact urging us to go further as a government than we did go. I touched on that a little bit in an earlier answer that we desired to have an approach that was moderate and balanced and fundamentally respectful of the classroom and the students in the classroom and not disruptive of students in the classroom and not unnecessarily disruptive of the public school system, the stability in the public school system in Manitoba.

So I feel quite comfortable in spite of calls for provincial control and education by some editorial writers or one school division in Winnipeg, as suggested by the *Winnipeg daily*, the

Free Press; other suggestions to move further and more rigorously to reduce school boundaries that were made in my home community newspaper, the *Brandon Sun*, and other jurisdictions. I remember reading the *Portage Daily Graphic* sometime in 2000 with a very, I thought, enthusiastic editorial entitled: Bring on the Mergers, advocating substantive change in the public school, the consolidation of public school divisions in the province of Manitoba.

So we did undertake in this exercise, we did endeavour to be sensitive to the realities in the school system, the consequences of substantive change in terms of the boundaries of the public school system in the province and fundamentally respectful and responsive to communities who had the right and the obligation to make representation to government before it made an announcement. During the process of making that announcement, the reality that was Bill 14 which was passed, as I said, in the House last week.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I find it fascinating that you used the term "modernization" as a title for this bill and this process. As I said in an earlier speech, when I first read that I expected to hear about new curriculum and new technology and other issues, but, lo and behold, it was about boundaries. I wonder if you can tell me how a division like Turtle River escaped modernization.

Mr. Caldwell: Just touching on the first point, The Public Schools Modernization Act, as I mentioned earlier in remarks, the *nom de guerre* by which this exercise or this sort of process has been known in the past in the province, the consolidations of school districts from some 2000 to some 200 that took place in the early decades of the 20th century, consolidation being the phrase that was used by legislators then, moving into the amalgamation, which was used as a phrase for this exercise in the fifties and sixties.

Norrie established the Boundaries Review Commission with a view to reviewing the boundaries and making suggestions for changes to boundaries in school divisions. We have already touched upon that being the Norrie conclusion versus the more balanced approach that

we undertook as a government in terms of the number of school divisions and the reductions and how those were carried out.

Modernization refers to more than just changes in boundaries. It also refers to administrative caps, redirection of educational resources, greater accountability and rigour put into place for the expenditure and accountability for those resources. That, I think, is something that Manitobans have been asking for certainly very loudly in recent years with the explosion of local school property taxes, which accompanied the provincial retreat from education and educational funding that took place in the nineties. We still have some work to do to be able to catch up to that retreat even at unprecedented levels of investment.

We still have many, many challenges in the public school system in terms of operating and in terms of infrastructure. The member may appreciate and may smile at this, but they chose to call their act the Fewer School Boards Act in Ontario. I have not had an opportunity to look in depth at the framework of that act to find out if there were indeed other factors as a part of that act other than creating fewer school boards, but certainly with this act, The Public Schools Modernization Act, it was about redirecting resources from administrative functions to educational functions. It was about having greater expectations for the allocation of these resources in terms of having administrative caps and identified administration caps that could be benchmarked against the FRAME report. It was about encouraging greater public engagement and public scrutiny of our public school system and accountability for educational dollars within that system.

* (17:50)

As I said, again at some point earlier in our sitting today, I am very encouraged and pleased with the increased public discussion and public debate around education in the province of Manitoba. I think it is healthy to have vigorous debate and discussion around the building of public schools excellence in the province and more broadly educational excellence in the province. You know, our commitment as a government to education does not begin and end in

the public school system. It extends to our post-secondary system: the large investment in capital that has been part and parcel of this Government's record in post-secondary education; the largest contribution in history made last year, as I recall, or 18 months to a year ago around rebuilding university infrastructure; the College Expansion Initiative in the province, which is unprecedented in the province.

We are seeing some of the fruits of that rising on Princess Street, with the Red River College Campus in the historic Exchange District in the city of Winnipeg. That not only has huge educational impacts but huge urban renewal impacts in Manitoba's capital city in Winnipeg, specifically in the historic core area of the city of Winnipeg in the Exchange District, in adult learning centres, in the education of adults, in this province.

In my tenure in this office, we have doubled the budgeted allocation to adult learning centres in the province from \$6 million to a little over \$12 million this year. In adult literacy outside of the context of the adult learning centres, there have been increases in support. We touched upon the early childhood initiative when we discussed the Nicholls report earlier in this Estimates process, but we are committed obviously in a meaningful way, in a way that is unprecedented in Canada to an investment in early childhood development. So across, I suppose, the spectrum of educational priorities, as a government we have been very much engaged.

I should touch upon too before I conclude my remarks on this question that the development of the K to Senior 4 agenda for student success, which has been developed over the last two-and-a-half years by the field essentially, the department working with the field in developing an agenda for student success in this province that can guide our policy discussions, guide our investment decisions, guide our thinking on educational issues in the public school system, is something that I think the department is very pleased to have participated in, continue to be a participant, because it will provide a lasting guide year in and year out with six priorities identified to provide a framework for policy and investment in our public school system.

So, certainly, we have as a department a very solid plan for the future in education in the province of Manitoba. It has an integral tie to the K to Senior 4 agenda for student success. It is something I think that in the department certainly and in the province we are all very proud of. Again it puts Manitoba in a leadership role in the country vis-à-vis policy in the public school sector.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Madam Chairperson, I wonder if I could get the minister to focus on the question I asked, and that was: How did Turtle River escape modernization?

Mr. Caldwell: Well, I appreciate that, and I appreciate the member bringing me back to the initial question. The entire boundary modernization that took place in the province of Manitoba was not done in a piecemeal fashion. It was done in a very comprehensive and big-picture fashion. Divisions were engaged in this process from the earliest days of the Government taking office. All divisions were engaged with the department in the minister's office very closely in discussing the issues of school boundaries in the year and a half prior to the announcement in November of 2001.

In Turtle River's case, when they were engaged in this discussion in 2000, they said very clearly: Please leave us alone. That was the advice from Turtle River. That was advice from other school divisions as well, I might add. Other divisions said we would like to merge with one of our neighbours. It was a very mixed picture that emerged from the year and a half of discussions that took place with the field.

There are a number of divisions in the province that were not touched by this Public Schools Modernization Act. I think I have made a pretty clear statement upon why that was the case. The public interest in education is served not only by the redirection of resources from classrooms to boardrooms but also by continuing stability in the public school system so that we can work together on the educational issues that are important to all of us, as well as the governance and boundary issues, fiscal issues that also occupy a lot of our collective resources and attention.

In making the announcement in November we chose to undertake a process of amalgamation or a modernization project that was manageable. We respected traditional boundaries in this process. As I said, the major fundamental difference between Norrie and the exercise undertaken by us is there was a pretty profound respect for existing boundaries. We also want to respect transportation orientations of communities throughout the province, the community perspective broadly. All those factors in all those discussions that took place with the field were part of the thinking in making the announcement in November.

Demographics were fundamentally important, finances and tax base considerations, educational opportunities, but also respect for the views and boundaries, views as expressed by school boards in our consultation process and the boundaries and capacities of existing school divisions to merge or to create partnerships amongst themselves.

In that part of the province—we will talk about west of Portage broadly right now—the school divisions in my own part of the province, Brandon School Division, Rolling River, Turtle Mountain, Antler River, Fort La Bosse, Souris Valley, that is in the southwestern part of the province.

Then moving a little bit further north into Dauphin, Ochre River, Duck Mountain, Pelly Trail, Intermountain, Birdtail River, and I suppose moving a little bit north from there into the Frontier School Division, it was, in terms of the decision-making process when we were looking at this—we do look at this in terms of a whole, not in terms of an individual division but as a whole—looking at the province as a whole and looking at this through a lens of a macro-perspective, the change in the northwestern part of the province, or north central, depending on your perspective—because northwestern really would be up with the territory, if you took it to extension—the Parklands south, the change in the northwest and that part of the region, Parkland South with Duck Mountain, Frontier School Division, Dauphin, Ochre River, Pelly Trail, Birdtail all being in play, it seemed to be a better fit and more support for change in Birdtail and Pelly where we had one division, as I said, very

keen as a dance partner and one division more reticent but willing to work together, and they are now a successful, merged division, the Pelly-Birdtail merger.

The Duck Mountain, Ochre River, Mountain School Division, Mountain coming into that partnership voluntarily and being keen to see something emerge in the Parklands region that was new and had a better ability to support programs for children in the public school system. I guess in the southwest with Souris Valley and Antler River being a more directed amalgamation, it comes back to the fact we took a balanced and moderate approach as a government, one that was not going to disrupt or destabilize the public school system. That would be the context in which this decision was made.

Turtle River showed clearly that they wanted to be left alone. There were opportunities to move other divisions in with people that were interested, trustees that were interested in voluntarily moving forward, our interest collectively being to redirect resources from boardrooms to classrooms or administrative functions to educational functions with the least possible disruption. That is the environment of the context within which the decisions would have been reached in terms of that part of the province.

Mr. Gilleshammer: So we have forced school board amalgamations and you have a board that said we do not want to be amalgamated, and that was okay with you. There seems to be an apparent contradiction here that you have many school boards that are only amalgamating because you ordered them to. They were not keen on amalgamation, yet you are saying here Turtle River was not part of your so-called modernization because they asked not to be amalgamated. If that, in fact, was in play, I dare say there would be many school divisions that did not get amalgamated.

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

CULTURE, HERITAGE AND TOURISM

* (14:50)

Mr. Chairperson (Conrad Santos): Will the Committee of Supply come to order, please. This

section of the Committee of Supply has been dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Culture, Heritage and Tourism. Will the minister's staff please enter the Chamber.

We are on page 61 of the Estimates book, resolution 14.4 Tourism (a) Tourism Marketing and Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits.

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Seine River): Could the minister please identify the increase in Salaries and Employee Benefits?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism): As a result of a collective agreement, their regular incremental advances or increases.

Mrs. Dacquay: Can the minister please identify what the current staff ratio is, and if there are any vacancies?

Mr. Lemieux: I thank the member from Seine River for the question. There is a full complement except for the one vacancy, and the one vacancy is a person by the name of Statia Elliot. I believe her position was a marketing director in the department. Her husband received a transfer, and regrettably we have lost a very, very talented person which we would be looking forward to filling in the very near future. As the member knows, it is not always easy to fill positions like that because they are few and far between, and they are certainly being readily sought after. So we are attempting that one position to fill as soon as we possibly can.

Mrs. Dacquay: Can the minister please identify what the increase in Other Expenditures, specifically, well, there are several areas that increased, three of them to be precise, Personnel Services, Transportation and Communications, have the most substantive increases.

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Chairperson, the larger increase in communications is as a result of a reprioritization, or putting extra monies into an area where we feel the marketing since September 11 was really important. All our data and information we received was to increase our advertising and our promotion into the northern United States, primarily being Minnesota, North

Dakota and South Dakota, and that increase in marketing and promotion is reflected in those numbers going up.

* (15:00)

I would say, since September 11, we have been able to hold our own, as I commented on yesterday, primarily because most of our traffic is rubber-wheel traffic, and a lot of our tourists from the United States use the highways to get here. Whether it is for the Folk Festival, Folklorama or other events that take place in Manitoba, they use the highways to get here.

So we have been very fortunate in that light, but we certainly want to make sure we target our friends to the south and inform them of the great benefits of their United States dollar getting better by the minute almost, it seems, these days. Nevertheless, our promotions and marketing is happening in the northern United States, and this is primarily reflected in this line.

Mrs. Dacquay: Could the minister please explain why there has been a reduction in the grant assistance, and as a direct result of this reduction, what grants are no longer available?

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Chairperson, I have been advised that this reduction in Operating is really dealing with a reduction in hospitality grants. At one time, we used to give more money out for hospitality, assisting the industry really in hospitality grants, and that has been reduced.

Regrettably, I think most departments are looking at areas where they would have liked to have provided what they have provided in years gone by, but thanks to Mr. Martin and others, we have had to take a tough stand in a lot of different areas and be very, very selective of where we are spending money.

We made a decision overall in the department with regard to tourism to do more in the marketing end. Yet when we were assisting in the hospitality area, we felt, well, we will try to deal with the core area, help our core constituency, and in areas like this, regrettably, we had to reduce. The industry overall has been cognizant of the fact that we are in tough times with regard to the overpayment by the federal

government, so we have been able to work through it.

When we have more money and when more money is put into tourism overall and into government, we would be pleased to revisit that particular line.

Mrs. Dacquay: I have several questions specifically relating to Travel Manitoba and the Travel Manitoba Web site, and I am looking for direction from the minister as to whether he prefers I discuss this under this section, Tourism Marketing and Services, or if he prefers I defer to Tourism Development.

Mr. Lemieux: Well, this area is fine. Any questions related to Tourism, I am pleased to have the staff who are here to assist me with any questions or answers that I do not know. So this is a good enough opportunity right now.

Mrs. Dacquay: Can the minister please identify what the overall advertising budget is, please?

Mr. Lemieux: To answer the member's question, the member from Seine River, the advertising budget is \$2,079,000. Just to clarify a little bit on the advertising, advertising is generally television, radio, brochures or newspapers. But what has to be pointed out as well is that, one thing that we have been able to do quite successfully in Manitoba, we have been able to work closely with the industry in different trade shows. We have also been able to have nights like the night that Travel Manitoba had with the Winnipeg Blue Bombers at the last home game they had, or the previous home game, I guess. Not the last one. It is promoting tourism in the province, but by having some ingenuity with regard to it, being very flexible with the dollars you have.

The advertising dollars are just over \$2 million. The effectiveness of that is teaming up and working with the industry and trying to partner with them in trade shows and other areas too. That is where the real benefit is for us and always has been. I think in Manitoba that we have been able to work with the industry as the previous government has, in a sense, to try to partner on trade shows and things like that that

really give us the best bang for our buck, especially in the United States.

Mrs. Dacquay: I would like the minister to comment on how the advertising contracts are let.

Mr. Lemieux: I would like to thank one of the members for our chocolate, I guess a little energy. This is my lunch.

I would like to answer the question by saying that a request for proposal was put out, and there was a committee that reviewed all the requests for proposals. We have changed to someone new and often those names and those corporations are companies that are recommended for contracts, are usually recommended to ministers and that is generally the norm, but one relies on your staff and committees to make those selections. Just like purchasing art, you have a committee, the minister has a committee that makes those selections and then makes recommendations to the minister.

So an RFP went out, came back, and the best bid was selected by the committee and then recommended to me, which I accepted.

* (15:10)

Mrs. Dacquay: Can the minister please identify who the successful recipient was?

Mr. Lemieux: The company name is Glennie Stamnes and I am not sure how you spell the last name. I am hoping I am pronouncing it properly. Here is the proper spelling. Glennie and then Stamnes is spelled S-t-a-m-n-e-s.

Mrs. Dacquay: Are any of the advertisements prepared in-house and approximately what percentage or dollar value are prepared in-house?

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Chairperson, approximately 10 percent is done in-house, I am told. We try to be as efficient as possible. We have a lot of talented people in the Tourism Division, but obviously you hire people for their expertise outside and you try to complement that with people from the staff you have internally. I am told that, advised that roughly 10 percent is what we are looking at.

Mrs. Dacquay: I apologize. I am going to go back and ask a question related to my previous question. Is this company Glennie Starnes, a Winnipeg firm?

Mr. Lemieux: Yes, it is, Mr. Chairperson.

Mrs. Dacquay: Could the minister please identify who develops the annual advertising strategy?

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Chairperson, I thank the member for the question. Generally, the director of marketing would do that in consultation with others, primarily with the industry to determine the areas of need.

How do they make their decisions? Well, that could be based on focus testing with different audiences to determine what kind of marketing would be most acceptable to Manitobans. Most of the tourism dollars in Manitoba are tourism dollars that are circulated internally, where you get people from Churchill travelling to Winnipeg to attend an event. That changes from year to year on what tourists may want to do.

Of course, the tourism approach we used this year is stay closer to home, mainly because of September 11, but we found that seemed to be very, very attractive for a lot of people. But essentially it is the director of marketing, in consultation with the industry, that comes up with the marketing plan. It is not just throwing darts at a dart board and picking out what is good this year. This is something that is well researched, because it is such a competitive industry. Everyone, there is only so much money in the pot, all provinces and states are all after it, never mind overseas.

We have been very fortunate thus far. I know the member from Seine River can appreciate this, because Manitoba has done fairly well for itself over a number of years, and we are only hoping that \$1.13 billion that comes in as result of tourism will only grow. I know all members in this House would want to see that happen. It is better for the province overall.

Mrs. Dacquay: Can the minister please identify, and he did this to some degree in his opening remarks, the shift of the focus on the target

markets and how these are determined? I guess, by that, I mean, is it based on sort of a review from year to year, in terms of the numbers of tourism dollars that actually come in from various destinations?

Mr. Lemieux: The long and the short is, yes to all of the above. But it has changed slightly. A lot of it is really related to events of the day. Regrettably and tragically, the events in New York that happened September 11 did change tourism and maybe has changed a lot of things forever, but tourism definitely affected as a result.

I know the Tourism ministers have met. We are trying to work with our colleague Minister Rock now, federally, to work a lot closer with us to determine how we can better spend our monies and how can we partner with the federal government.

The dollars have been changed slightly, but market analysis, or the word I am searching for is, I guess, review of circumstances, from year to year, certainly are important, because one marketing approach one year may not be well received the following year. So it is important that you continually review your plan and review your approach.

The dollars have changed slightly from where we may have spent more dollars, for example, in overseas market, whether it is Japan or the British Isles, has changed slightly to dollars going more to the United States. All of our studies of research show us that we have possibly a little bit more potential or better potential from the northern United States because of the proximity and because of the rubber-wheel traffic that we so highly depend on, that it was felt that was the market that we should be zeroing in on this year. It does not mean that will not change next year, depending on what happens and the success of the marketing approach. This is staff that will review it continually and continually monitor it as it is happening.

Sometimes in tourism, as in other areas, you have to change and go with the flow. Depending if an issue happens, as September 11 happened, there are many provinces and many states who

did not and had no plans on spending money in certain areas. Then all of a sudden, when that happened, there was a lot of emphasis placed on the different type of marketing that they certainly did not expect. So it is important to review it and to monitor the ongoing market, but essentially you come up with a plan and you go with the plan. What has been pointed out to me, I am pleased that it was, that whatever marketing plan you have, it is important that you do not flip-flop and change every three months.

Because it was so well researched and planned in the first place, you have to give it a chance because it has potential for success. You cannot just change that after a few months and then change to some different type of plan. You have to stick with it. That is what we are attempting to do with the United States. We feel there is a lot of potential there. It does not mean that we have totally abandoned England or Europe or Japan, but it is just felt that we have a better chance, our province, with our neighbours to the south of us in drawing those U.S. dollars here because of the big advantage of that U.S. dollar. That is certainly self-evident, especially today, to anyone who has watched the value of our dollar and how it has dropped recently.

Regrettably that is not good for a lot of people in different areas, but for tourism with our U.S. neighbours it is a very, very huge plus for us because they come up here, not only for medication and pharmaceuticals, but they come up here for tourism and their dollar goes a long way here.

So thank you to the member for asking the question.

Mrs. Dacquay: Yes, Mr. Chair, I have some figures here based on actual figures for 2000-2001 and estimated for 2001-2002. I recognize that the actuals for this year are not yet available, but my question is when I look from year over year, the estimated for 2001-2002 for Manitoba for actual advertising, I am talking about advertising and promotional shows now, just for clarification, the advertising estimated for Manitoba is approximately \$401,200 and the actual in 2001 was \$436,000. I am wondering how close to that figure that projection will

eventually be, and if, indeed, there is a real reason why there has been a reduction there.

Mr. Lemieux: My apologies to my critic. I was just looking through the papers to try to find the figures, but I have found them and it does show a slight reduction. What we did is we redirected monies to the *Travel Values Guide* and we took money out of the Advertising portion. Of course the *Travel Values Guide* is not considered advertising, as such. We have also redirected some dollars to the U.S. market, but the question is the dollars will, in the end, be very, very close to what is being shown.

Mrs. Dacquay: Well, also conversely, there is a more substantive reduction in the actual estimated advertising for other Canadian cities, as opposed to the 2000-2001 year. My figures indicate it was about \$455,300, and it is projected this year to be only \$385,700. Can the minister explain if those dollars were redirected, and where they were redirected?

* (15:20)

Mr. Lemieux: Just a natural progression through the dollars is that we have redirected a lot of those dollars. In the next column that I have, it shows the U.S. advertising actual to \$1.3 million, and in the advertising estimated it is \$1.363 million. So there is an increase there of about roughly \$60,000. Those dollars had been redirected, in many ways, to the northern United States and the marketing approach. Obviously, we are hoping that it will be successful, but by redirecting dollars like that, essentially you still have the same pot of money, but it is to where you place the money and how best it is used. This is the reason why some areas it shows that monies have changed, but overall, the dollars may end up approximately the same as we see them.

Mrs. Dacquay: I now have a question for the overseas target market: Why is more money spent on the promotional shows, as opposed to the actual advertising?

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Chairperson, the approach used is really to go through the tour operators and the travel agents, and that is where the promotional shows come in, as opposed to trying

to directly advertise or market to a local population, whether it be in Germany, England or Japan. We find it to be more successful, and by going through travel agents and tour operators, and working with them, and have them, in return, promote our province and what we have to offer here, as opposed to going out and trying to market fully within that country, which is very, very expensive, and has not been proven to be lucrative in return. So I think, once again, it comes down to getting the best bang for your buck.

What has been found is dealing with the tour operators and travel agents, through promotional shows, is far, far more successful, and that has been the history and the track record over a number of years, going back when the Member for Seine River was in government at the time. This goes back many years, and the approach has been taken that it has not changed. It is looked upon as being far more successful.

Mrs. Dacquay: Is the minister aware that the Province's Tourism advertising budget is virtually the same as the budget spent on advertising for the casinos? I would like to get his opinion as to whether he feels just to expend a comparable amount in just advertising casinos really gives visitors to our province an overall view of what our province has to offer.

Mr. Lemieux: Thank you for the question, to the Member for Seine River. The whole issue with regard to casinos and gaming in Manitoba, as elsewhere, it is part and parcel, I believe, of the tourism industry. Whether one likes gaming or not and believes it should be in one state or province, I believe the genie is out of the bottle and casinos are here and gaming is here.

It is part and parcel of a draw for people and bringing money from outside of our borders. There are a lot of Motorcoach and a lot of people who take bus tours and so on into our province, come here, not exclusively just to come here to participate in gaming, but they do come here to see our museums, to see our ballet, to see the symphony.

What they may do is they may take a couple of hours out of their day to also take a look at the beautiful fish we have in the fish tank at Regent,

or take a look at our history in the railway car at McPhillips Street Station. It is just part and parcel of the overall amenities we have in Manitoba. We should, I think, look upon it like that.

At one time, I know the gaming centres we have in Manitoba were only competing with—I cannot remember what it was called in the Fort Garry; I think it was called crystal place, Crystal Casino, crystal palace. They were only in competition, I believe, at that time with about three casinos within—I cannot remember what the radius was, but they were really in competition with three other casinos, three other gaming places.

Now there are 40 within that same driving distance to Manitoba. Once again, it is part and parcel of the tourism attraction that we have. In many ways, we have two of the nicer and best facilities with what comes into those particular casinos. I mean, there are restaurants, and there is entertainment. We have a lot to offer.

Once again, I will just repeat that people who come to Manitoba using the bus transportation, a motor coach, they may use that as an add-on to their vacation. Some may specifically come here to participate in gaming, but a lot of other people come here to see our museums and our ballet and our symphony and Folklorama and Folk Festival, and they may drop into the casinos while they are here as an add-on to their vacation.

* (15:30)

Mrs. Dacquay: I want to ask some questions on the Legislators' Forum, the tourism panel for the two nations that was held, and I would like the minister to confirm what Manitoba's contribution is. In the document I have, it is a photocopy and it is very difficult to read, I believe it is \$6 million, but I would just like confirmation.

Mr. Lemieux: With regard to the co-operation and partnership that we are trying to develop with our friends to the south of us, in Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota, there has been a real approach, not only dealing with resources, but with agriculture and with tourism with our partners, with our friends to the south of us in the United States. We have been able to develop

an excellent working relationship, in many ways thanks to Mr. Hubert Mesman, who is the Assistant Deputy Minister of Tourism, who has been working closely with his counterpart in Minnesota, more so Minnesota but certainly North Dakota and South Dakota to a lesser degree.

We have been able to develop an approach where we are looking at what will benefit all those three states that I had previously mentioned, as well as Manitoba. Where the term a "two-nation vacation," a "two-nation destination," was coined was here in Manitoba when our friends, legislators from the States, came up to visit us approximately a year ago, and then we returned about a month and a half ago or so, down to the United States, to St. Paul, to participate in a meeting where, after a year's hard work, the three states and Manitoba were able to put together a package that would be acceptable to the legislators from the four different jurisdictions.

The figure, the copy that we received in the United States, and the colleagues of the member from Seine River attended with us, because it is an all-party delegation that participates in these discussions. We received a PowerPoint presentation from Mr. Mesman and Mr. John Edman, who represented the State of Minnesota, but they were two gentlemen that were responsible for putting together this package, and they were working closely together over a year to develop a tourism package.

So I have to tell you that Mr. Maguire and also Mr. Jack Penner were present when this presentation took place and very, very much agreed with this approach, working closely with our neighbours and trying to see what would benefit us in the tourism area. So the only question I have, if I am allowed to pose a question in return, is I believe the member from Seine River raised the \$6-million figure, and I would be pleased to provide the member from Seine River with a clean copy of that PowerPoint presentation. I have a very similar copy as she has, and it is very hard to read after it is photocopied. The \$6-million figure, I am not sure what that refers to, so if I could ask my critic in Tourism if she would not mind clarifying that. I am not sure what that is referring to.

Mrs. Dacquay: Maybe I was not specific enough. In the PowerPoint presentation, it indicates that the state and provincial budgets, the figures there, what I can read to the best of my ability, it is very blurry, is that Manitoba's budget is \$6 million. We know in fact it is not the full \$6 million, so I was wondering why (a) that figure was used; and (b) how much of the current budget is being allocated to be able to participate in this joint venture.

Mr. Lemieux: For the benefit of having a discussion and dialogue with our neighbours to the south, we were asked to put together a figure that dealt with marketing, the marketing dollars overall, and that is what we rounded off at \$6,519,000 or whatever it is, to just the \$6 million, and the other states did the same. They rounded off their marketing. One state's, I believe, is larger than ours, but I believe two of them have smaller budgets than ours.

The second part of the question was how much money has been allocated to the specific partnership. There have not been any dollars allocated as such. We have put in staff time and Mr. Mesman's and Ms. Elliott's and others in trying to put the package together as our neighbours to the south have done. But we have not really come up with a dollar figure as to how we are going to make this work and how we are going to contribute our dollars either in one pot or do we do this individually or how do we go about exactly doing this. This is currently being flushed out as we speak. We are trying to work through this and to complete the plan. It will take some dollars. We are not sure how much, but we believe it is going to take some dollars to partner with our neighbours to the south.

Just to expand a little bit, if I could beg my critic's indulgence, the two-nation vacation or two-nation destination, we have slightly changed the title of that. We are calling it two-nation tours as opposed to two-nation destination or two-nation vacation. Two-nation tours is the first part of it, mainly dealing with rubber-wheel traffic. The motor coach tourism sector is one avenue, but when we are talking about tours, I mean, there are people from England who wish to come over. When you are thinking about two-nation destination, there is an opportunity here where—since we have the second highest or the

highest Icelandic population outside of Iceland, we would like to get people from Iceland to be able to come over and see where their ancestors went and settled when they left their homeland.

Many Icelanders are interested in coming to Manitoba, but they also have relatives in the United States. You have Icelandair that flies into Minneapolis. I cannot remember exactly how many flights a week, but there are a number of flights flying in from Iceland directly to Minnesota. So, when you are talking about two-nation tours, you have an opportunity for the people from Iceland to see Minnesota, visit their relatives there, come up to Gimli, participate in our Icelandic Festival here.

* (15:40)

So the idea of seeing two nations in one vacation is excellent because you have Northwest Airlines that flies from Minneapolis into Winnipeg three times a day. So there is great potential here. You can take advantage of a particular population by doing that. This is kind of where the ideas came in, and where we have an opportunity with our neighbors and friends in North Dakota and South Dakota, it is different. There are different opportunities there. But I use just one example of using Iceland as an example.

So there is plenty of potential. As yet, we are not sure how this is going to work out in the end, but as Mr. Maguire and Mr. Penner commented, at those meetings in the United States, they felt, as I feel, this is one area where we have a lot of cohesion and agreement, that this is an area that was really worked out, where everyone was able to agree that we should proceed and try to work through this.

The area of agriculture, the area of energy and the area of water or conservation, those are areas that are still having to be worked out. But the area of tourism, we actually have a plan that we are trying to complete which took over a year to put together. But we are getting there. I am really pleased to see, at least in this area in my portfolio, we have an area that we are ready to partner with our neighbors to the south. Thank you.

Mrs. Dacquay: Can I ask if part of the overall plan would be to have joint marketing programs?

Mr. Lemieux: The idea would be to do some, along the lines of the two-nation tours or the two-nation destination, to do some marketing together in trade shows in the Midwest and to see how successful that would work out.

People are quite surprised that we are trying to work with our neighbours in the sense that this is a highly competitive area. Manitoba does not want to give anything away. Minnesota does not necessarily want to give anything away. Neither do North Dakota or South Dakota. I mean, we are all in this to try to attract as many tourists as we can to our own particular state or, in our case, Manitoba.

So you do not want to give anything away. It is still highly competitive. But there are some areas where you find that by either combining your energies, either human energies or dollars together, you may get a better bang for your buck. The idea is to have both countries, and in this case, Manitoba and the three states, be very, very successful as a result of doing this by partnering.

I know Senator Roger Moe, who led the delegation for Minnesota when we were there and hosted us, did comment at the press conference at the end of our meeting, and I made the comment as well, in fact I think I made it first, that if we see all of a sudden that, for example, Manitoba is really on the losing end of something or if our partners also see that it is really not being advantageous to them, we are going to have to review this partnership and see where it is going. The idea is it is supposed to be beneficial for all, and, if it is not going to be that way, we are going to have to really review our partnership.

So it really is right now in the early stages of where this partnership is going to go and how we are going to work through it. But the trade shows are one area we know that we can work together and put some dollars together to see where that goes from there and try to see if there is really an advantage of working closely together on tourism.

Mrs. Dacquay: I would like the minister now to give me an update on the new initiatives regarding marketing on ecotourism, Aboriginal tourism and agri-tourism. I would like to know what the status of those primary three areas are.

Mr. Lemieux: If there is one area, besides working closely with our neighbours to the south of us in the United States, Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota, this is an area that our government takes a great deal of pride. I believe members opposite feel the same way, that there is a lot of potential in the adventure travel and ecotourism area. Ecotourism is probably an area that has the most potential to grow than any other tourism area.

I attended a conference in Québec City, the World Ecotourism Conference, and I had an opportunity to speak to individuals that came up that conduct tours down the Amazon. There are many who go through jungles in the Far East, people who go on hiking tours and backpacking tours in Europe, and many who go into Africa to live in a village for a month at a time in the Sahara. This area has so much potential, and I know Manitoba is no different than any other area, any other region, for that matter, in the world, because this is an area that is highly, highly competitive.

If one was to take a look at Manitoba and you passed out a questionnaire to all the people that either have thoughts of visiting here and you ask them what do you think of when you think of Manitoba. What have you heard of Manitoba? They will tell you there is plenty of space. You can go miles and miles and miles of walking or paddling without seeing a person, a human being at all. There is tremendous clean water here, a lot of waterways. There is so much fresh air here. There is no smog in Manitoba. Those are just the basics that people will tell you. They look upon us as really a place that almost has not been discovered yet. It is in many ways a new frontier in tourism because we have so much potential in this area and we have so many opportunities to tap into this area of adventure travel and ecotourism.

* (15:50)

I know that Manitoba's Adventure Travel and Ecotourism initiative will provide, I think,

strategic leadership necessary to capitalize on growing demand for this area, but also the \$450,000 that the Premier (Mr. Doer) announced in Churchill, I believe it was, in this new initiative for research and product development and training and marketing initiatives.

Right now we find that if one wants to go out, for example, to the Manigotagan, and I talked to two individuals in the hallway yesterday actually that said they are going to spend a week paddling down the Manigotagan or up the Manigotagan, better than me, but you have to be in tremendous shape. There are a lot of portages there, but the water is decent and it is relatively safe. You have to know what you are doing. I was so surprised to hear them say that one is from Manitoba and one is from the United States. They are going to add onto their vacation to Folklorama. They are going to spend a week at Folklorama and then a week on the Manigotagan.

So this is an area to me that has so much potential. I believe no matter who the government is, no matter what political stripe, this is an area that Manitoba can truly benefit from and truly gain. This is an area, if there is no other area, this is the one I think should be really focused on.

Because there are people that come from Texas to bird-watch; there are people that come from England to bird-watch; there are people that come from all over the world that come here to Manitoba for the fresh air, the water and the space. There are not too many countries in the world or provinces that can say that they have to offer what we have to offer in the adventure and ecotourism area.

You know, there has to be, I believe, product development, and I know that my colleague in Industry, Trade and Mines is right behind me on this. I was going to say that this is an area where people often come to me and ask, you know, is there anything in the industry and trade area that they can receive assistance or how do they go about meeting this Minister of Industry, Trade and Mines (Ms. Mihychuk) to talk to her about all this potential?

So I just want to say, and I do not want to be too long-winded on this, but this is an extremely

important area. If you have not gathered this yet, you might see I have a slight bias with regard to adventure travel and ecotourism, but I really have been sold on the fact that we have so much potential in this area and we really have not taken advantage of what we have yet.

We are not there yet. We just do not have the product development or training or the marketing initiatives. It is not there yet. We have to work towards that. Again, that is working with industry. When I speak about industry, I am talking about the Ministerial Advisory Council on Tourism, for example, where you have members of the industry that make their bread and butter from tourism together in an advisory council giving me advice, and the Government advice, on where they think our Government should be going, and this is one of the areas.

You have about 27 members on this advisory council, made up of people from all walks of life in the tourism industry. I know that Max Johnson and Doug Stephen, who are the co-chairs, Max from the Great Canadian Travel Company and Doug Stevens from WOW Hospitality, have been tremendous chairs. They have been excellent chairs. They have been able to bring a team together and been able to work together on addressing this area, but there are many other areas that the advisory council had been able to work on.

I talk about some of those areas in adventure travel and ecotourism that need some help. It is not only, actually, adventure travel and ecotourism that needs product development. There are a lot of other areas. But that is just one of the five working groups that they have established, is to identify tourism development opportunities.

Also, they are looking at how to promote the importance of education and training within this industry. We need people trained not only to be able to work as hoteliers or restaurateurs, but there are many, many other areas in tourism, just using guides, for example. If you are going to have people using these rivers, there has to be safety involved. You need people trained to be able to take people on these whitewater rafts and paddling their canoeing trips.

Also, they are looking at facilitating the marketing approach between the public and private sector. That is really important. The Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) yesterday raised a question and said he is really proud of the fact that he and his government of the day talked about barbless hooks and how that has had so much not only potential at the time but how it has been so positive for us with the catch-and-release in Manitoba. That has been able to keep our fish stocks healthy. This area of having business involved and entrepreneurs who make their bread and butter from tourism involved is a first for Manitoba. Where we have an advisory council is something that we can be extremely proud of. You have businesspeople involved in giving government advice on tourism.

I think there is so much potential as a result of that, and the advice that is going to come to us. I am really looking forward to the different initiatives and examples they are going to give us, and I know they are not only looking at adventure travel and ecotourism. Just on that note, we were able to produce the *Great Outdoor Adventure* travel guide which came as a result of consultations. This guide, if one has an opportunity to look through this guide, you will see—and maybe people are going to be extremely surprised by what we have to offer. I think if a lot of students in school, being a former school-teacher, had an opportunity to take a look at this *Great Outdoor Adventure Guide* which we launched just a while ago at the Rural Forum in Brandon, I do not think a lot of young people realize what we have here, or a lot of families.

You have two-thirds of the population in Manitoba living in Winnipeg, and if Winnipeggers had an opportunity to look at this, just what we have in Manitoba alone, this could keep a family busy for many, many, many vacations, not only summer but winter and fall and spring. We truly are a four-season destination place. This guide really points that out.

I am so proud of the department for all the hard work that they did in putting something like this together. If my critic from Seine River has not had an opportunity to see it, this particular guide is tremendous and really talks to and speaks to what we have in tourism in Manitoba. Really, you do not have to go far from home to

be able to—where in the world can you get in a vehicle and drive one hour and be in the wilderness and just be out in nature and able to throw your canoe in the water and paddle for miles and miles and not see a person. You will see bears and you will see birds and you will see all kinds of wildlife. We have so much to be proud of.

I know that the adventure travel and ecotourism plan is just one area, and \$450,000 really is not a lot of money when I hear, when in Québec City, what some states and some countries are spending on ecotourism, and I can tell you they are the same size as Manitoba, relatively speaking, in population, and yet they are really zeroing in on this area because they believe in the potential that they have.

Our challenge is going to be how we are going to be able to address this whole issue of adventure travel and ecotourism. There are only so many dollars available, and yet I just feel that we have an opportunity here that really should not be missed. Because we are on the cutting edge of it and we are just at the beginning, really, adventure and travel in ecotourism is in its infancy, we have an opportunity to jump on this and get people coming from the United Kingdom and from the United States and places that I have never visited in Manitoba before. We have a real opportunity here to do that.

So I apologize for being so long-winded on this, but I believe, if there is an area that our Government can truly say that we are a leader on and we are going to make inroads in an area in tourism, that not a lot of other people will even have or are able to offer, this is what we have as Manitoba.

I would like to just conclude, at least, my answer, long-winded as it was—and the Premier (Mr. Doer) made this announcement, and it really kick-started a lot of things happening, people phoning from all over the place, people e-mailing us, inquiring as to what do you have to offer in Manitoba in this area. So that is telling us that we are on the right track. There still has to be a lot of work to be done in the area, but we believe we are right on the right track. I will certainly be willing to share in days and months

ahead of any new initiatives or anything like that that we are going to be proceeding with.

* (16:00)

Mrs. Dacquay: With the minister's indulgence, I am going to defer to my colleague from Portage la Prairie, who has some questions primarily, I believe, along the lines of ecotourism.

Mr. David Faurschou (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Chairperson, I have been listening very intently to the minister's acknowledgement of the province's potential, and I hope that he can convince the Finance Minister of additional resources to realize that potential.

I would like to ask the minister whether he is knowledgeable of Churchill. The word is starting to get out in regard to the potential of that port entertaining cruise ships to discover the northern amenities that most of us in the province recognize. If he is not knowledgeable, I will say that the first week of shipping has commenced in the Port of Churchill. For the first time in history, we have booked, in the first week of shipping, only one vessel for loading of grains and two vessels that are coming in that are designated cruise line, cruise ships that will be berthing at the Port of Churchill on the 22nd, was scheduled, which would have been this past Monday, and then this coming Saturday is another cruise line ship coming in. In fact, they will be in and out of port by the time the first vessel is berthed for receipt of agricultural grains. So I just wanted to emphasize that and, for the record, Mr. Chairman, acknowledge that the potential is just starting to be realized at that location within our province. If the minister has any comment to that, I would allow him the floor momentarily.

Mr. Lemieux: Well, to answer a question, the first question, was whether I am aware or not. Yes, I am absolutely aware and have been aware for years. Regrettably, I believe the previous government was not aware. There was so much potential, but that potential just did not happen in 2002. That potential was there 10 years ago.

The member from Portage will know that I not often get very partisan, but I have to be partisan on this, and the reason I am being

partisan on it is because Churchill has been left out there hanging, it seems, for a number of years. Now, regrettably, we are almost in a catch-up phase because we have approximately 20 000 visitors, I understand, a year. They come from Japan, they come from England, all over the world, to Churchill to see the northern lights, to see the beluga whales, and to see our beautiful polar bears. It is wonderful. One, two, three, and there is so much other potential there. One of the greatest places for birding is in Churchill, Manitoba, in the world. There is a lot of potential, but if that potential is not taken advantage of, and if you do not do something with it, it just remains potential.

Now, there has been a committee put together, I believe, by the honourable Mr. Axworthy and I cannot remember who else is on it. I think it is Mr. Plohman. But they have been asked to look at the Port of Churchill, and to look at how you take advantage of the port. Last year, I stand to be corrected, I believe there were four cruise lines last year. *[interjection]* Oh, I thought last year we had four cruise lines come into—there was a cruise ship that came into Churchill. I understand there were four last year. I stand to be corrected, but I will check with my department to make sure I am accurate. I do not want to mislead anyone. But I understood that there were four. So cruise lines have been coming into Churchill for a number of years. I just want to say that we had the Minister of Industry (Ms. Mihychuk), for example, last year, on a cruise line in Churchill and on a tour.

So I just want to say that Churchill is a tremendous place. Churchill has a great deal of potential. Again, I just want to say that something that has been raised from the tourism advisory council in discussions is product development. Now, we have a lot of people that come from England, and they pay a lot of money; or they come from the British Isles, or Japan. It costs them a fair dollar to get to Churchill, but they look at it as an exotic vacation. You have got people in the world that are willing to pay thousands upon thousands of dollars to go to the Sahara Desert, to go to see the Andes Mountains, to go to the Amazon River, and, you know, we have so many opportunities here to do great business with regard to tourism in Churchill. I know that the

mayor, Mr. Spence, there, is a great promoter of Churchill.

I am going to be going up to Churchill in the next few months to take a look at the polar bears. It will be my first occasion to see the polar bears in the wild. I have had an opportunity to be in a tundra buggy, but, regrettably, it was going down Roblin Avenue on its way to Washington. The only polar bear that was there was in the Assiniboine Zoo. I was amazed at how large those vehicles are, but I am going to be taking advantage of it personally and seeing it with my own eyes. I look forward to it very much.

Again, I know the member from Portage, and I certainly do not want to make light of his question, and I do not want to be sarcastic in my remarks, because the question is very, very important. I believe, as well as our Government believes, that there is a great deal of potential in Churchill. It is what you do with it. I know that I am certainly trying to talk to my colleague. I can tell the member from Portage la Prairie that, when I have my first opportunity to meet the Honourable Allan Rock, the minister responsible for tourism, Industry Minister, I will be raising Churchill as one of those areas of saying: What is the federal government's intention with regard to Churchill? I know there are many other portfolios in our Government that have interaction with other federal ministers that also are tied into Churchill. So it is not just Tourism, but it is Industry and Trade, and many other areas.

I guess the long and the short for my answer with regard to Churchill is that we are aware of it, that we are aware of the potential, that we are aware of the many thousands of people that visit Churchill from all over the world. There is just a lot of potential for growth. It is how are we going to manage this and how are we going to take advantage of the potential when there are a lot of demands on the government, not just in the tourism area, but how do you find the funds and the money to be able to address it. It is a real challenge. I do not profess to have all the answers and I do not.

It is how are you going to take advantage of places like Churchill or Fort Dufferin in Emerson or The Forks in Winnipeg or the Delta Marsh near Portage la Prairie. It is a real

challenge for all of us. The previous government had the same challenge, but I hope we are going to do a better job at it than they did.

Mr. Faurchou: Wow, Mr. Chairperson. For a yes or no answer, I have got to say that almost takes a record. I suppose it does not. I have got to realize where I am at the present time, and that is the Manitoba Legislative Assembly, of which I believe there have been a lot of lengthy answers heard.

But I do want to be factual in my dialogue today. In regard to the cruise lines attending to Churchill, we may be splitting hairs on the basis of whether it is one or two or five. According to the docking authority, there are two scheduled to dock this week, as I mentioned, the 22nd and 27th. There was only one cruise line that actually docked last year at the Port of Churchill, although there were numerous others that came within the bay and did come within visual distance of the port and may have put down their launches and gone into town, so to speak. But I was speaking of the official log of the Port Authority that registered only one cruise ship docking last year and two this year thus far.

Not to totally discredit what the minister and what the current Government is doing, but I will say that a very, very significant action by the previous administration significantly has enhanced the attractiveness of the port, when the previous Filmon government took off the bunker fuel tax for cruise lines and other shipping to dock and take on fuel at Churchill was dropped from the charges for fuelling at that location. So it is making it and the word is getting out.

I know birding is great in Churchill, but I will say that, as registered in the official national ranking of places for birding in the nation, Delta is No. 4. Churchill, I am afraid, is not in the top 10, and that is in my own constituency. I will say the birding festival that was held there earlier this year, persons travelled from near and far, internationally. The comment time and time again that this is the best kept secret in Manitoba, because the Delta Marsh and those that tend to it and try to safeguard its continued viability recognized that with the increase in popularity it stands a chance to adversely affect

the very features of the marsh that make it popular. So there is a balance.

It has been requested by those of the University of Manitoba field station, where the birding is held, that the road potentially could be paved. I will say, and I will credit this Government right at the present time, after 42 years of in-the-discussion mode, Provincial Road 227 to the Delta Field Station intersection or access road will be done next year. That just gets us to the access road, and the access road to the Delta Field Station is encumbered on a number of occasions because it shares the dual duty of being the west dike of the Assiniboine River floodway. There has been no real effort made to stabilize that bank after numerous overflows that have cut deep ridges into it and, in fact, lowered the elevation of the west dike significantly. It does not take someone with a transit to observe that dike is much, much lower, just by standing on the grade and seeing where it has been reduced by overflow or of the level. Anyway, enough said of that.

* (16:10)

I know that there is tremendous potential here in the province for some of the amenities that we sometimes take for granted. I will say, in travelling to the U.K., I sat beside a young man from Israel, and he stated, once learning where I was from, that he had always, in his entire lifetime, wanted to come to Manitoba to view, personally, the northern lights. He had never seen the northern lights.

To me, having grown up with them and seeing them in the northern skies and sometimes just directly above oneself out in the country, where there are no lights to defer away from the actual spectacular colours that one sees, but to realize that there are people around the world that have not had the opportunity to see them. For that to be mentioned, it really struck home that we are so infinitely fortunate to live in the province of Manitoba.

Now, I do want to turn to another topic right now. The minister talked about ecotourism and fishing and, just by coincidence, mentioned Minister Plohman. I walked into the room here today with Minister Plohman's report. Former

Minister Plohman tabled a report in 1988 in looking at what we could do to, not only enhance the control of spring water run-off and enhance irrigation and quality of water and secure supply for agriculture, residential, commercial usage, as well as that of tourism in the southern part of Manitoba, former Minister Plohman endorsed and recommended, through the study, that a dam be constructed just to the upstream side of the Highway 34 crossing of the Assiniboine River, and that would create a basin of water that would be near 85 feet deep at full complement of the reservoir and potentially would offer greater tourism opportunities than we have seen at Lake of the Prairies.

Now, I would like to ask first-off for the minister's acknowledgement of the tourism that has been spawned by the creation of that lake, Shellmouth reservoir as it was originally termed, and update us as to what the department believes is the dollar value spawned by that lake. I do have a number of figures that were provided to the Clean Environment Commission when the hearings were taking place in Portage la Prairie, but time and time again it was discussed, the need for another control structure of some fashion on the Assiniboine River in order to safeguard the consistent flow of water through to Winnipeg, because it is vitally important now that a minimum flow be maintained in the Assiniboine for all of the demands that have been licensed now along that riverway.

So I will leave the minister with some of that information right now. If he would like to comment just briefly, I would like to add a few more comments in regard to this project.

Mr. Lemieux: Well, I will try to be brief. The Plohman report came out in 1988. I believe the government changed, and the government was in place until 1999. I was just wondering if they did anything with that report over the 10-year span since the Plohman report came out.

But I would just like to say that prior to making my comments on Lake of the Prairies and so on, and any initiative with regard to water-holding areas and so on, the member is right with regard to the Delta Marsh.

I know that my friends in Texas have told me that, and I just want to be brief with regard to bird-watching and so on, that Manitoba is the No. 1 province in all of Canada, they have been told anyway, for bird-watching. On any given day, you can see 300 different species of birds in the Delta Marsh. So I wish to second what the member from Portage la Prairie was saying. Delta Marsh is certainly very, very important.

My friends in Texas have commented and told me this, and so I just wanted to repeat that for the member from Portage, to say that they also recognize and have been to the Delta Marsh and have commented about these 300 different species that you can see there. It is just fantastic. So, again, there is a lot of opportunity. I think we do not realize that Texas also is the No. 1 state in the United States for bird-watching. So we have a lot in common, the province of Manitoba and the state of Texas.

With regard to Lake of the Prairies and the potential of the Assiniboine River and the dollar figures, what the attraction is and what kinds of dollars are generated as a result of Lake of the Prairies and Assiniboine valley, we have the Asessippi ski hill. Those are the kinds of things that have come on. There are a few lodges that are located near Lake of the Prairies.

I understand that we do not have any specific dollar figures. I have been advised that we do not have any specific dollar figures, as such, to say what is generated as a result of Lake of the Prairies itself. We know that a lot of Manitobans use Lake of the Prairies to fish. There are some sport fishermen that use it as well. I know, once again, our friends from the United States come up to trout fish in the spring and fall near Russell and Inglis, in that area.

So I will try to be brief by just saying there is no hard data yet to show how much, and I do not believe any was ever collected to show since that man-made lake was put in place how many dollars are actually being generated because of tourism. I know we are getting a better handle on the Asessippi ski hill which is close by but not the fishing and the total tourism dollars that are generated there.

* (16:20)

Mr. Faurschou: I appreciate the minister's comments, and one piece of information regarding the Delta Field Station for the minister's own knowledge is that within the next two years—I hope other Cabinet colleagues will support—the position is that the long-term lease of that large tract of land owned by the Province of Manitoba that is leased to the University of Manitoba is coming up for renewal. I hope that the minister, through Cabinet discussions, will support. I believe the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin) will be bringing that forward, so I hope that Cabinet will see fit to continue with a long-term lease with the University of Manitoba for this very, very vibrant piece of nature that is under the management of the University of Manitoba.

In regard to Lake of the Prairies, I believe at the hearings there was a general economic activity related to the Lake of the Prairies. It was recognized in excess of \$2 million annually with fishing and those that come there to boat, to swim and to just relax near a pristine body of water. I would like to draw the minister's attention further to the Assiniboine-South Hespeler Area Study which former Minister Plohman did provide to the House, and, yes, I will be the first to recognize that this study did come in at the latter part of the New Democratic Party mandate to govern the province and the Progressive Conservative government that superseded that tenure did not proceed in any fashion with this.

However, I believe, if I can say to the minister, it is all in timing. It was the Progressive Conservative party that went ahead with the Shellmouth Dam and the creation of Lake of the Prairies and it was unknown as to the impact on the river and how essentially that body of water would play out as a reservoir versus a recreational body of water. I believe that the information that has been compiled over the last number of years does now answer questions that needed to be answered before a decision could be made on this recommendation of the study. Now that we have the potential staring us right in the face because of hard facts as supplied to us by the Lake of the Prairies, we can now look very seriously at the potential that this study outlines and references.

It was originally commissioned to add a source of water to drought-starved areas of Manitoba, and, as the minister may recall, 1988 in this province of Manitoba was extraordinarily dry, and the Assiniboine River, one would be lucky to wet one's kneecaps walking across the river because it was almost dry. So the study that was commissioned and brought to the Legislative Assembly was really to look at water quality, water supply, and regulated quantities of water for the city of Winnipeg and southern Manitoba for all the right reasons, whether they be residential, commercial, agricultural.

Now that we have that information and there is still more information coming in, I would venture to state that the construction of the Holland Dam No. 3 and the subsequent creation of a body of water that would go into the area of the provincial part known to us as the Spruce Woods Provincial Park, in itself, would substantially enhance the usage of the body of water because there is already a provincial park that would border this reservoir, or this body of water, that has all the access roads, all the hiking trails. I am not so blind as to say there are not drawbacks, because there will be one campsite that currently is alongside the river that would be flooded and there would be some areas of the park that would be inundated at high-water levels.

But what area that would be flooded, I believe, would be overshadowed or overcome by the enhancement of other areas within the park and along the roadways. This is right off Highway 5. I know the study says something about one would have to consider raising Highway 5. Well, maybe we should not have the dam quite that high because I know that the Minister of Transportation's current restraints on capital projects to build another bridge over the Assiniboine and to raise the highway would probably be a greater burden than maybe that department can handle.

I do want the minister in discussions, because I have raised this particular project with four ministers now and the merits of the project are very substantial. If one can imagine having a Lake of the Prairies within an hour and 20 minutes drive from the city of Winnipeg or basically an hour-and-a-half's drive for three-

quarters of the population of the province, I would think that people would think twice about driving to Falcon Lake or West Hawk in Ontario. The amenities that I believe can be built into a provincial park that is already there with a body of water created like this would be substantial.

So I want to encourage the minister and ask the minister today to respond as to whether he would feel comfortable in getting perhaps an executive summary or a synopsis of this project to consider within his department, the merits. I would hope that sometime during the next little while maybe a Cabinet colleague of his will raise it at the Cabinet level and he, in turn, would be familiar with what is the potential of impact on his department. At the very least, I hope that there would be one Cabinet minister that would listen to my request to discuss it further.

Mr. Lemieux: The quick response is that any idea is worthwhile pursuing. Any idea is worthwhile looking at and seeing. I think not only the taxpayers of Manitoba but I think all Manitobans and certainly anyone in this Chamber would want to make sure that you did your homework and understood exactly the potential or the drawbacks on any kind of a project.

* (16:30)

I will be quite honest with the member from Portage la Prairie, I would just like to say that I know of the Plohman report just in name only, for example. I do not know of its contents. I have never had the opportunity to read it or to see what it says. So I would not want to make light of it and discuss it because I would not know what I would be talking about. So I am not sure what is in the Plohman report. Even though I did take a shot at the previous government for not implementing it, I am not certain of what is in the report. So I really cannot comment on it.

Mr. Doug Martindale, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

But I know that the member is correct. Lake of the Prairies is a man-made lake, had potential. No one knew exactly what would happen with it. But it has turned out to be such a positive. Not

only does it hold water back, but it has become such a positive recreation area for families, sport fisherman and others. One really has to consider about all the opportunities that are around the province.

If the member for Portage la Prairie was asking me as a member of the Government would I look at expanding the floodway and protecting three-quarters of the population or two-thirds of the population compared to a project that he referred to in Holland, I would say protecting the city of Winnipeg, two-thirds of the population. If there is only a certain pot of money, and I am trying to keep an open mind to this, but I am saying if there is only a certain pot of money that you can either partner with the federal government, and so on, and if it was to expand the floodway and look at the recreational opportunities related to expanding the floodway, I would have to choose that. I know it is not either/or.

But the reality is there is not a lot of money and there is only so much money to go around, but it sure helps to have the Asessippi Valley and Lake of the Prairies there, because when you see the recreation opportunities that came from that, not only used by local people around Russell and Inglis and Roblin and Shellmouth and the communities that are located close to that particular lake, a lot of other Manitobans and people from Saskatchewan also use that lake. People from the United States come up to fish and hunt in the area as well and use the lodges there and also use the lake. So it is a tremendous attraction. But we do have that example now to say: Look, when you put a structure that holds back water, not only does it help regulate the water, which we need, it really became into a real positive recreation area.

I have friends and family that have used that Lake of the Prairies. I have used the Lake of the Prairies myself and have had many great weekends there tubing, pulling tube behind the boat. My children have enjoyed it tremendously.

So the member from Portage la Prairie is correct. The proof is in the pudding. It has become a tremendous recreation area. We do not know exactly the dollar figures for sure that it has created in tourism, but there is potential

there. The project he is referring to in Holland, any idea deserves to be explored, it deserves to take a look at its potential, and, yet, always keeping in mind the reality that there is only so much money to go around and what kind of a cost would it be and how long would it take to recover those dollars that have been put into a project like the one he was referring to.

With regard to Falcon Lake and West Hawk, not that they are part of my own constituency, but Falcon Lake and West Hawk, it is a beautiful part of the province, and it is only an hour and fifteen minute drive from Winnipeg.

So I would agree with the member from Portage that to be so close to the city of Winnipeg, where two-thirds of the population is, it makes for a tremendous opportunity. I know West Hawk and Falcon Lake are taking advantage of that. Many, many people not only own cottages there but just use it as a recreation area, which I will be doing this particular weekend.

Mr. Faurshou: I do appreciate the minister's candidness in regard to his weekend activities. I see that the Member for Brandon West (Mr. Smith) is with us this afternoon. In regard to the project that we are speaking of, I believe Brandon residents would benefit to a great degree in having a major body of water just outside their backdoor on the Assiniboine River.

The particular report, and I will be very specific, if the minister wants to pursue it or any department staff, it was submitted on March 11, 1988, and the Honourable Eugene Kostyra, Minister of Finance, and the Honourable John S. Plohman, Minister of Natural Resources, in cooperation with the federal government, the Honourable John Wise, Agriculture Minister, House of Commons. So anyway that is the report.

I will say, I really appreciate the minister recognizing the importance of regulated flow of water through Winnipeg. I did speak at the Clean Environment Commission hearing here in Winnipeg in regard to widening the floodway versus Ste. Agathe dam and spoke about this particular report and about the information in it. On the heels of those individuals that represent The Forks development corporation, former

Mayor Bill Norrie spoke about the importance of the development at The Forks to the city of Winnipeg and the tourism, and to have water levels that are not controllable, and we have seen this year an extraordinary variation in water levels. In fact, today one cannot walk down the walkway beside the river because it is inundated because of the high levels of the Assiniboine and Red rivers.

So, if we are going to make major investments of walkways and bank re-establishment and amenities close by the river that are going to attract tourism, we have to have the ability to control the water levels or, at the very least, keep them within a variation that does not impede or inhibit the tourism amenities that we have invested in in the city of Winnipeg.

Now, to the minister's credit, he recognizes the importance of flooding, but there are two sides of flooding that we have to examine—two sides of water. I do not know if he is aware that the Department of Agriculture recognizes the restrictions of production here in the province to two things, one being flood and the other being drought. So you can comprehend from those restrictions as to the variation that our province has for moisture within the province.

I see my colleague from Seine River has returned, and I would like turn the floor back to her. However, I do want to leave the minister with one last point on water levels here in the city, as an example of what potential exists with the river system right in downtown Winnipeg, and that is the initiation of the water-taxi service last year.

The water-taxi service initiated by the individual who came to committee stated he believed the potential was a part-time job for himself and maybe another family member. I will say that he reported, through The Forks development corp in their report to the Legislative Assembly that he now is a full-time employee at that enterprise, as well as another family member, full-time, and four other individuals full-time as well on that particular enterprise. So, something that, through his business plan, believed to be part-time job employment and maybe a novelty here and there, has

been so overwhelmingly used, he is looking at expanding because he is restricted by the number of boats that he has right now. He may be also restricted by trying to get under some of the bridges because of the water levels too.

* (16:40)

But he is a perfect example of what potential lies with the use of our waterways here in the city. His experience of now being restricted by higher water levels is, once again, another reason to consider a project such as a Holland Dam No. 3, because there is no way, shape or form Shellmouth can control the Assiniboine River water because of the entry of the South Saskatchewan downstream from the Shellmouth, the entrance of the Souris River downstream, as well as other small tributaries that add significant amounts of water to the river that the Shellmouth could not control. So we are looking at another control structure that is downstream of the tributaries that I have mentioned here this afternoon.

In the same context of your relationship between the south floodway and this project, this does dual duty. Not only does it protect the city of Winnipeg from flood waters on the Assiniboine River but would control the level of the Assiniboine for ecotourism and protection of all the investments that we have either made or plan to make along the riverbanks here in the city of Winnipeg. So, on that, I appreciate the opportunity this afternoon.

Mr. Lemieux: Just to follow up what the member from Portage la Prairie had said, there is a great deal of potential with the Red River and certainly the Assiniboine in Winnipeg. We know the walkways; many, many tourists take advantage of it. Regrettably, it is under water. It is something that I feel is going to have to be looked at in one way, shape or form when the Red River, and I say "when" because it will happen when the floodway is expanded.

I have had the opportunity to holiday with my family in Texas, in San Antonio. They have the river walk in Texas, and many, many businesses and tourism opportunities have come to fruition there because they have built right

around the river walk and the river going right through San Antonio.

Some day, we see the development that is happening now currently, the new bridge going over the river, and we see the river walk happening, and Red River Drive taking place. So there is going to be the opportunity, but you cannot have water over those walkways all the time without really being able to take advantage of the taxi service. I know I should actually thank the Minister for Transportation (Mr. Ashton) for all his assistance in having the docking area near the Legislature back here dredged so the water taxi could actually come up.

When you have the water that is so high and it is over the walkway along the river, there is no advantage to anyone. That is something that is seriously going to have to be looked at, how are we going to be able to take best advantage of the rivers, including the Seine River that is in Winnipeg.

We have a Seine River that goes through Winnipeg that really, for the longest time, became a refuse, a garbage dump. People would dump everything into that river, but thanks to the Save our Seine organization that worked so hard to clean it up, and I know the Member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) has an appreciation with that river going through her constituency as it goes through mine.

It is truly important. I mean, you have the Assiniboine, the Red and the Seine rivers going through Winnipeg. We are very lucky to have the three rivers here, that surely there must be a way to take advantage of this for tourism. I know Fort Gibraltar is not too far from the Red as well as from the Seine River in St. Boniface. There is a great deal of potential, but how you are able to manage it, especially with the high waters that we experience? There is no reason to believe that this is not going to happen off and on in years to come.

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair.

So the challenge is not only with ourselves but with the municipalities and with the federal government to really partner and to be able to

take full advantage of not only being able to monitor and to watch the waters, and I know the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin) would be better able to speak to it than I, but, certainly, the tourism aspect related to our waterways, there is so much potential here, and once again this is another area where it would be great to take advantage of for the benefit, financially, to Manitoba.

When I talk about the Red River, we have an initiative which we call and I call the Red River Greenway. We are looking at the Red River going all the way from Emerson, all the way through the different communities, Letellier, Ste. Agathe, Ste. Adolphe, through Winnipeg, through Selkirk, all the way up to Lake Winnipeg. The Red River Greenway initiative, as it is coined or the term that is used, is looking at how to best take advantage of this greenway, this space, alongside the river all the way from Emerson, all the way to the lake, including, of course, through Winnipeg.

There is a committee made up mayors, reeves, chiefs of First Nations communities, different interested individuals on that committee who are looking at how to take advantage of the Red River, using the Red River and the green space that is located beside it. I know my colleagues, when we met with the legislators in Minnesota, in St. Paul, they are also looking at taking advantage of the \$190 billion that the federal government from the U.S. put into agriculture. There is a portion there that they can tap into trying to address the green space along their Red River. I know many of the states are looking at that, either buying up land that continually floods or using those dollars to try to make green space all along their portion of the Red River and other rivers that run through their states.

So there is a real connection between our friends to the south of the 49th parallel and ourselves because that Red River flows from the U.S. into Manitoba. They are looking at aspects of how to best use that Red River. We have this gentleman whom I have had the pleasure of meeting and working with—he is very, very competent—the mayor of Selkirk. He is on a committee. He co-chairs a committee. I cannot remember what it is called, the name of this

committee, but it is a joint committee between the United States and ourselves looking at the Red River and all its potential, tourism being one part of that puzzle. We are very fortunate to have the mayor of Selkirk sit on that body, and I know he comes to the table with Manitoba's perspective at heart and also the Red River, how it affects us and his own community of Selkirk as well.

So just to follow up and conclude on what the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Fauschou) is saying, controlling water, using water to the best advantage for us, not only for agriculture but for tourism is very, very important. But there is right now someone who is not at the table and that is the federal government, in different aspects. I do not want to make it sound like sour grapes because we do work closely with the federal government and work very well and very co-operatively with the federal government, but this is an area with regard to the widening of the floodway and what we are going to do with regard to water in Manitoba. Not only with our great rivers we have here, but drainage, as well, is a real concern. Water has so much potential, but there is also the downside of water. How do you harness it, and how do you put it to your advantage like we did in the Lake of the Prairies?

* (16:50)

Mrs. Dacquay: I want to ask a couple of general questions and, more or less, opinions from the minister, but I have just been informed by a colleague of mine that he wants to ask questions on Tourism tomorrow morning. I was going to get into all my questions on the Web site. I have several, actually. Then I was going to move back to the arts and culture. I am not sure how the minister wishes to handle this, but I have had a request to keep this open for tomorrow morning, hopefully. That is dependent on negotiation with the House leaders.

Mr. Lemieux: I am certainly willing to be flexible in any way. I know that often people are not able to be here right when they would like to be, so I am certainly prepared. I hope it is not too much of an inconvenience for staff, but I think that is fine. If my critic and the Member for

Seine River wish to go into a different area right now and deal with that, we can. We can go back to Tourism tomorrow. That is fine. I am willing to be flexible with that. I am open to doing that. That is not a problem because I do have staff here now that were able to go into a different area and then just revert back to Tourism tomorrow morning. It is absolutely fine with me.

Mrs. Dacquay: It does not matter to me, but I think my preference, at this point, would be to ask the questions, particularly on the Web site, with Tourism now, and, if we finish the section of Tourism, just keep it open and go there tomorrow to have my colleague ask a few questions. He said they were Tourism related, and I assume they are in the Parkland area, but I do not specifically know what questions.

Mr. Chairperson: The Chair wants some clarification. After the other colleague asks on Tourism, do we propose to pass the item or not?

Mrs. Dacquay: My request was that we keep the Tourism section open. I will continue asking questions until however much time I need this afternoon. Then, if we could accommodate my colleague from Russell tomorrow morning, if we are in Estimates tomorrow morning, he said he only needed a half hour or so, but his questions are Tourism related. I was reluctant to pass this section when I know he has pending questions.

Mr. Lemieux: Just in response, Mr. Chairperson, that is fine. I do not have a problem with that at all. I certainly want to make myself available, and staff, to any questions you have at all on Tourism or any other area. The question I have for clarification is that, when we go through the questions related, let us say, to the Web site, we have some questions in that area and others, I am not sure whether or not we are going past five today, right till six. I guess I am not clear on that.

Mr. Chairperson: We waived private members' hour, so we stay till six, hopefully.

Mr. Lemieux: Okay. That is fine. Yes. That is absolutely fine. Then we can just continue without passing Tourism, because I would want to make sure that everyone has an opportunity to ask questions, if they like.

Mrs. Dacquay: I would like to thank the minister for his co-operation. I have a couple of questions now, before I get into the actual Web site questions, involving the promotional campaign that the minister's colleague has just announced.

I am wondering, first and foremost, if the minister had consultation with his colleagues. I think he knows what I am referencing, but I will be more specific. The Golden Boy souvenir program, if he had consultation with the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ashton), and I just want to put on record some of the concerns I have relative to us not working perhaps cooperatively or consistently in terms of promoting Manitoba and, in particular, the Legislature's historical features.

I guess my first question is: Was there consultation with the Minister of Government Services on this initiative?

Mr. Lemieux: Well, if I could go back two steps, the answer is yes, I have had discussions with the Minister of Government Services and certainly my colleague Mr. Rondeau, the Member for Assiniboia, but going back to the Golden Boy, the Golden Boy, when you have about 113 000 Manitobans and others, who, when the Golden Boy was in the Manitoba Museum, came to take a look at the Golden Boy in its tattered shape, that really sent a message to a lot of people about the importance that people place on the Golden Boy and the symbol it is for Manitoba.

There are few objects in Manitoba that people look upon as representing our province, and when you go out of province, people look at the buffalo as one. When they see the buffalo, they think that is Manitoba's symbol. That is a trademark of Manitoba and always has been, but the Golden Boy is also a trademark or a symbol that people look at the Golden Boy and they would automatically recognize it as being Manitoban. It has huge potential for tourism in the sense that people when they come to this building, they look to see the Golden Boy, to know the history of the Golden Boy. That was evident when people could not find the Golden Boy here. They went to the museum, where it was being displayed.

I believe that a lot of people will also be going to The Forks, where it is going to be displayed and will continue to have interest in the Golden Boy after it is placed back on top of the dome of this beautiful building, which, I believe, is probably, arguably, Manitoba's No. 1 tourist attraction. We certainly have a lot of tourists that come here.

With regard to marketing and to the merchandising of the Golden Boy, I have been advised for certainly the year and a half that I have been Minister of Tourism, responsible for the Tourism area, that a lot of requests come in to our offices asking about—for example, when people do the tour in this building, when they leave, they are looking for more than just a paper pamphlet. They are looking for something tangible as a gift for relatives or gifts for people back home, or friends and so on. We essentially have not had a lot of that to offer.

* (17:00)

There are people around Manitoba that have been offering for sale different memorabilia related to the Golden Boy. I do not know how much marketing they have done or whether or not it is just by word of mouth that they have it and are able to sell it. I know that there are a number of them that do this.

But we felt that it was important that we show that the province of Manitoba is proud of the Golden Boy and proud of what it represents and that, since people are asking for memorabilia or merchandise, we should possibly tender an RFP, or go through the tendering process, to see who would come back and be able to provide us with t-shirts or golf shirts or those different types of tattoos or souvenir booklets, and so on, or postcards, or lapel pins that are offered. So we went through the process, and that is the way it worked out. I think it is going to be very, very successful.

Obviously, there is a huge cost to having the Golden Boy brought back to its better-than-original shape. Hopefully, the dollars that come as a result will help defer some of those costs of replacing and putting that Golden Boy back up to the top of the dome so that this will not have to be done for another hundred years, hopefully.

Mrs. Dacquay: Is the minister aware of where in The Forks the memorabilia will be sold? Is it going to be sold out of the Travel Manitoba kiosk currently there?

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Chairperson, the short answer is that there is a kiosk going to be set up, or is set up, where the Golden Boy is going to be displayed. An individual is, or individuals are, going to be selling the merchandise out of that kiosk in The Forks Market building. I believe that is where the Golden Boy is going to be displayed, so the merchandise will be sold from that particular kiosk in that building.

Mrs. Dacquay: Which department of government will be actually manning the kiosk. Is it from the minister's department, Culture, Heritage and Tourism, or is it through Government Services?

Mr. Lemieux: There is a company that has been hired to be the official seller of the merchandise. It is not government. It is not Tourism staff that is responsible for selling the merchandise out of the kiosk.

Mrs. Dacquay: So I assume there will be a cost, though, in terms of renting space at The Forks. Was that going to be covered by the minister's department or the Minister of Government Services' department?

Mr. Lemieux: Yes, this is a Government Services initiative. It would be Government Services. I am not sure. I guess the question would have to be put to that minister with regard to the, you know, I guess the RFP or the contract and how that works, what they are being paid and so on to do that, to be the sellers of the merchandise.

Mrs. Dacquay: I understand this merchandise will be somewhat restrictive in terms of its logo and there will be a time line sort of on when the merchandise will be available for sale and for how long. Does the minister have any idea what those time lines might be?

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Chairperson, with regard to the current project, because of the Golden Boy's restoration and the interest related to it, this was almost a natural. The involvement of the mer-

chandising was a result of the demand, supply and demand. People were demanding that they wanted memorabilia or merchandise as a result of the Golden Boy coming down and everything surrounding it and all the enthusiasm and all the excitement related to the Golden Boy.

I cannot comment on what the Minister of Government Services' (Mr. Ashton) proposal would be in the future, but with regard to this time line, this window, you know, the Golden Boy is going to go up in the fall or late summer, early fall. I do not know what is going to happen past that. I cannot say. I am just familiar with what is going on now and the merchandising happening now. I mean, anyone can speculate that all of a sudden if there is such a huge demand and it is very, very popular and people kind of empty the shelves of all the merchandise that is there, one may want to look at the potential of something like that.

I cannot answer for the Minister of Government Services, but what I know is that there is a window while the Golden Boy is being restored, that there is merchandise being sold to try to meet the demand of the public wanting to purchase memorabilia or gifts associated with this restoration. Thank you.

Mrs. Dacquay: Well, I personally consider the Golden Boy to be one of our historic resources, so I would hope that the minister's department would have some input and even, perhaps, some control.

I have a concern. I am not sure that the minister has seen the advertisement, but some time ago, it was drawn to my attention that the Golden Boy was being utilized by an Ontario company to advertise one of their products. I actually have a copy of the advertisement with me here today that I would like to table. I am just wondering, based on that, when I asked the Minister of Government Services, his response to, is there a restricted use for that and is it utilized only by government departments, he said, no, the public at large could use it at any time.

So, given the particular use of this Golden Boy in this image for this advertising, I am wondering why, if the minister's department

does not have any input into that, if there is any other government department that is able to have some respected control, and, I guess, if not, why not?

The ad I specifically refer to is for Brava Cerveza, "the Beer of Summer" and "Mr. Sun, Sun, Sun, Mr. Golden Sun." To me, that is the distinct replica of our Golden Boy being utilized. I personally, by the way, just to clarify the record, do not have a problem with utilization of the Golden Boy for visitors to our province. In fact, I have always been a little bit surprised why Travel Manitoba has not taken more of a lead role in having some of these souvenirs available for tourists, because I know, personally, when I was Speaker, I used to have visitors at this building continually being directed to my office for pins.

You know, I could never understand that. That was not my role at that particular time, nor was I involved in any of the government departments, but, having said that, I am a little bit concerned that if there is exclusive, wide-open use of it—well, in my opinion—I do not think it is appropriate because I think the Golden Boy is a very cherished, valuable, recognized heritage resource, and, I think, one that maybe we should be able to have some direct control over the use of for marketing and promotion.

Mr. Lemieux: I thank the member for the question, and, also, I look forward to seeing the document that was tabled. You know this can be a regrettable thing. The Golden Boy has become a symbol that has been in the public domain for many, many years. To the best of my knowledge, at least I have been advised that there is no copyright on the Golden Boy. There are no infringement clauses anywhere that prohibits someone from using the Golden Boy. This is something that I have never looked into or inquired about. It is not an official symbol of Manitoba; the buffalo is. We have the owl, and we have the crocus, our official flower, and so on. So Golden Boy has never been designated in any way. Yet, in my opening remarks I mentioned how people outside of our borders and even within Manitoba recognize the Golden Boy and the buffalo, to them, and I guess maybe to a lesser degree, the crocus and also the owl.

* (17:10)

To be quite frank, I am not sure what can be done. I do not know what can be done at this stage. It is really, at this late stage, in a sense, because the Golden Boy has been around so long and without any copyright or anything related to it, many people have used the Golden Boy all over. I am aware of a number of different distributors that certainly do not get any percentage of monies or do not even get any okay from the Province in any way for any kind of memorabilia.

The regrettable part is that people can use objects in any way they wish. There may be some people who use the Golden Boy in a distasteful way that Manitobans would object to, but yet there is no copyright law. They could just use the shape of the Golden Boy and call it whatever they want.

Before permission to use the Golden Boy, I guess we can review the product, but if they do not ask, we cannot do anything. It is a difficult thing. The Golden Boy has been around, but nowhere in our history has anyone designated it officially anything, even though we look at it as a real symbol for us. So, I look forward and I know that—thank you. I have just received a copy of the document you tabled. Oh, yes, I do not think there is any doubt in my mind, anyway, that that is our Golden Boy. That is the Golden Boy that is being used. If I understood correctly, this is an ad out of Ontario. I was taking a look at the name of the company at the bottom of the ad and the address. It is not distasteful in the sense that it is not distasteful that they have not distorted the object or anything. It is the Golden Boy, but I do not like the idea that it is introducing Cerveza beer and the Golden Boy is being used as part of the ad. I do not like it one bit, to be quite frank, but there are no copyrights, I have been advised, in any way, shape, or form.

I think it is something the Government can look at and maybe the Government has looked at in past. I do not know how you would regulate something that has been around for 80-some years and more, that has been used for many, many years by companies. It could be a courier service, or whatever, and has the Golden Boy on the side of a van, and if they have used that for 20 years, how do you go back retroactively and say now you cannot go back? I think some

lawyers would really have a heyday with that because it has been out in the public domain so long.

I appreciate the question, and I appreciate the suggestion that maybe we should be looking at this or looking to see what is available to us. But, regrettably, I do not think a lot, but I appreciate the suggestion and the question being raised about the Golden Boy and how it is being used.

I guess what this highlights is the fact that now that the Golden Boy has come down for restoration, there is a huge interest from students and children who firmly believe that the Golden Boy is a symbol like the buffalo, yet there are no protections on that.

Yet we see all of MTS's ads and the buffalo. They do not use the buffalo that we have as our symbol, as our logo for the province of Manitoba, but they use the buffalo, and all Manitobans have really reacted in different ways to that, but generally because it is humorous, it is positive.

Manitoba Telecom Services, being located in Manitoba, it is a nice tie and people do not object to it because whatever they are doing is tastefully done. There might be individuals there who right now we cannot restrict them in any way.

So I appreciate the question very much, and I know Manitobans appreciate the question, too, because the Golden Boy is near and dear to a lot of people's hearts.

I do not know what the current Speaker, what the traffic is like at his door, but I know that most MLAs, people request the buffalo or the Golden Boy as pins. They ask for them. They want them. I can only sympathize when the Member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) was the Speaker, because I do also get a lot of requests for the Golden Boy, I would say more requests for the Golden Boy than the buffalo. But I thank the member for the question.

Mrs. Dacquay: I thank the minister. I did not really want to put you on the spot, but I thought I

would like to draw it to your attention, because I did not particularly enjoy that ad, and I was not aware that there was not some department, at least, monitoring, recognizing the history behind it and the fact that it can be used publicly very freely.

But I guess what I find even a little more alarming is the fact that it is not even Manitoba. It is Ontario that stole, to me, what is a historic resource, our historic resource symbol from this building. So I have a little bit of difficulty with that.

But I just wanted to draw it to the minister's attention because, who knows, I do not find that particularly offensive in terms of the way it has been utilized, but I just think it may not be an extremely valid use of the Golden Boy, particularly when it is out of province.

But I would be even more concerned if nobody in government had any control if this were used in a very offensive or really I guess derogatory manner in terms of advertising, and in today's society, who knows, because there are some pretty creative minds out there. I would think that that would do more to harm our great historical resource than promote it. So that is why I raised it at this time.

Also, when I asked the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ashton) what the profits from the sale of the Golden Boy souvenirs were going to be utilized for, there were actually very mixed messages. There were three messages. The press release indicated that it was going to be a break-even proposition. The Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Rondeau), in his member's statement, indicated that the profits would be utilized for the restoration of the Golden Boy, and the Minister of Government Services indicated in his response to me that there would be a historical fund set up to be used for the refurbishing of other Manitoba historical resources.

* (17:20)

So my question is: Does the minister know which of those three is the accurate one, and if, indeed, it is going to be used for a fund for the refurbishing of historical resources. I would

assume then that fund would be most appropriately administered by his department. So my question is: Is that indeed what is going to take place?

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Chairperson, I would say my initial reaction would be that it is the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ashton) that has to answer that. I mean, it is his project, and it is dollars that are being essentially taken, I understand, from his department and used to do the restoration. Those dollars would go back and do that restoration. Some people are being very enthusiastic about the amounts that may come back. There may be an overwhelming response to the material, to the merchandising. There may not be.

I mean, I guess everyone would say, most ministers, or maybe not, would say that, oh, if there is a huge profit, give it to me. I can sure use it. Tourism sure could use it. But, on the other hand, it is a project that the Minister of Government Services and his department have proceeded with and have proceeded with the merchandising program. I know that the restoration, I believe, was over a million dollars, I am just going by memory, just to restore the Golden Boy. Those are the costs. That is a huge amount of money. That is also a huge amount of merchandise that it would take to make a million dollars to get the Golden Boy at a break-even point.

This is one of these questions where I cannot answer. I do not have any answer other than to say that it is with Minister of Government Services, and the Minister of Government Services will determine how and where the dollars go and also will be tracking on how much money is brought in. Thank you.

Mrs. Dacquay: If and when we get into highways and Government Services Estimates, I definitely will be appearing to ask the minister some of these same questions.

Just bear with me one minute, please. I am just trying to do all of my Tourism-related questions at this point in time before I get into the Web site.

Okay, I am going to move now into the several questions I have on the Web site, some of them, regrettably, which I raised last year. First of all, my first question is: Has the department done any on-line surveys or received any feedback from the public in terms of the effectiveness or usage of Travel Manitoba Web site?

Mr. Lemieux: Just with regard to the Tourism Web site, I guess what I would like to mention is that the Tourism Web site or Travel Manitoba Web site is www.travelmanitoba.com, and it continues to be one of the most popular government Web sites. We get about 180 000 hits per month on that Web site, people making inquiries into tourism potential in Manitoba. So 180 000 hits, comparatively speaking, there are some larger, some smaller. But the analysis for the first time really is—the department is monitoring other Web sites throughout the country—I know within Canada; I am not sure if there are some in the United States that are being looked at—just to see how we compare comparatively, the look of it, the visual aspects with regard to content and so on.

This also gave us an opportunity when we were developing a questionnaire or survey, which is going to be done in the future. It will also give us an opportunity to announce the on-line counselling service, which we announced just a while back, where people can on-line contact Tourism or Travel Manitoba, ask questions directly and get a response back right then and there about hotels or different events that are taking place in the province. It is a tremendous service. Once again, we can be proud of travel and ecotourism as being an important announcement that we are making along with the tourism advisory council that is made up of business leaders.

Also, another first we can be proud of is the on-line service. My understanding, I have been advised, is that this service is the first of its kind in the country where you have on-line counselling and you get the response. Well, I would not say immediately back, but certainly within a minute or two depending on the length of your question and the complexity, you get an answer back. Mr. Chair, this is a tremendous marketing tool because, with more and more people now,

we are finding our telephones are not being used as much as a Web site. It is an area that is growing, and whether it be seniors or younger people, many people are using computers nowadays, and we are finding that it is growing rapidly. So this is going to give us an opportunity with this on-line counselling service to announce it and make it public, but also to be able to provide a survey of users of our system at the same time.

Mrs. Dacquay: Mr. Chair, I believe I heard the minister say that there will be an on-line survey done to get feedback from the public on the effectiveness of the Travel Manitoba Web site. Is that accurate, and could he give me some time lines?

Mr. Lemieux: To answer the member from Seine River, yes, my answer was that it is going to happen. It has not happened yet. It is going to happen in the fall. There are people putting it together right now. There are different aspects to it that are going to be rolled out. There is the general public survey. Also there is going to be a survey to the industry. So it is going to be rolled out in segments. As it goes out there is going to be feedback coming back as it goes. So I would just say that in the fall it is going to happen. I cannot give the member from Seine River the exact date. But I just know in the fall it is going to happen. So it is going to happen.

It is a very good question, not that other questions are not, but it is a very good question in the sense that you should track and try to find out what you are doing and how successful it is or not. If it is not, you want to change it or use parts of it or whatever. So it is a great tool. Computers can be a tremendous tool.

Tourism is no different. This is an area where I believe there is so much potential with regard to computers that we have not tapped in to all the different positive aspects of using computers and how does that impact on tourism. There are many states right now and provinces that you can do a lot of things on-line, whether it is booking camping spots or booking cottages or hotel rooms and going through and getting assistance from the local travel body related to the province or state. There is assistance happening

there. So it is something that we are looking forward to, using computers more often.

* (17:30)

I have been working with my colleagues within the department and with my ADM with regard to putting computers as a pilot, if you want to call it a pilot. It is in Emerson and at also our travel offices at The Forks, where people are able to come in and use the computer systems that are there. They will be able to access information. It is just another tool to assist tourists that come in. They may want to look at what is around the province. This is different than the on-line counselling. This is just access to a computer that is being monitored and policed—well, policed is not the right word, but being able to be watched that people are not using the computer for other reasons, they are using it to inquire into tourism questions.

Computers are the way of the future. It is happening now. All provinces and states and many tourism offices around North America are making more and more use of computers. So we will only be left in the dust if we are not going to be ahead of the parade. We really have to react to this and move on computers.

The survey is going to happen this fall. We will be able to get feedback. So as soon as we are able to get some feedback and get some legitimate data, we will be able to provide it. I am sure we will be proud of the information we get back. If there are some concerns, we will be able to address those as well.

Mrs. Dacquay: The minister indicated he is open to increasing the capability of the Web site. I wondered if any consideration has been given to putting promotional packages on the Travel Manitoba Web site? Personally, I think it might be a nice way of promoting the travel values book that Tourism Manitoba puts out. In fact, I have done a little bit of research on this. I know Minnesota has a section entitled Specials, where tourists can look for vacation packages. Michigan and Wisconsin have similar sections on their Web sites. I just wonder if it might be a consideration that the minister and his department would look at. I think it might be a great promotional tool.

Mr. Lemieux: I just want to say that I appreciate the suggestion very much, and, in my opening remarks as well as throughout questions on my Estimates, I have said all along that I, not only I, but Travel Manitoba, is very open to any suggestions. We are all in this together, and any suggestions that people feel would help tourism in Manitoba, we are certainly, absolutely, open to them. This suggestion is a very good suggestion.

There is currently access to, I am not sure if the word is programs, but through tour companies where you can access through to tour companies what they offer. We do not offer, actually, packages ourselves on our site, but you can access it through a tour operator or tour packages, what they offer.

The example of Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan offering it is really quite important because those are kind of our competitors, too, and that is what struck me as interesting. Those are our competitors, and if they are doing something, we better, you know, if we are not doing something that they are doing, we better find out about it and find out what they are doing, because it is a natural draw for Manitobans to go to North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Wisconsin Dells and other centres, and Michigan. It is natural of the northern states and in the mid-continent area, as well.

So I appreciate the suggestion very much, and if other members of the Legislature have any suggestions—and I know my own colleagues use the occasion to come and see me and pass along ideas. I appreciate it very much because it is only going to help make tourism much better in Manitoba and, by that, offering tourists an opportunity to see what we have got. The computer is really a great tool and is being used more and more by our competitors, as well as by others.

Mrs. Dacquay: I would like to now offer another suggestion. I am wondering if the minister and his department would give consideration to reorganizing the Travel Manitoba Web site into a few more categories. I will explain.

If you go to Alberta's travel site, they have broken some of the different components of

what they want to promote in their province such as Aboriginal experiences, agricultural experiences and learning experiences. Then, under each of those categories, there is a breakdown of some of the specific sites to see and things to do. Also on the Ontario site, there is a section that focusses on arts and culture. This just might be beneficial in helping target certain types of travelers. I know we cannot be all things to all people, but when we have that Web site at our disposal, I think the more inclusive we are, the more we can promote affordably.

* (17:40)

Mr. Lemieux: Just to go into a couple of suggestions made, very good ones, I am familiar with on the Ontario side of the arts and cultural site that is there. We have some of that in ours. It is not titled like that, but we do have some of that. I know that Alberta with its Aboriginal, agricultural and learning sites, some of their product development is more developed than ours, so I think as a department you would have to be really—and I mentioned this about Churchill where we have certain things that have been developed there, not as developed maybe as much as we would want, like bird-watching and so on.

People think of Churchill and think of polar bears it seems automatically, but there are other things there that are important, but the product development is not up to where the local entrepreneurs would like it to be, so they are trying to get their product developed to a point where, when we advertise it, people can come there and have a good experience. They do not want to kind of be halfway there and have people come and then they have as not a good experience as they might. Then they leave and they say not good things about the location. I appreciate the suggestion very much because, as you mentioned, if you are going to have a site, you cannot be all things to everyone, but you should be able to offer and give people an idea of what is there. Because different things appeal to different individuals, and while they are here, someone may want to go see the ballet and someone may want to go see the symphony or the museum. Some may want to go to one of the gaming places for part of their vacation. There are many different aspects that appeal to different people.

I mean, this does raise the whole issue about you cannot be all things to everyone. I think this raises a real key issue related to tourism, the issue being how we are branded as a province. I do not mind telling you that this is one of the issues that I have raised with our department, and in return we are discussing this whole issue as to what do we want to do in Manitoba? How do we want to portray ourselves? We cannot be everything to everyone, and yet you have to be able to brand our province in such a way that when people come here they can take advantage of all these, our culture and our arts and even sporting events. I was just actually taking a look at *Canada's Tourism Monthly*, and one of the categories they have got is Sport Tourism. It is amazing how many events are run throughout the country every year. Commonwealth Games are happening in England this summer, but we have our North American Indigenous Games here, and it has become a huge tourism magnet. People are calling and asking: What are the sports? How long is it happening? Where are the hotels? I have been advised that there is a potential for 25 million, I believe is the number, tourism dollars that are going to be generated as a result in the city of Winnipeg, or certainly in Manitoba. I can stand to be corrected, but I understand that certainly in Manitoba \$25 million as a result of the North American Indigenous Games being here.

The tourism sport aspect, something that we would agree that you have to be able to put as much as you can on your site, it is how do you categorize it? I know your terminology was reorganizing more categories, and under what do you place them? So I think this has a lot to do with our department monitoring, the Tourism Division monitoring other sites, trying to pick up all the good ideas, using what we can. Some we cannot. It may not be applicable to us, maybe the product development is not there just yet. So we do not want to have someone come to the greatest whitewater rafting place in the world, they show up, and somebody has got a little canoe or a bucket you are going to go down the river in. If they go back and tell everyone this is ridiculous, you know, do not go back there again, it just does not help us in the long term.

So I appreciate the suggestion very much. I know that the department has heard you loud

and clear. I have. So we are going to be looking at all those suggestions because they are good ones.

Mrs. Dacquay: Mr. Chair, I have a few more. Also, in comparing Alberta and Wisconsin, they have information that I find much easier to find regarding their scenic road trips and their back road trips. I know we have got something on the Web site dealing with scenic highway routes, but I find it really difficult. It is difficult to find, in my opinion. It is sort of thrown in with a whole bunch of information ranging from customs regulations to metric conversions in the Visitor Information section, and I do not know that most people would be inclined to be looking there for scenic drives.

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Chairperson, once again, thank you for the suggestion. It is important that whoever is using the site be able to follow it. It is to our advantage if they can follow it easier and be able to get exactly what they need of it.

With regard to our scenic routes or our trails systems, we have so many, whether it is Pembina Trail or La Vérendrye Trail and so on, or all the different scenic routes we have, even the Yellowhead Route. It is amazing on how many different regions that touches and goes into.

So it is important that we be able to show that and highlight that on the computer that people are using and able to tap into that. So I appreciate the suggestion. I know that I will certainly be passing that on to people in the department. One way to experience it is to do it myself and to find out and see what it is like and, also, to get into—I believe you said Minnesota's?

An Honourable Member: Alberta's and Wisconsin's.

Mr. Lemieux: Oh, Alberta and Wisconsin. It will be interesting to see what they have and how they portray their scenic routes and their trails. We can compare to others and do quite well with our trails and scenic routes.

This all gets back to what appeals to different people. There are people that come, especially—rubber-wheel traffic is a huge industry for us. They are going to be driving on our

highways and they are going to be following scenic routes or trails. Yes, there is going to be a destination in Winnipeg, usually for a lot of them, because two-thirds of our population is here. A lot of things are happening in Winnipeg. But many people are going to use the highways to get here.

If there is a way to go and take a scenic route to be able to get to Winnipeg, or if there is another way to go from Winnipeg to Saskatoon, they need to find out what is on those trails, what is on those routes, and, hopefully, a site would be able to say that and would be able to help them plan their vacation.

So I thank you. I appreciate the suggestion. If you have any more, I would be pleased to hear them because your suggestions have been very good ones and very helpful. Thank you.

Mrs. Dacquay: I have one more specific suggestion in terms of a site map link. I know the click link section is okay, but I do not personally think it is extensive enough to be able to do justice to the amount of information that is actually available on that Web site.

I am wondering if consideration could be given to having a master index to the site? It probably would make it a whole lot easier for visitors, in particular, to be able to utilize the Web site and be able to navigate it more readily.

I know there has been an attempt made with the click link component, but, I still think that, because of the diversity and all of the things that Manitoba has to offer, perhaps there could be a change made. Maybe the suggestion, I have not tried this, so I do not know how readily it would work, but I am just wondering if, perhaps, a master index would help people more readily move from site to site.

Mr. Lemieux: Once again, thank you, Mr. Chairperson, and thank you for the member from Seine River for the suggestion.

I am not sure whether a master index to the site would work, and I do not know how much it is going to improve it. I would say that this is something that the department or the division

should look at and see whether or not it is able to be done. I certainly do not mean any disrespect to the member because she has made some good suggestions.

* (17:50)

What I have soon discovered in the area of tourism, and especially with computers, is that we have a lot of suggestions coming at us. We are trying to improve the site, and we are taking into consideration a lot of suggestions. Also, there is the monitoring that the staff do of other sites or trying to incorporate them. So the site has come a long way. It has, but it is because of suggestions like the ones that were made by the member from Seine River, or monitoring of other sites. Everyone is improving their site. It is almost on a monthly, or certainly an annual, basis, because they are incorporating either things that did not work or things that are working elsewhere and they are using them. So it is great.

So you would just hope that the site in a year's time is better than what we have now. It had better be. You would expect it to be, and then it would be much better in two years from now than it will be in a year. So I appreciate all the suggestions, and we are committed to looking at it and seeing what will work and see if it will improve it. Hopefully, by this time next year, there will be some of those that are incorporated and a lot of new ones.

I know that this year our focus has been on adventure travel. I think we are trying to get ahead of the parade. We are trying to lead, so our big focus has been adventure travel, and we are trying to incorporate some of that into our Web site. Our focus has been adventure and eco-tourism, and adventure travel. Again, you are limited in what you can do and how much you can do, but I thank the member for all the suggestions. I will certainly look at them in a serious way and see which ones we can use and improve the system. That is what it is all about.

Mrs. Dacquay: My next questions are regarding the maps on the Web site. I raised this last year, and some of the changes were made. But, regrettably, I am back again because I have reviewed them once again. In order to be able to facilitate the understanding of my questions, I have

copies, I only have two, but I have copies to table for the minister and his staff so that when I reference it, they can also follow along with me.

The first questions and the concerns that I want to raise are on the maps. In the map section, there is a small pop-up section of Manitoba maps. On map 1, and I think they are properly identified there, I am wondering if it would be possible to make the map a little bit larger and label the regions on the map. I know what most of those are, but I bet you there are many Manitobans that do not even know what some of those areas that are highlighted in the different colours specifically referred to, like the Interlake, Pembina Valley, and things like that. I am not even sure how many people in Manitoba would even know what those regions are referred to as, and certainly I would think visitors from outside Manitoba probably would not have a clue.

Mr. Lemieux: That is a very good suggestion. I have to tell you, when I took a look at that map, you could use a key on that front page and you could just number them. You could put No. 1 as north of 53 or Norman, or No. 2, Parkland, or No. 3, Westman. You could actually put a key like that, or you could letter it ABC. You could do that quite easily. That is a good suggestion.

A lot of Manitobans are not sure where the different regions are, and it would make a lot of sense to do that. Then what it does, it goes into each of the regions. It is like a natural progression. They could pick and choose, say, oh, gee, I want No. 3, like region No. 3, what is this like, and they could go to the Parkland region or Westman. It seems to me it would not take a lot of effort to do that, to just label it using a numbering system, or you could number it in such a way where Winnipeg is No. 1. I mean, that is where most of the traffic comes to, is the city of Winnipeg, and then you could go from there, but, nevertheless, it is a good suggestion.

Now, the question I have, and I have not seen that page, is the map that size. When it is on the screen, it is fairly small up in the left-hand corner like that. It is not larger. I think if you are going to number it, it is probably a good idea, a good suggestion, to make it larger, so when you point out the regions by number or letter,

visually you might be able to see where it breaks off. I do not have my glasses with me today, but it is still small, nevertheless. So thank you for that suggestion.

Also, if you wish to proceed through the document that you have, I think I am almost ready to do that. I was just going to say that we can arrange a meeting with the Member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) to really take a look at the Web master, take a look and see what can be done, because I appreciate her suggestions very much.

As I mentioned, a year from now, this Web site will be much better than it is today. This is all part and parcel of what we are trying to do. Just the suggestions that the division has today from our discussions and questions, I believe it has improved already. It made it much better than it was a half hour ago. Thank you.

Mrs. Dacquay: I do not know if the minister wants to spend a little bit of time tomorrow going through each of these documents. I sort of had a suggestion relative to each of the documents that I have provided the minister with, provided we are going into Estimates tomorrow morning. I still have not had that clarified.

I do not have too much more. There are about four more documents here in terms of some suggestions, and then I had some questions in terms of some of the actual identification on the maps of certain places that I—

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

IN SESSION

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 6 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow (Thursday).

