

Third Session - Thirty-Ninth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

Official Report
(Hansard)

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

Vol. LXI No. 29 - 1:30 p.m., Wednesday, April 22, 2009

ISSN 0542-5492

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Ninth Legislature

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, April 22, 2009

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: If I could just have your attention for a minute, your voices, whoever has the mike, is being fed down into Hansard and to the public. We just have, we're going to have to—the voices internally. You can't hear, but if you put your earpiece on—because that's part of the external—you will be able to hear. And [*inaudible*] whoever in this room has the floor, the mike will be switched on but members will have to listen carefully because the mikes will not be working internally. It will only be externally.

So I think we are ready to go if you're ready. So if we can rise, we'll start off with the prayer.

PRAYER

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 23—The Buildings and Mobile Homes Amendment Act

Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Labour and Immigration): I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), that Bill 23, The Buildings and Mobile Homes Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les bâtiments et les maisons mobiles, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Ms. Allan: It gives me pleasure to introduce The Buildings and Mobile Homes Amendment Act. This bill will make a farm building subject to the act if it has a building area that is larger than specified by the regulation. This will allow the enactment of the Building Code requirements for larger agricultural buildings. We will consult stakeholders to seek their input in developing the regulation.

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

* (14:20)

PETITIONS

Long-Term Care Facility—Morden

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background for this petition is as follows:

Tabor Home Incorporated is a time-expired personal care home in Morden with safety, environmental and space deficiencies.

The seniors of Manitoba are valuable members of the community with increasing health-care needs requiring long-term care.

The community of Morden and the surrounding area are experiencing substantial population growth.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) to strongly consider giving priority for funding to develop and staff a new 100-bed long-term care facility so that clients are not exposed to unsafe conditions and so that Boundary Trails Health Centre beds remain available for acute-care patients instead of waiting placement clients.

This is signed by Donna Barkley, Audrey Lone, Paul Olafson and many, many others.

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

Winnipeg Regional Health Authority

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

Manitoba's Premier and his NDP government have not recognized the issues of public concern related to the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority.

The WRHA is building an administrative empire at the expense of bedside care.

Winnipeg Regional Health Authority needs to be held accountable for the decisions it is making.

Health-care workers are being pressured into not being able to speak out no matter what the WRHA is doing or has done.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Premier (Mr. Doer) and the NDP government to call a meeting of a standing committee of the Legislature and invite representatives of the WRHA to appear before it.

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by J. Joss, N. Rene and C. Goldenstein and many, many other fine Manitobans.

**Neepawa, Gladstone, Ste. Rose, McCreary—
Family Doctors**

Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition.

Access to a family doctor is vital to good primary health care. Patients depend on their family doctors for many things, including their routine health-care needs, preventative care and referrals for diagnostic tests and appointments with specialists.

Family doctors in Neepawa, Gladstone and Ste. Rose are unable to accept new patients. The nearby community of McCreary has not had a doctor available to take patients in months.

Without a family doctor, residents of this large geographical area have no option but to look for a family doctor in communities as far away as Brandon and Winnipeg.

Residents of these communities are suffering because of the provincial government's continuing failure to effectively address the shortage of doctors in rural Manitoba.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) to consider prioritizing the needs of these communities by ensuring they have access to a family doctor.

To urge the Minister of Health to consider promptly increasing the use of nurse practitioners in these communities in order to improve access to quality health care.

This petition is signed by Donald Frobisher, Helene Montsion, Simone Worrall and many, many others.

PTH 15

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

These are the reasons for this petition.

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

Signed by Curtis Buley, Ethel Hansen, Hank Theunissen and many, many other Manitobans.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Eric Robinson (Minister of Culture, Heritage, Tourism and Sport): Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to table the 2009-2010 Expenditure Estimates for the Department of Culture, Heritage and Tourism.

At the same time, I'd like to table the Supplementary Estimates for Aboriginal and Northern Affairs.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Provincial Ice Jams and Flooding

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures): I'll try and speak up.

Mr. Speaker, water levels throughout most of the province are forecast to decline slowly for the rest of the week with a more significant decline beginning next week, subject to favourable weather. The Souris River, however, continues to rise at Melita this morning. An additional rise of about 2.5 feet is expected before the river crests in late April. The Province has been working closely with the

community this spring to ensure that they are protected.

Overland flooding continues in many portions of southern Manitoba, especially in the Red River Valley and the Interlake, but it is expected to gradually subside this week based on favourable weather.

Flood protection efforts since 1997 have been successful in many communities, for example, only 300,000 sandbags were utilized in the R.M. of Ritchot this spring compared to five million in 1997.

As water levels continue to level off throughout the province, there will be a transition from flood response to flood recovery. We will continue to work with the municipalities, First Nations and individual home-owners post-flood to ensure that they are protected against future flood events.

Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose): I'd like to thank the minister for the update on the flood relief. We will continue to watch as the flood levels recede a little and look forward to working toward the flood recovery afterwards and the assistance that needs to go out to help people in their recovery.

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

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

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for his update. We are continuing to be concerned about people who are in flooded areas along the Red River, the Souris River, places like Peguis and Fisher River, where there continue to be significant concerns.

At a time when water levels are starting to go down, it is important that we stay vigilant and concerned because the problems are not completely over. I hope that the minister will, in one of his future updates, talk about some of the northern communities and where there are risks later on because some of them have flooding events which may occur after those *[inaudible]* Thank you.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today Pat Isaak, president of the Manitoba Teachers' Society; Diane Beresford, assistant general secretary, Manitoba Teachers' Society; Judy Edmonds, public affairs

officer, who are the guests of the honourable Member for Rossmere (Ms. Braun).

Also in the public gallery we have from Fairholme School 32 grade 9 students under the direction of Evelyn Mandel. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Faurshou).

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Increase

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): After a decade of announcements, advertising and spin on the environment, the results that came through yesterday from Stats Canada show that Manitoba continues to move in the wrong direction when it comes to greenhouse gas emissions.

At the same time as Manitoba has increased greenhouse gas emissions by some 400,000 tonnes between '06 and '07, Alberta cut their emissions by 6.5 megatonnes, Mr. Speaker.

I want to ask the government: How do they explain these very poor results, particularly compared to the spin that we see in their ad campaigns?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the member would note the 40 percent reduction in the Stats Canada report on energy efficiency in households in Manitoba. I want to thank each consumer in Manitoba who's doing their part for the environment. It's the best record in Canada in terms of getting a B-plus, or A-plus rather, along with British Columbia in energy efficiency.

I would note today that David Suzuki goes on a public radio today to indicate that Manitoba, in their view, is behind British Columbia because British Columbia has a carbon tax. That's something we don't support. We support the cap and trade.

It goes on to say that Manitoba, Ontario and Québec have very good, positive climate change initiatives.

* (14:30)

Mr. McFadyen: Well, Mr. Speaker, they may very well refer to announcements that have been made by government, but the results from Stats Canada show

that in actual terms, greenhouse gas emissions are going up. They're higher today than they were in 1999. They've gone up by 400,000 tonnes over a 12-month period from '06 to '07 even as the Conservative government in Alberta with mandatory reduction targets has cut their emissions by 6.5 megatonnes over the same period of time.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday, in response to a question from the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), the Premier blamed agriculture for these changes when, in fact, agriculture is down by 4,000 tonnes over that time period.

Why is he blaming agriculture when agriculture is doing its part?

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, looking at the Stats Can, Stats Canada has restated the numbers from the 1999 base. In fact, it restated it back to 1990, and if you look at the numbers from 1990 to 2009, we have about a 3 percent increase in emissions in vehicles; we have a 40 percent reduction in household energy consumption, and we have an increase in agriculture that is a challenge in Manitoba. We think that those are important numbers to look at.

You can look at the year-by-year numbers or you can look at the long-term trend numbers, Mr. Speaker. We think that all sectors are extremely important in Manitoba. We have a strategy that has targets. It includes a \$10-a-tonne cost for coal. We've closed down one coal plant. We're implementing a coal tax in the year 2011-12 as per our budget last year and our Kyoto plan. We have the highest amount of geothermal per capita of any place in Canada. Independent people, analysis by, as late as this morning, from David Suzuki indicate very, very positive results.

I would point out that David Suzuki does say we have challenges in terms of the California tailpipe emissions standards, which we acknowledge, and now with the Barack Obama administration replacing the Republicans in the United States, we think we can go to the California tailpipe emissions standards in Manitoba, which we think, again, is very, very positive.

Dr. Suzuki also says we have a number of challenges in agriculture. Everybody acknowledges that. We acknowledge it's a challenge, but we think it's a multiple challenge in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. McFadyen: I was wondering how he was going to find a way to blame somebody else for his poor performance. Somehow he's managed to find a way

to blame American governments for the fact that here in Manitoba our greenhouse gas emissions have gone up. They're up from where they were in 1999. They are going in the opposite direction of Alberta, which is going down dramatically with a 6.5-megatonne reduction, a government that introduced mandatory targets.

Here in Manitoba, when they introduced their bill last year with optional targets, we proposed amendments to include mandatory targets. They voted those amendments down, Mr. Speaker. They voted them down. They didn't want mandatory targets.

Will the Premier now admit the reason they don't want mandatory targets is because all they want to do is talk about the environment but not actually achieve results.

Mr. Doer: Manitoba, indeed, went from 20.9 to 21.3, less than 0.4 megatonnes. Saskatchewan went up from 71 to 71.9, quite a bit of a higher increase, and, Mr. Speaker, Alberta went from 233 megatonnes in 2006 to 245 megatonnes in 2007.

The way I read that chart is they went up quite a bit more, and the member again is wrong, wrong, wrong, Mr. Speaker.

On-Site Waste-Water Management Systems Regulations

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain): Mr. Speaker, we know that the government is proposing further regulations to the existing on-site waste-water management systems regulation. I also know there's been serious questions raised regarding these additional regulations being proposed. Just over a year ago, I asked the Minister of Conservation for clarification on the existing regulations and inspections.

Mr. Speaker, I refer to his response. In it he says there will be an enhanced inspection and enforcement program that will focus on existing systems in priority areas such as the Red River Valley and designated sensitive areas like Pelican Lake. He goes on to say the department's role is to administer and enforce the OWMS regulation.

I just want to ask the minister: How come it didn't happen?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Conservation): The member should open up the paper in his own local riding and see that we're advertising for meetings where we've got the public coming forward

to give us advice on this, just as the act says we should do. I don't know if the member opposite would ignore our own act and what we put in place there, but we want the people in Manitoba to have a say in this.

We want to have a comprehensive across-the-board kind of an approach to protecting Manitoba's water. It fits in with what we've been doing in so many areas that this government has taken a look at, and, just as I said back then, we're moving forward to make sure that in sensitive areas we have protection for Manitoba's water. It's time that you guys got on board.

Mr. Cullen: Well, we certainly see lots of advertisement from the government trying to mislead Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to table two letters for the minister for his review. The first letter is from the municipality of Killarney-Turtle Mountain. In the letter it says: "...Council expressed concern regarding the holding capacity of holding tanks located on Killarney Lake. We are not sure of the process for the review to take place and would request that an inspection of holding tanks located on Killarney Lake be done."

Mr. Speaker, I refer to the response from his department: "Thank you for your letter dated July 28, 2008 expressing your concerns regarding holding tanks in your jurisdiction. Manitoba Conservation does not have the resources to conduct such inspections."

Mr. Speaker, why would the minister even think about further regulations when he can't even look after the one he has in place now?

Mr. Struthers: I'd suggest a couple of things. First of all, putting an ad in the paper to invite the people of Manitoba to participate [*inaudible*]

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Struthers: –consultation is not a bad thing, Mr. Speaker.

Second of all, I'd suggest that the member, in our Estimates procedure, bring a copy of the budget along, and he can take a look at ways in which we are dealing with enforcement issues in sensitive areas of our province, where we know we have to act first, where we know we have to act strongly, and we're doing that, Mr. Speaker.

So I would also suggest that the member take part—maybe the member could take part and facilitate his constituents to come out to the consultations that we're having, which I have extended to May 8, at the request of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Cullen: Well, Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House are interested in real results. Legislation and regulation for the purpose of public spin is just not acceptable. Manitobans are looking for a plan and a vision from this government.

Mr. Speaker, why would Manitobans take this government seriously when it comes to environmental issues when they are not even enforcing their own regulations?

Mr. Struthers: Mr. Speaker, I must remind the member opposite that every single water protection measure that we've brought forward, he has voted against. Bill 17, he voted against. The approach that we've put forward in terms of working with municipalities and waste water, they spoke against.

Mr. Speaker, they've got to start taking seriously water protection in this province. We have a plan. We've put it in place. This is part of that plan. We're moving forward with some strong actions in terms of on-site waste water.

High-Efficiency Toilet Rebate Program Plan for Disposal of Old Toilets

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Mr. Speaker, in November of last year, the Minister of Water Stewardship announced a rebate program for the use of high efficiency or dual-flush toilets.

I am just wondering if the minister can indicate what her plan is to dispose of the old toilets that are to be replaced under this program.

Hon. Christine Melnick (Minister of Water Stewardship): Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to report to the House that on the one day that we did have the sale we sold over 10,000 low-flush toilets in Manitoba, which is over three times more than any other jurisdiction that has had a sale like this. So I want to thank Manitobans for responding so positively to the water conservation initiative that we brought forward in this province.

We also understand that the ReStore, which is part of Habitat for Humanity, was receiving a lot of the toilets that had been replaced. They are working and we are co-operating with an individual who is

taking these toilets, grinding them down and using them for flooring, Mr. Speaker.

So we're taking a 13-litre toilet, replacing it but also—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

* (14:40)

Mrs. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, according to officials at the City of Winnipeg, there doesn't appear to be a plan that has been stated in terms of taking these toilets and where are they going to go. It's not in their purview. It's not within their jurisdiction to do that.

So the question is: What is the plan to do this? It's under your jurisdiction, so what is the plan to ensure that these are removed from one place to where they should be and ensure that they are recycled and don't end up in the dump?

Ms. Melnick: Well, Mr. Speaker, we are also talking about any of the toilets that did end up in the dump, making sure that they are available to the individual who wants to recycle them. So, again, I think we have a win, win, win, lower water usage—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Ms. Melnick: Mr. Speaker, members opposite may think that water conservation is a big joke. We don't. It's the next pillar in our water resource strategy. Over 10,500—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Ms. Melnick: By having 10,500 houses replace their 13-litre toilets with low flush, we are saving 262.5 million litres a year, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, I guess, Mr. Speaker, the plan is to dump them at the dump first and then require the individual who's trying to use this product to have to go, to recycle this product, to actually have to go out to the dump and pick these up.

Mr. Speaker, there is no plan in place which is unfortunate. We should be working with the industry to ensure that these toilets are re-used. We know the City of Winnipeg has said that it's not within their purview to actually dispose of them or recycle them. It is within the purview of this minister.

She made the announcement at the time. Will she follow through? We know it's not happening now, so when will this take place?

Ms. Melnick: Mr. Speaker, the ReStore announced that they were receiving these. We told the press that we were going to be helping in this. We have done so. We will continue to do so.

The questions are really disappointing, Mr. Speaker, but what do you expect from a party who has a leader that would remove all water regs in the province of Manitoba.

Shame on them for going against water conservation in this province, not surprising, but the disappointment is really that they were not a part of this, as they have not been a part of any of the initiatives this government has taken to take care of water in this province. Shame on the members opposite.

Anishinaabe Child and Family Services Staff Conference Attendance

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Mr. Speaker, I'm having difficulty understanding this Minister of Family Services' priorities. How can he possibly justify and support sending over half of the management staff from Anishinaabe Child and Family Services to a posh casino and resort in Reno when he has frozen foster rates for children in care at 2005 levels? Where are his priorities?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Housing): I ask where the member could possibly get the information about foster care rates, Mr. Speaker. She, I think, was referring to her administration and her decisions where they didn't just freeze foster rates, they cut them, they cut them, they cut them, they cut them, I believe four times.

But, Mr. Speaker, I also question the member how she can stand up in this House after having got up here before and raised concerns about Aboriginal child welfare and training. I now ask what aspects of training is she opposed to, FASD, cross-border adoptee repatriation, Telehealth, alcohol being brought onto reserves. Those are the subjects of the conference, the 27th conference. They—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Child and Family Services Agencies Foster Care Rates Freeze

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Mr. Speaker, it's the foster family association and foster families that are saying, as the result of AJI and the devolution of Child and Family Services, that foster rates have been frozen at the 2005 level.

So if the minister is saying that those people are lying, Mr. Speaker, I think he maybe better go and ask the question. My understanding is that Treasury Board froze the rates. That's the information I am getting.

Will the minister stand up today and say that is not true?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Housing): I think nothing is more graphic than actually looking at the graph of foster rates over the last 15 years in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker. It's a valley actually. The top of the valley on one side is 1988, and the bottom of the valley is under her watch when foster care rates hit an all-time low after cut after cut.

Finally, we're back up. We're moving up the valley. We're saying to foster parents that they are important to the well-being of children, as is the training of child welfare workers in this province.

Mr. Speaker, would the member please, please apply a fair analysis to the facts and to Aboriginal child welfare in this province.

Conference Attendance Policy

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): That answer, to me, sounded like a, yes, the rates have been frozen at 2005 levels.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell us today whether any other agencies have sent staff on an all-expenses paid trip to this upscale resort in Reno while his department has frozen rates for children since 2005?

How many children in Manitoba aren't receiving the support they should be getting because this minister supports retreats at spas and casinos in the United States rather than supporting children?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Housing): Well, fact No. 1, foster care rates have increased 20 percent over the last two years, Mr. Speaker.

Foster rates were cut, Mr. Speaker, in '93, '94, '97. I can go on all those years.

Mr. Speaker, during the last recession, we know what members opposite do about children. In fact, I don't want to use my own words, but there are headlines here: 1993, They've crippled child care. It says here they've chopped more than \$6 million in funding to child care, foster parents, child welfare agencies.

Under this government, Mr. Speaker, we don't cut back on children when there's hard times.

Mr. Speaker, the members, a few days ago—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: No. That's three.

Mrs. Mitchelson: No, just on a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: Oh, the honourable Member for River East, on a point of order?

Mrs. Mitchelson: No, Mr. Speaker, maybe it's a point of clarification. You might be able to help me.

But I'm just wondering—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Let me hear first. Come on. Order.

Mrs. Mitchelson: —whether you could clarify for us whether the cameras are on during question period and whether the voice will be recorded. I'd just like clarification.

Mr. Speaker: The information that I have received is that, yes, all feed externally is live. It's only internally, the feed, we can't get.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thanks.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: You have about eight seconds.

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, the same member last week voted against the budget, the second-largest increase in investments in child welfare in recent history, an increase of about 10 percent. She stood up here and very proudly said, no.

Anishinaabe Child and Family Services Quality Assurance Review

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): Mr. Speaker, 10 years and four Family Services ministers later, and we still see the huge chaos within the system under this NDP's watch.

Mr. Speaker, last June, the Minister of Family Services contracted with an external independent investigator to conduct an investigation into allegations of tax evasion, child endangerment, hire

of staff with high-risk criminal record, malicious behaviour and staff misconduct at the Anishinaabe Child and Family Services agency.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell us if this investigation is complete, and will he make this report public?

*(14:50)

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Housing): Yes, Mr. Speaker, quality assurance reviews that are going to take place for every child welfare agency in the province of Manitoba are under way and, of course, will be released.

But this is driven by a concern that of the over 500 people attending the 27th Annual American Indian Conference on Child Abuse, there are five people from Anishinaabe, of the 75 staff, that were sent there to ensure that they have understanding of the best techniques, the best approaches to protect children.

Mr. Speaker, surely, the member opposite would support training that strengthens child welfare.

Mrs. Taillieu: The minister has not indicated whether the report is complete, but I wonder if he might say if this report justifies these expensive retreats to Reno at the expense of children in care.

Why isn't this minister demanding accountability? Why isn't he putting children first, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, there are over 60 training workshops at the annual conference, the conference that was held, and I'm sure child welfare workers went when they were in office.

It's a long-standing, highly respected conference endorsed by the Child Welfare League of America. There are people from Canada there, about 150 child welfare workers, thank goodness, Mr. Speaker, so that we can learn from the practices. The Americans have had a longer experience with the devolution of child welfare, and it's important that this jurisdiction not be left in the backwaters, that we also are there learning from the best practices in North America.

Mrs. Taillieu: Well, Mr. Speaker, we have allegations from this agency, from Anishinaabe agency, about tax evasion, about child endangerment. We don't have the report yet. He's not sharing anything and yet he still condones sending

people on expensive trips at the expense of children in care.

When is he going to restore accountability in Child and Family Services and make children his top priority?

Mr. Mackintosh: It was the previous questioner who actually eradicated the accountability mechanism in Manitoba. We put it back in place, and, as well, Mr. Speaker, there is, in addition to accountability units, the accountability unit, there is enhanced accountability.

This department, Mr. Speaker, provides social services through 1,250, roughly, agencies in this province. They are empowered to make decisions about training and make decisions that are appropriate within their budgets. The southern authority has looked at this expenditure and has determined that it is appropriate to strengthen that particular agency.

I also will remind the member that, yes, it is under review and the review will be made public.

McPhillips Street Station Casino Presence of Automated Teller Machines

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Manitoba has the highest proportion of problem gamblers in Canada. In fact, the NDP government takes in the third highest per capita gaming revenue in the country, \$726 a year for every adult in the province. Even still, the minister has ignored the advice of the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba and has decided to place ATMs in the McPhillips Street Station Casino.

Every year, this government takes in more money from those Manitobans who are struggling with severe gambling addictions. Can the minister explain why he is so dependent on gambling revenues that he is putting ATMs in the casino?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): The short answer is safety of the people that are using the facilities. On the McPhillips avenue situation, the Lotteries Corporation was very concerned about the risks to people going outside of the facility to access an ATM machine. They were concerned about violence to the customers.

They have placed an ATM inside the casino, but outside of the gaming area. Within the gaming area are the resources from the alcohol foundation, but outside of the gaming area is the ATM so that people

do not have a risk to their physical security when they want to access that service.

Mr. Graydon: Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the minister said that he had put ATMs in the casino because of the patrons crossing the parking lot, concern for their safety, and, again, today, we've heard the same thing. This is the NDP's way of dealing with crime, putting ATMs in casinos.

Mr. Speaker, Manitoba spends less than 1 percent of its total gaming revenues on problem gambling, far less than the Canadian average, and has the highest proportion of problem gambling in Canada. The decision is going to make problem gaming worse, not better.

Why is the minister putting his addiction to gaming revenues ahead of the best interests of Manitoba?

Mr. Selinger: As I explained earlier, it was the strong view that people attending at that casino were at risk by going across the parking lot to use the ATM. Now, if the member wants to go on the record on behalf of the opposition and say that people should be at physical risk, I wish he would declare that.

We have to put public safety first. It's supported by the police. It's supported by the Lotteries Corporation, and it follows responsible gaming practice.

Mr. Graydon: Mr. Speaker, this NDP government is addicted to gaming revenues, and now they're putting the ATMs in the McPhillips Street Station. Manitobans suffering from gaming addictions will be able to turn over their paycheques to the NDP without even leaving the facility.

In 2004, the former minister listened to the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba and realized that this was the wrong decision for Manitobans. A news release dated January 21, 2004, states: Our government is deeply committed to working in partnership with the AFM in promoting responsible gaming and, as a result, not proceeding with the proposal.

The NDP listened to the Addictions Foundation then. Why are they not listening to them today?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, I'll remind the member that it was the Conservative Party of Manitoba that built the casinos and brought lotteries into the community inside of Manitoba. The reality is any responsible organization has a responsibility—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Selinger: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have a responsibility, through the Lotteries Corporation, to protect the public. If the member believes that the solution to gaming is to have people at risk of physical violence, he should say that. We believe that there should be—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. It's hard enough to hear.

Mr. Selinger: We believe that the responsible gaming resources should be inside the casino, that the ATM should be outside of the gaming area but in a safe place where Manitobans are not at risk, and that's what we have done in the interest of public safety.

Green Report Card Provincial Rating

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, it's Earth Day. We've had 10 years of NDP government in this province and the results are very clear. Manitoba has performed among the very worst of all provinces when it comes to the environment on Canada's first green provincial report card.

When it comes to the release, for example, of toxic material into the atmosphere, Manitoba, at 487 toxicity units per million GDP, is by far and away the worst performer of all provinces. Saskatchewan is at 11. Ontario is at 62. Almost all the other provinces are less than 100.

I ask the Premier: Why has he performed so poorly?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Well, Mr. Speaker, I would point out that, notwithstanding the methodology of the report, the findings allegedly have Ontario ahead of Manitoba. Ontario has coal. It's proceeding with nuclear. We're way ahead of them in terms of energy efficiency, way ahead of them in terms of per capita geothermal.

The member opposite, yesterday, asked questions about the Canada statistics. We are quite a bit lower, according to Stats Canada, than Saskatchewan, Alberta and Ontario.

So I would point out that we have more work to do, but we'll put our record against his record, any day, on emissions. Thank you.

* (15:00)

Mr. Gerrard: This provincial green report card is important because it's got a broad range of indices, and the better comparison, in fact, is Manitoba and Québec, when it's greenhouse gases. Manitoba produces per capita almost twice as much as Québec. As Québec has been going down, down, down for four years, Manitoba has been going up, up, up on greenhouse gas production.

Why has the Premier done so poorly when it compares to a comparable hydro-electric producing province like Québec?

Mr. Doer: Well, yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the numbers the member cited, Québec went from 82 megatonnes to 85. That's an increase of 3 megatonnes. We had 0.3. Québec's population is not 10 times greater than Manitoba.

I would also point out that contrary to what the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) stated, the Alberta megatonnes went from 233 to 245. That's plus 12 megatonnes. That's not a decrease, as the member alleged and the whole world knows. That's actually an increase, as the whole world knows, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, when it comes to green buildings, Manitoba is far behind even Alberta. Manitoba has 34 certified green homes for a hundred thousand people. Alberta has 105, three times as many.

When it comes to government spending on transit, compared to roads, Manitoba has only a quarter of the proportion of Ontario and only about half that of B.C. and Québec.

When it comes to employment in environmental or green industries, Manitoba has the lowest rate of all the provinces at 2.3 percent of our work force, only about half that of British Columbia, which is at 4.3 percent.

How could the Premier have let Manitoba get so far behind?

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, British Columbia, which the member mentioned, went from 60 megatonnes to 63 megatonnes, almost an increase of 3 megatonnes. We had one-tenth of that in terms of megatonne increases. It's still an increase. It's still not acceptable. That's why we put a plan in place.

And, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the report the member opposite is quoting, it has Ontario with better energy—coal, nuclear, no strategy on many of the items that we have.

The Liberals have never supported Manitoba Hydro. They've never supported hydro-electric power. They called Limestone lemonstone, Mr. Speaker. I would rather have hydro-electric power any day.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The Member for River Heights, are you up on a point of order?

Mr. Gerrard: Point of order.

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

Mr. Gerrard: What the Premier said is so far from the truth, it's unbelievable.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I remind members that points of order and matters of privilege are very, very serious, and I need to hear every word that is spoken because I will have to make a ruling.

The honourable Member for River Heights, on his point of order.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, Manitoba Liberals have supported Manitoba Hydro. Indeed, it was Premier Garson and Premier Campbell who put in place rural electrification, two Liberal premiers. They did wonderful things for this province. They set the stage for the development of the hydro-electric power at the Grand Rapids location, for example.

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

Mr. Doer: Yes, this is not a point of order. It's a dispute over the facts, and we'll take the record on Grand Rapids with 500 miles of flooding over our record any day of the week, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Member for River Heights, it is not a point of order. It's a dispute over the facts.

Natural Areas Conservation Program Government Funding

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): Well, hello, Mr. Speaker. You can tell it's Earth Day when the members opposite try and account for 364 days of neglect on the environment accountability, all in a

span of about half an hour. It's a pretty pathetic showing.

Meanwhile, day after day, week after week, our government's making enormous progress on all the issues that [inaudible] protected areas, reduced emissions and better water management.

I'm going to pick on the Minister of Conservation and ask if he might have any special announcements he'd like to share with the Chamber on this special day.

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Conservation): Mr. Speaker, finally a question on the environment with some real meaning to it.

Mr. Speaker, today, we were very, very pleased to announce a partnership with the Nature Conservancy of Canada, where we're partnering for \$7 million with their private money of \$7 million in order to protect Manitoba lands, in order to protect vegetation and animal species. We also announced the inclusion of 2,200 hectares of land in our protected areas network through work with the Nature Conservancy of Canada. We're also very pleased to announce the expansion of the Pembina Valley park and also the Pinawa Dam Provincial Park.

This is on top of, Mr. Speaker, three weeks ago announcing the Whitemouth Bog Ecological Reserve. The Whitemouth Bog WMA—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Lake Dauphin Fishery Government Report

Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose): Two meaningful questions on conservation in a row. The government of Manitoba has spent more than \$500,000 over the last nine years to develop a co-management plan for the Lake Dauphin fishery. The minister stated yesterday that science shows the need to close two of the seven tributaries of Lake Dauphin. She assures us that a partial closure of these tributaries is all that's needed to protect the long-term health of the fishery.

Mr. Speaker, if the minister is so confident of her partial closure, will she today table the scientific documents she is referencing?

Hon. Christine Melnick (Minister of Water Stewardship): Well, Mr. Speaker, it's kind of ironic that the member from Ste. Anne would table a

portion of that document on Monday and not remember on Wednesday that he had tabled it.

This was the document that the department used as they went out for consultation with the West Regional Tribal Council. It's also the document that was shared with the Fisheries Enhancement group, when I went up and had a joint meeting with the local MLA and Minister of Conservation with the Fisheries Enhancement group.

Perhaps the member should read more than pages 2, 3, and 4 of that document to find out exactly what the rationale is to announce the closure this year, as we did last Thursday.

Mr. Briese: Mr. Speaker, those documents we tabled the other day said nothing about closing two of the seven tributaries. Through Freedom of Information, we requested a copy of reports that stakeholders had submitted to the Province as part of the development of a management plan to protect the walleye stocks in Lake Dauphin. However, we were denied access.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister explain why she won't share her reports? Why doesn't she want to reveal the long-term management plan for this fishery?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Conservation): Mr. Speaker, first and foremost, we did the work necessary to consult with First Nations in the area, so that we could do this closure and then enforce the closure like we are.

Unlike members opposite who ignored this problem year after year after year and did nothing in terms of consultation or protection of the fish in that lake, we're doing it right, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Briese: Mr. Speaker, the first closure on Lake Dauphin was in '99 under Glen Cummings.

Mr. Speaker, the minister claims to have a plan to protect Lake Dauphin's fishery, but she won't table it for public scrutiny. Instead, we've seen a series of ineffectual, piecemeal reactions to pressures from different directions. We've seen a trap net program that didn't work, a partial closure that won't work, and now the minister is buying truckloads of frozen fish to try and encourage people not to fish.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: What is she trying to hide? Why won't she release the long-term plan for the conservation of the Lake Dauphin walleye fishery?

Mr. Struthers: Mr. Speaker, talk about revisionist history across the way. In '99, that was no more than a news release looking for political points that was never consulted upon and never enforced. We have—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Struthers: I can understand members being a little bit touchy on this, Mr. Speaker. We have a plan that has been put in place based on science and based on our duty to consult with the First Nations.

We've done that, Mr. Speaker. We're working with the RCMP right now to make sure that this closure is enforced on the two tributaries that have been closed and on the five others that have limitations put on it.

We're doing our part to protect pickerel on that lake. Members opposite should recognize that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral question has expired.

*(15:10)

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Earth Day

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Mr. Speaker, today, people around the globe are marking the 39th annual Earth Day, the largest, most celebrated environmental event worldwide.

Earth Day is based on the premise that we all have the right to live on a healthy sustainable earth. More than 6 million Canadians celebrate Earth Day annually. I am glad to see so many young people in Manitoba are interested in making the earth a better place by conserving our resources and reducing waste.

Students are learning about environmental concerns in the classroom and they have become leaders in promoting change in their families and communities. They understand that, in order to preserve the environment for future generations, we all need to make changes in our lives today.

Some of the things that we as Manitobans can do to limit our impact on the environment include using water more wisely, conserving energy, reducing our waste, increasing recycling, choosing more energy efficient transportation alternatives and making greener shopping choices.

All week, there are events going on across the province that Manitobans are encouraged to take part in to celebrate Earth Day. Some of these events include free presentations and films at the Millennium Library, an Amazing Race and Eco-Pavilion at The Forks on April 25. As always, there are Earth Day events taking place at the Fort Whyte Centre.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to encourage all Manitobans to take part in Earth Day and do their part to help the environment. Furthermore, our actions should not be limited to today, but every day should be treated like Earth Day by limiting our environmental footprints. Thank you very much.

Manitoba Teachers' Society 90th Anniversary

Ms. Erna Braun (Rossmere): Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured to rise today on a very important occasion and one that is very dear to my personal experience as an educator.

Today is the 90th anniversary of the Manitoba Teachers' Society. Ninety years ago, on April 22, a group of Manitoba teachers united together to improve the working environment of teachers in this province.

At their humble beginnings back in 1919, teachers had few to no rights. Salaries and contracts could be altered at whim by local school boards. This injustice influenced a handful of educators to organize for better working conditions, to seek job security, better pay and teacher training. These pioneers had the foresight to know that better working conditions for teachers would lead to better learning conditions for students.

There have been struggles but the triumphs have been numerous over the years. Today, the Manitoba Teachers' Society stands as a testament to the hard work of public school teachers over the past nine decades. MTS has worked tirelessly for quality education. Issues of improving pensions, benefits and salaries for teachers have gone hand in hand with encouraging governments to improve supports for education, as well as renewing curriculum and instruction.

I'm very proud to have been a member of the Manitoba Teachers' Society and to have been part of an organization that works diligently to support all teachers and to improve their work lives that students, in turn, may benefit from the inspiring learning environments that teachers create.

I am pleased that we are joined today by Pat Isaak, the recently re-elected president of the Manitoba Teachers' Society. Congratulations and best wishes to Ms. Isaak, as MTS continues into the next decade as a leader in advocating for teachers' rights and quality education.

Ms. Isaak is accompanied by assistant general secretary of MTS, Diane Beresford and Judy Edmonds, MTS public affairs officer. I ask that all members join me in congratulating the Manitoba Teachers' Society for 90 years of exemplary service in representing the public school teachers in our province. Thank you.

Jon Montgomery

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to congratulate a young Manitoban and native of Russell for his outstanding accomplishments as a skeleton racer and a member of Canada's national skeleton racing team.

Jon Montgomery grew up in Russell, Manitoba, where he was active in all types of sports, but his main sport was hockey. After high school, Jon attended post-secondary university at Barrie, Ontario, and, after completion of his degree, Jon moved to Calgary, Alberta, and took up skeleton racing. His passion and performance in the sport earned him a spot on the Canadian national skeleton racing team in 2006 and '07. Since that time, Jon has excelled admirably in the sport, earning gold, silver and bronze medals at World Cup competitions in 2007 and 2008. Early in 2009, Jon won gold at the World Cup in Whistler, B.C., the venue for the 2010 Olympics.

In 2007-08, Jon's overall World Cup ranking was second, and in 2008 and 2009 his overall World Cup ranking is eighth. In addition, he has won sixth place in the Olympic qualifiers in the 2008 and 2009 season.

On behalf of all Russell constituents, I want to wish Jon the very best as he continues toward his qualification for the 2010 Olympic Games. I'm sure all of us will be watching Jon with great interest over the course of the next year, and we look forward to him representing our country at the 2010 Olympics.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Gabrielle Roy

Ms. Erin Selby (Southdale): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about an influential Manitoban who

was a life-long champion of the underprivileged and the marginalized.

Gabrielle Roy, née à Saint-Boniface, est une des auteures les plus importantes du vingtième siècle.

Translation

Gabrielle Roy, born in St. Boniface, is one of the most significant authors of the 20th Century.

English

She was born on March 22 in 1909 in St. Boniface and was the youngest of 11 children. She completed school in 1929 and was offered a permanent position as a teacher in St. Boniface.

Elle enseigna à Saint-Boniface au cours des sept années suivantes et fut membre du Cercle Molière, une des plus vieilles troupes théâtrales au Canada.

Translation

She taught in St. Boniface over the next seven years and was a member of the Cercle Molière, one of Canada's oldest theatre companies.

English

In 1937, she made her way to Europe where she stayed for two years. It was in France where she began writing. After publishing some articles in a French journal, Gabrielle Roy returned to Canada and began to write in Montréal. She spent six years as a freelance reporter. She published her first novel *Bonheur d'occasion*, or *The Tin Flute* in 1945 and it became an instant success. Following this novel, Gabrielle Roy continued to write. Some of her notable works include *La petite poule d'eau* and *Rue Deschambault*.

Tout au cours de sa carrière, Gabrielle Roy a reçu de nombreux prix littéraires prestigieux. Elle a également été la première femme nommée membre de la Société royale du Canada en 1947 et a reçu le titre de Compagnon de l'Ordre du Canada en 1967.

Translation

Throughout her career, Gabrielle Roy received many prestigious literary awards. In 1947, she was the first woman to become a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and in 1967 was appointed Companion of the Order of Canada.

English

Gabrielle Roy received numerous awards in recognition for her work. She died on July 13, 1983 of heart failure.

Mr. Speaker, Gabrielle Roy was a remarkable Manitoban, and this year marks 100 years since she was born. She was an outstanding role model and a literary icon in Manitoba's and Canada's history. I ask all members of the House to celebrate her work with me today.

Merci, Monsieur le Président.

Translation

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Green Report Card

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Today is Earth Day. The NDP in Manitoba have talked and talked about the environment, but their lacklustre performance doesn't even come close to matching their public grandstanding. The latest national report, Canada's first green provincial report card, gives us a snapshot of failure.

Take air quality. Manitobans would be shocked to realize that when toxic release of emissions into the air are considered, Manitoba performs abysmally at 487 toxicity units per million GDP. Almost all other provinces were less than 100.

Our performance is equally poor on climate change. Manitoba is expected to suffer more intense weather, including changes in precipitation and drought cycles. The problems we face are urgent, real and global, and they could irrevocably reduce our quality of life. Yet, Manitoba's greenhouse gas production has gone up by 13 percent compared to 1990 and continues to go up. We're performing much worse than Québec, which has reduced emissions for the fourth consecutive year. Manitoba and Québec both extensively use hydro-electric power, yet Manitoba's greenhouse gas production per capita is now almost double that of Québec. NDP half-measures are not getting the job done.

Manitoba also scored poorly in upgrading building codes, and the NDP have done little to encourage smart urban planning. Alberta has 105 certified green homes per 100,000 people, while Manitoba has only 34. We've had little movement on rapid transit and the Province's policies promote urban sprawl, rather than smart urban design.

Despite words to the contrary, green industries in Manitoba are not growing, at a paltry 2.3 percent, with the lowest employment in green industries. By comparison, British Columbia had almost double Manitoba's rate of environmental employment at more than 4 percent.

With so much potential for improvement in these areas, the NDP have not only failed Manitobans but future generations around the world. Liberals have consistently forwarded leading-edge ideas to improve water quality and lower greenhouse gases, including measures to reduce phosphorus in waterways and ban the plastic bag. But the NDP have hardly listened for over a decade.

Manitobans are demanding real progressive action, action that can only be delivered through the efforts of a dedicated leading-edge Liberal government.

* (15:20)

House Business

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you please canvass the House to see if there's an agreement for the Estimates sequence to be changed so that, in Room 255, starting on April 23, the Estimates for the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives will be set aside, with the Department of Finance to be considered, with the understanding that once Finance is completed, the sequence will revert back to Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives?

And, would you please canvass the House to see if there's agreement to change the Estimates sequence in Room 254 to place the Estimates for Infrastructure and Transportation ahead of the Estimates for Advanced Education and Literacy, and, just to confirm, Justice will continue in 254?

And, would you please canvass the House to see if there's agreement to change the Estimates sequence in the Chamber so that on Thursday, April 23, Aboriginal and Northern Affairs will be considered, with Culture, Heritage, Tourism and Sport to be considered on Friday, April 24, and Education, Citizenship and Youth be considered starting on Monday, April 27?

And, would you also canvass the House to see if there's leave to not see the clock until 5:30 today?

Mr. Speaker: Okay. Is there agreement for the Estimates sequence to be changed so that in Room 255, starting on April 23, the Estimates for the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives will be set aside with the Department of Finance to be considered, with the understanding that once Finance is completed, the sequence will revert to Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives? Is there agreement? *[Agreed]*

Is there agreement to change the Estimates sequence in room 254 to place the Estimates for Infrastructure and Transportation ahead of the Estimates for Advanced Education and Literacy, and just to confirm, Justice will be continuing in 254? Is there agreement? *[Agreed]*

Is there also agreement to change the Estimates sequence in the Chamber so that on Thursday, April 23, Aboriginal and Northern Affairs will be considered, with Culture, Heritage, Tourism and Sport to be considered on Friday, April 24, and Education, Citizenship and Youth to be considered starting on Monday, April 27? Is there agreement? *[Agreed]*

Also, is there leave for the Speaker not to see the clock until 5:30 for today only? Is there agreement? *[Agreed]*

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. Speaker: Resolve into Committee of Supply?

Mr. Chomiak: We will resolve the House into Committee of Supply.

Mr. Speaker: Okay. The House will now resolve into Committee of Supply. Will the Chairs please go to the rooms that they will be chairing.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

JUSTICE

* (15:30)

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

This section of the Committee of Supply will now resume consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Justice.

As had been previously agreed, questioning for this department will proceed in a global manner. The floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. A question regarding the drug treatment court. We left off yesterday about the applications.

Did the department, were they able to get those numbers yesterday, or are they going to be forthcoming in responses?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): We don't have it right now. We'll try to provide it as soon as possible.

Mr. Goertzen: That's fine. I appreciate the undertaking.

A question regarding victimization surveys, and the minister and I had this discussion in the context of the Legislature in a question. That's not always, I know, the most fruitful way to address an issue, so we'll try it in this form, instead.

The minister, I think, in response to one of his questions, had indicated that there are victimization surveys done monthly by Statistics Canada. They tell me they do them every five years. I'm not sure that that matters so much. I'm more curious, I suppose, about the value that the minister sees in victimization surveys, generally, in trying to measure the level of crime in a community, in a city, or in a province.

Mr. Chomiak: I guess, since '88, victimization surveys have been conducted by StatsCan and CCJS every five to six years.

The victimization data is not a verified total of crime incidents, but is an estimate based upon responses from a sample of people who participate in a telephone survey. So, in that respect, it's not done regularly like other, for example, CCJS reports that look at actual crime statistics based on charges and dispositions, et cetera.

Mr. Goertzen: That's fine. So I think the minister probably misspoke in the House. I think both of us know it's an occupational hazard sometimes when you're asking and answering questions on things, and that just sometimes happens.

But, more specifically, then, to the question: What value does the minister see in these victimization surveys and their potential use in Manitoba?

Mr. Chomiak: I think they're one of the useful statistics or one of the statistics that help to determine application and follow-through. I think I indicated to the member that our victim and domestic response services talk to about 1,200 people a month in terms of follow-ups. So the actual contacts are fairly extensive to the extent that surveys capture all of the data. It's only one of the tools that illustrates the effectiveness or the non-effectiveness of victim services.

Mr. Goertzen: Sure, I don't completely disagree with the minister. I don't think victimization surveys

are a panacea for anything, but I do think that they're important and they would have useful application in capturing crimes that aren't being reported or underreported.

I remember a story, in talking to a Winnipeg police officer once, where they indicated to me that, when they went to community police offices, they also changed the way some crimes got reported. Instead of an individual being able to phone in the crime, they had to go to their police station and actually report the crime. They noticed, the next year, a drastic decline in certain crimes, and that was revealed or, I think, held up as a good news story until people started to look into it a little bit more deeply and realized, okay, it's just that there are some people, for whatever reason, won't report certain crimes. Either they don't think that there's going to be a consequence, or they don't have to do it for insurance reasons, or whatever reasons they're not reporting that crime.

I just want to leave it with the minister that, I think, he agrees that there's some value in victimization surveys. It's something that should be looked at, in the province, not on a daily basis or a monthly basis, but even a yearly basis, that's something that could be considered.

Mr. Chomiak: I agree with the member in both tone and approach. We know from our own experience that, for example, domestic violence cases, for a variety of reasons, are unreported, and we all know that. It's incumbent upon all of us to ensure the capacity of victims of all crime to have the ability to be in contact with the system, whatever means and methodology. There's no question that under-reporting means some people are suffering and cannot be helped. Today we should do everything we can to expand our outreach.

Mr. Goertzen: I thank the minister for those comments. I think that we might be moving to a positive outcome on that.

I have some questions regarding Prosecutions now, and so leaving the issue of—I think, we're generally talking about recidivism, although, forgive me, because sometimes I drift into other issues and that might happen again.

On the issue of Prosecutions, the government, I think, in the last election, had promised 20 new prosecutors. I believe, unless I'm wrong, there have been two that have been committed to in the budget. Are those the most recent numbers that the minister

has, as well, in terms of new prosecutors, new positions being hired?

Mr. Chomiak: We will reach our election commitment. I do know that in terms of overall—I'd better get the stat to the member in writing with both FTEs and the support staff, et cetera, to give an appropriate response to that particular question.

One thing that is still in some transitory form is one of the issues that's out there yet to be determined in terms of numbers, that is, when and how the police act gets passed and implemented, because that will have an implication for both police numbers and, likely, implications for Prosecutions as well. So that's on both, on a number of ends, we're sort of keeping an open mind, if you were, on application and development. But I'll get the number of Crown prosecutors and the related staff because there are two issues here. There were issues of both Crown prosecutors and the increase of Crown prosecutors, as well as the increase in administrative capacity to assist the Crown prosecutors.

Mr. Goertzen: So that's good, you know, the current number of Crown prosecutors, administrative staff and then the number of new Crown prosecutor positions that have been committed to since the last election. Just sort of tracking your promises, although I'm sure that you do, Mr. Minister.

Also, issues of workload numbers or the number of cases that each individual prosecutor has. This will probably be one of those areas where the minister cautions me that the numbers aren't always of complete relevance because there's different complexity of cases. I understand that. I think that the, and I'm going off of memory here, so I hope it's not a dangerous place to go, but there was a new system at least a couple of years ago—the PRISM system, I believe it was called—on tracking cases, and so those numbers were available in terms of caseloads, average caseloads. Could those be provided to my office?

Mr. Chomiak: Yes.

Mr. Goertzen: I thank the member for that. Just in terms of sort of retention rates for prosecutors, so there might be new positions opening up. Just curious how the department tracks average retention rates and whether or not the seniority of prosecutors generally is stable over the last number of years. Of course, I know if you hire new people, that would bring down your seniority rate in terms of those who are in the department. But how does the department

measure sort of the turnover of prosecutors and whether or not it's more difficult to retain prosecutors?

Mr. Chomiak: It's a very interesting question. We've had a fair amount of prosecutors going to the bench, which is always a mixed blessing when we're faced with a Crown prosecutor winning a competition. There's been trouble, of course, retaining lawyers, both Legal Aid, Crown, of any kind in the north and rural areas, particularly the north. In Winnipeg it's more stable.

My suspicion is that in the environment that we're in right now in terms of the legal profession, per se, the retention rate is actually going to stabilize more than we've seen in the last little while, but I'll get the numbers to the member. My overall sense of the bar, that is the legal bar, and where it's going, is that we are going to see with the economic recession, the downturn, some of the stability of the tenure of prosecutors and government lawyers may become more attractive than working on one's own, but I'll get the numbers for the member.

Mr. Goertzen: I think the member may have been cautioning me to stay in the occupation I'm in? Is that what you're suggesting, that things are—*[interjection]* All right. Now I should go into the occupation.

The number of articling students that come into the Crown's office every year used to be two, I think, or three. The number of articling students?

Mr. Chomiak: We have eight across the province now.

Mr. Goertzen: It hasn't been challenging in getting people to fill those positions in quality candidates?

Mr. Chomiak: I think to the contrary. I think it's been fairly attractive.

Mr. Goertzen: So this might not be necessary, but it still might be helpful. I think, on the federal side, what they do is offer articling students a three-year term. They know that, at least for the next three years, which would be unusual for most articling students, but they would know that for the next three years they have a job placement there. I suspect your retention rate of Crowns coming out of the articling and getting called to the bar is probably pretty good. But is that something that might be considered?

* (15:40)

Mr. Chomiak: I think the pattern of hirings indicates that—we've had five and we've gone up to eight, and the past few years we've virtually hired everyone that applied. That was one of the reasons for suggesting that I think the pattern is changing a bit out there in terms of legal practice. So, in that sense, I think we're fairly confident that there'll be a good resource supply to the department into the future.

Mr. Goertzen: Can the minister indicate how many ministerial directives he would have issued to his Prosecutions branch over, I guess, this year and last year?

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, other than fulfilling commitments and requirements in the Taman report, I'm not aware of any ministerial directives.

Mr. Goertzen: More so out of curiosity then, I guess, how many sort of live or active ministerial directives would—this is probably the wrong terminology—but would the Prosecutions branch have that are sort of ongoing and still provide advice on how to proceed on prosecutions?

Mr. Chomiak: There's a complete policy of Crown directives and policies, et cetera. I have not, other than direction during the—from the results of the Taman inquiry, I haven't provided any directives.

Mr. Goertzen: That accumulation of directives, I believe, is public, right? And I could obtain them?

Mr. Chomiak: I think they're actually on Web. Most of them are on Web, and the ones that aren't on Web we can provide.

Mr. Goertzen: I thank the member for that. In other jurisdictions, such as British Columbia, I think—do they publish them in their *Gazette* when they come out. Maybe we do the same. I don't believe so, but it's—

Mr. Chomiak: No, I don't believe so.

Mr. Goertzen: I take it they're models. It's just slightly different. They don't have an independent Prosecutions department and so its structure is slightly different, in form anyway, and so the directives come through the *Gazette*. They're then public in that form?

Mr. Chomiak: Yes. I think in B.C. they have an office of public prosecutions that has a different framework, but we're independent to the extent that we follow the law in terms of the independence

between the Prosecutions branch and the minister's office.

Mr. Goertzen: Just exploring sort of the current, the mix of private lawyers that are employed or used through the department as opposed to staff lawyers, is it sort of considered a good mix at this point?

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, I think to the extent that it's a small pool and that's one of the—on my reflection, on my years, the 25 years ago when I—I thought about it last night. I actually went back in my rapidly fleeting memory to actual dates and times. So, in the relatively small pool at the criminal bar, and we have a relatively small pool, we've retendered as a result, as I indicated publicly after the Taman inquiry, retendered to the private bar and have under retainers eight private lawyers to conduct independent investigations. Now—pardon me, independent prosecutions. Of course, that's in addition to using other out-of-jurisdiction prosecutions, et cetera, which we would in some cases utilize.

Mr. Goertzen: The money that comes in from the federal government for Legal Aid, is it earmarked specifically for Legal Aid purposes, or is it part of the general transfer that might come in through the health and social safety?

Mr. Chomiak: It depends who you talk to. If you talk to all the provincial ministers, to a person, they will tell you it's all included in the Legal Aid transfer. If you talk to the federal ministers, regardless of who was in power the last few years, they will tell you part of the money under the last federal-provincial health related agreement, part of that was for Legal Aid. That's one of the major points of constant tension between the provinces and the federal government vis-à-vis Legal Aid. In that sense, it never changes. It's always an interesting but never-changing debate at FPT meetings.

So the federal government insists they put in additional funds through the CHST. The provinces insist that at one time the federal government provided 50 percent of Legal Aid and now it's dropped to something like 20 percent. That's one of the major points of contention across all jurisdictions. It does fundamentally come down to an interpretation of funding arrangements between the federal government and the other governments.

Mr. Goertzen: So the minister is siding with his provincial colleagues, generally, in suggesting the funding is declining and is advocating then for a specific separate allocation of the Legal Aid transfer?

Mr. Chomiak: Yes.

Mr. Goertzen: A question regarding the issue around photo radar, and I know the minister will be careful in the comments he makes because I understand an appeal is under way. Without speaking specifically to the issue, can the minister sort of outline what goes into the decision on an appeal like this? I mean, there's sort of the legal discussion that has to happen, but also there has to be a policy discussion that happens as well about whether or not the initial decision and initial comments about, you know, protecting a site where there aren't workers working is policy. Can the minister indicate what sort of discussion he would have in determining whether or not an appeal would proceed on the photo radar case?

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, in general, in point of fact, all prosecution cases take into account the law and public safety as criteria. That's just the overall policy of prosecutions, period.

Mr. Goertzen: The minister can sort of understand from a public section perspective, and I know that doesn't always rule the day, but where there can be a frustration. I know some people are just frustrated with photo radar generally, so I'm setting that aside. But others who are just frustrated and say, okay, maybe photo radar has a place, and there would be some who would say that, but to have mobile units ostensibly there to protect construction workers and there are no construction workers there. From a public policy perspective, can you understand the frustration the public would have?

Mr. Chomiak: It's akin to the law school analogy we have of the—I better not use that one. Yes, I think the issue—it's interesting because part of the application within the city of Winnipeg and the application within the province, highways, have been somewhat different. I believe we'll be moving to an era where we'll have less difficulty.

* (15:50)

Mr. Goertzen: I might take some optimism from that. I'm just trying to get the minister to acknowledge that he can understand the frustration that people who receive these tickets, driving at a rate of speed that they would've believed to be safe given the conditions, that he can understand that level of frustration.

Mr. Chomiak: The City decides the criteria. We clarify the law.

Where does the discretion lie? Where does the judgment lie? Does it lie in the driver's jurisdiction, or does it lie in the contractor's jurisdiction, or the people doing the work?

Let's say, in an ideal policy world, I think that the signs that we see in Saskatchewan—it's a double violation when workers in sight, for example, send a better message than a blanket prohibition on all construction sites. To me, that conveys a better image to the public than the latter.

So I think it makes a lot of sense to the public that, if there are visible signs of work in construction and safety, then they ought to adhere to slower guidelines. But, if it's a weekend, on a long weekend, in the summertime, and it's 2 a.m. in the morning, I think it's a pretty good indication that they can use their discretion and not necessarily slow down.

Mr. Goertzen: Well, you may have gone further actually than I expected you to go on that, but I'm glad. If you get in trouble, you know I'll be right behind you to back you up on that.

No, in all seriousness, I think that we have a responsibility obviously to uphold the law and to ensure that the law is applied properly and effectively, but we also, as political people, have the broader policy issues to look at, and I'm not sure that the two have to be in conflict. Here, it seemed as though they were, but maybe we're moving to a better resolution on that.

A completely gratuitous question on Prosecutions before I leave it, asked by a friend of mine to bring it forward, on the old QC designation for lawyers that the government did away with. I think, at that point, it sort of was weird, a strange debate, because I don't think the general public would know what a QC is. But, among the legal profession, it meant something, and there may have been questions about how they were given out and that sort of thing, and that's fine. But we both, I think, agree that if lawyers, despite the reputation they sometimes have, contribute significantly to the orderly function of our communities, and that designation, it just had some value within that community.

The former Minister of Justice, when it was determined that it would be taken out shortly after his 1999 election, indicated that he would be open or looking at some other designation, which also struck me as odd.

But, just in terms of the old QC designation, is there any glimmer of thought that that might be reinstated at some point?

Mr. Chomiak: Completely gratuitously, it's now the 83rd year of the reign of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth. Having said that—

An Honourable Member: Of her life.

Mr. Chomiak: Of her life. Sixty years of her reign. I guess, at that time, there had been some suggestion to the Law Society that they administer the application of senior counsel, and that didn't go anywhere. I don't think we've recanvassed the issue. It hasn't been high on my priority list.

Mr. Goertzen: Yes, and I wouldn't expect it to be top of the minister's list of things to do, but there might be a glimmer of a day where he had some spare time. I think sometimes it's one of those issues that governments can sort of make a stand on and get a kind of a story on, and say, well, this is a colloquial, meaningless distinction and it gets done away with quickly, and it has absolutely no impact to the public other than for those, I guess, who are involved in the Law Society. And they might think, well, what value was it in taking it away. Again, if there are questions or concerns about how the QC was given out and designated, I think that probably could have been dealt with rather than striking it out altogether. But I'll leave that for the minister for some day when he's dealt with the other priorities that he has and he has a moment to look at that.

Moving on to the issue of policing—and I know we're moving quickly on issues. That either indicates maybe we're going to wrap up today or just have so many questions that I'll need the next week for other issues, but probably it's more the former than the latter. On the issue of policing, there was a promise or a commitment by the government for 100 new police officers in the province made during the last campaign. Just an update on where that is. I guess there were 10 promised in the current budget—maybe there was 11, I think there was one for rural.

Mr. Chomiak: I actually went off the top of my head the other day in Estimates. The numbers, because they're fluctuating, but I'll give it a shot here. We're supporting an additional 10 officers this budgetary year, which is in addition to the 110 that we've supported since 1999. No, we've funded 205 additional officers since '99 in total, which included WPS, RCMP, DOPS, and BPS.

Mr. Goertzen: In looking at the Saskatchewan budget that was introduced a few weeks ago—it may have been two or three weeks ago—I believe that they committed to 120 police officers over four years. Has the minister looked at that commitment and thought, maybe we were coming up a little bit short?

Mr. Chomiak: I think they're actually behind us in terms of catching up with what we've done in the last few years. Nationally, we are still one of the highest in terms of urban centres. I guess, overall, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, generally, in most areas, are in the same category vis-à-vis policing. We have the one large urban area. Saskatchewan has several smaller urban areas, which makes a difference. Our First Nation policing is more widely scattered and more inaccessible than in Saskatchewan. So there are different applications but, overall, we are, roughly, comparable to Saskatchewan. If they promised, the member said, 120.

An Honourable Member: I believe it's 120 over four years.

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, I think, considering what we did last year, we're probably right on par with them or somewhere in that same neighbourhood.

Mr. Goertzen: Right, other than the Saskatchewan parties, this current government has only been there for, I think, about a year, or two years. Time flies when you've got a good government in the province next to you, right?

An Honourable Member: Anniversary today.

Mr. Goertzen: Is it today? I should send a note. Well, I'm glad the minister is happy to see the Saskatchewan Party alive and well in that province and soldiers on as the lone NDP government in Canada.

The issue of measuring how many police officers, the right number, is difficult, and I understand that. The Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) was asking questions here yesterday or the day before about that, and we've probably approached it different ways. I think he has said that there are enough police officers, or maybe too many. That's really not the approach that I'm taking, and it's probably not the one that the minister would take, because we're both going to be at the policemen's ball on Saturday, so I don't think either of us would want to be saying that.

* (16:00)

But, more seriously, the issue of how you determine what the right number of police officers is for a jurisdiction, I think, is difficult. What sort of measurements does the department take in trying to determine—is it just simply on a request basis from the departments, or what sort of analysis is taken to determine where they land at that number?

Mr. Chomiak: It is difficult and, in fact, the policing formula itself, every time I get briefed on it, I only know it for about the period of time that I've been briefed on it, quite literally, because it's very complex in terms of the various cost-sharing ratios and the various scenarios, so it's difficult.

I think, generally, the best way to respond is that indications from the City of Winnipeg, Brandon and the RCMP is that we have been more than generous in terms of the funded police officers that we're providing. There are not outstanding requests from Winnipeg or Brandon, large police centres—and the RCMP in general—to fund additional police officers.

Having said that, I think I indicated in a previous Estimates, there's always the issue of administrative support and related support and that seems to have become more of an issue lately, in terms of a recognition by all levels of government that supports the police officers, in fact, equates into more time for police officers to do actual police work. So that's also an issue that one has to juggle with respect to policing. Lately, we've had a lot of discussion about policy analysts which we've had some internal discussions on, and external discussions with the RCMP, in particular, in terms of training of policy analysts, et cetera, because there seems to be a need for more capacity at that level.

Mr. Goertzen: I heard that, as well, in terms of the analysis and even the investigative side and certainly on the administrative side. I've heard that from both the RCMP and municipal officers. I guess I haven't heard from municipal officers, generally, that they feel they have enough officers, and that's—probably never going to hear that.

I guess when you're looking at measuring the numbers, what we sometimes get in Manitoba is police per population, and so people will say that we have, along with maybe Saskatchewan, a high police per population. It seems to me that a more appropriate comparison is police per offences because you're dealing more with the amount of crime we have. I can use a comparison; if I have

100,000 people in a community but you don't have any crime, your need for police is significantly reduced, and so the police-per-population figure seems to me to be a bit of a misnomer sometimes. Can the minister indicate whether or not using a police-per-offence measurement is a better and more accurate reflection of a community's needs for police officers?

Mr. Chomiak: I have a number of inherent stubborn streaks in me; one of them is the per capita looking at—I know of communities that have very high incidences of offences that, if one were to categorize, we would have double or triple the number of police officers in that community, when, in fact, the needs are not required in that community versus other communities because of the nature of the crime and the severity, to use the index from CCJS.

On a relative basis, the crime level in, say, a larger urban centre like Winnipeg, relative to smaller rural or a small First Nations community, is dramatic, the difference. The RCMP, if asked to analyze the priority, would base it on a whole series of factors, including the types of offences.

Anecdotally, to me it was interesting that, when I appeared in East St. Paul in front of a crowd and one of the people in the crowd said to me, we like it here because there are no drug problems and no gang problems in East St. Paul with our police force, I knew there was a problem because I know there are drug problems and gang problems in that community.

So the extent to which the police are involved is—crime severity, types of crime, population, characteristics of the community all weigh into the application of how many police officers are required, and in some cases, you know, on a relative basis if you were to do comparisons, we might reverse a lot of what we're doing. But then you look at more homogeneous communities, you look at communities that have more social bonding and adhesion, et cetera, there might be less need for more police services. So it's complex. That's one of the issues, but I wouldn't go entirely on type of crime as a measure.

Mr. Goertzen: Yes, and I wouldn't suggest that the only measurement they'd want to use is the number of offences, or number of police officers per offences, but I do think there's value in it. I think there's actually more value than police per population. I mean, does the department, through its policy branch, or otherwise, run those figures on the number of offences and the police that we have in

larger urban centres like Winnipeg, compared to comparable-sized cities?

Mr. Chomiak: I think, generally, when we discuss issues of policing with the RCMP, we ask them to prioritize their needs, and we meet the needs based on the criteria that's provided by the RCMP, which is usually based on part on criminal statistical caseload per officer, et cetera, calls for service, et cetera. Generally, we look to the RCMP outside of Winnipeg to provide us with those particular priority areas.

Mr. Goertzen: All right, but the question was specifically about whether or not you'd have statistics, or your department would run statistics on the number of police per offence in the city of Winnipeg, for example, compared to, say, like Edmonton, Hamilton, Ottawa, sort of similar-sized cities.

Mr. Chomiak: I think each municipal division, each municipal force, puts out its case and its case remission—what's the term they use? We don't have that on a comparative basis.

Mr. Goertzen: I mean, is that something that you'd foresee, if it's not being done at this point? I know that with the police act that hasn't been passed, hasn't even been debated and been briefed on it, but, you know, you have the police commission there and one of the, you know, the act's not in front of me, so I'm going from memory again. The minister of industry will caution me on that—or minister of environment will caution me on that. What are you, Jim? You're—

An Honourable Member: Science and Technology.

Mr. Goertzen: Sorry, Science and Technology.

But there's a role there for a policy analysis. Is that the sort of thing that you would expect that commission to do, if it's not being done at this point?

Mr. Chomiak: The policy considerations—we do make policy considerations at the Justice level, and I think it's useful to have an independent body that would provide some policy input as well, because I can't talk about the act.

Mr. Goertzen: On the issue of some of the operations that happened in the Winnipeg Police—I know the minister won't say that he doesn't get involved in directing police, but there has been some interrelation, obviously, in other areas. Operation Clean Sweep, which was a couple of years ago, I think, and the Department of Justice was putting out news releases on that, together with the City of

Winnipeg. That has evolved or devolved into a more permanent rapid response police unit. Is that correct?

* (16:10)

Mr. Chomiak: There are a number of interagency, inter-policing activities that take place in Manitoba, and I'm told that I can't publicly talk about all of them. But there is ongoing interagency, permanent and, I think, Winnipeg's now set up a permanent standing unit. Yes. We have the stolen vehicle unit. We have the interagency on gangs and we have a number of interagency operations that go both on an as needed basis and on a permanent basis. I'm generally not briefed. I don't want to be briefed on the ongoing operations in fear that I will stumble into something and blurt something out and cause a major kerfuffle. I usually, I mean, not usually—I get told after the operation is complete.

Mr. Goertzen: Right. I don't want the minister to, you know, if there is an organized crime endeavour under way, I don't want him to divulge that either, for a variety of different reasons.

But the establishment of Operation Clean Sweep, for example, was quite public, and there were releases that came out from the department. I have some of them with me. The statistics came out on a pretty regular basis about the arrests that were coming out of Operation Clean Sweep, and then it was stated that it would become a permanent unit. We just haven't really heard from it since then. It's sort of gone underground.

I don't want to know about the specific operations that are happening in this permanent unit, but does the minister know how many officers are assigned to it, for example, and sort of the broad function that it performs today?

Mr. Chomiak: I'll get a note to the member on the current operation.

Mr. Goertzen: Great, that's appreciated. It's one of those things, you know, that it sort of took on a life of its own, Operation Clean Sweep. Then it just seemed to get swept away at some point and not much was heard from it since.

Some public discussion, particularly in one media forum, about the need for a helicopter run and operated by the Winnipeg police in the city of Winnipeg. Is there a role for the department there, in terms of, obviously, funding is the first role that if someone would come to you for? But has there been an analysis done on the need for that type of

equipment in the city of Winnipeg and what benefit it might provide?

Mr. Chomiak: I think there's some ongoing review of that.

Mr. Goertzen: It's always difficult to decipher some of the minister's answers. So I take it, then, that there is some sort of a policy review that has happened, or is happening, about the value of a helicopter operated by the Winnipeg police in the city of Winnipeg.

Mr. Chomiak: There's an ongoing review of technological and other innovations.

Mr. Goertzen: I don't know that a helicopter is an innovation. I think it's been around for a while. So you might be looking, then, just at how effective it would be, given the type of crime and the population that we have and how quickly things can be responded to. I mean, those would be the sort of things that the department and the police would be interested in, because I'm assuming that there would be an ask for some sort of support, either capital or probably operational on the helicopter if it was purchased. Correct?

Mr. Chomiak: I think we've been recognized as responding very generously to the requirements and needs of the city of Winnipeg police.

Mr. Goertzen: I know, it just sort of leads me to believe that, you know, photo radar at vacant sites will be gone, and helicopters will be replacing them it seems. So that's fine. We'll look at that.

One of the things that we discussed also in the Legislature was about a zero tolerance policy towards gang members in breaches. This was raised by the Winnipeg Police Association publicly, as the minister knows, and about trying to ensure that any of those probation breaches are enforced in a zero tolerance fashion. I know that term can be a bit challenging to put a definition around, but is that something that the minister is looking at? Is a plan going forward to deal with gang activity?

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chair, I think the success of the WATSS unit and the experience on auto theft has alerted us in all jurisdictions to this systematic approach and the intensive approach of approaching some issues with intensity, which means significant resources, significant—not just police resources, but probation resources and attention to consequences, et cetera.

So, in a long about way, I think that the experience on auto theft will be used in the future to

deal with other significant issues. I have stated publicly for a long time that I think the most significant issue is organized crime and gang related crime.

Mr. Goertzen: I know my colleague from Portage has a couple of questions, so I'll just ask a couple more and then turn it over to him.

The minister indicated he couldn't speak about the police act—

Madam Chairperson: Just for the information of members, any act that is currently being considered before the Legislative Assembly cannot be considered in committee.

Mr. Goertzen: I won't speak to the specifics of the act, but there are some other issues that revolve around policing that may at some point be captured under the act. I mean a police college is something I know the minister has discussed as being something that the police commission would look at.

Has there been any analysis by the department about the value of a police college in Manitoba to date?

Mr. Chomiak: There have been discussions about policing direction and policing instruction in it, yet it actually—it happens at FPTs as well and with other provinces, et cetera. One of the suggestions that I've made in sorting it out is to indicate that if a police commission were to be established in any form, it would be one of the first tasks that would be assigned to a yet to be established, not talked about entity, that may resemble a police commission.

Mr. Goertzen: Well, and the minister knows that's something we would support. I think he said in the House last week that all we ran on was crime in the last election. *[interjection]* I'm glad you forgot some of the other parts maybe, but sort of slowly, systematically, taking some of the policies. I'm glad that we're able to give you some of that. If a police college is one of the things that evolves, I think that that would be positive certainly from what I've seen in the police colleges in the other provinces, the ones that I've had a chance to visit.

I'm going to turn it over to my friend from Portage la Prairie, who, I know, always has passionate questions regarding his own area and the Justice portfolio in general.

* (16:20)

Mr. David Faurichou (Portage la Prairie): Looking at the minister, I don't think I even have to pose the question because the minister is already preparing his answer.

It is an annual or perennial or, we'll say, question in regard to the women's correctional facility in Portage la Prairie. It was started by the previous administration, continuing with the current government to replace the provincial women's correctional facilities. I believe it was 2003 when the government was in receipt of a recommendation or a report of a committee that travelled the province and heard—and this is 2009. I know the minister is—if I could ask the minister for an update as to the progress in the last year towards a new women's correctional facility in the province.

Mr. Chomiak: The new women's correctional facility, they can't break ground soon enough. I indicated earlier in the Estimates that there's a time frame of construction completion by 2011. I would like to see it 2010.

Mr. Faurichou: Is the project progressing in co-operation and co-ordination with the federal government for a women's penitentiary within the configuration of the site?

Mr. Chomiak: Discussions continue with the federal government and, last I checked, were progressing well.

Mr. Faurichou: Maybe I can be a little clearer in regard to when construction will be commencing and the actual site. I haven't seen any signage or anything of that nature, I understand it. Is it Headingley? North side, south side of the highway? Proximity to existing landmark perhaps, if the minister could?

Mr. Chomiak: North side of the highway near Canoak Road, Canoak Flooring. I'm not a big fan of putting signs up until there's actual work under way.

Mr. Faurichou: Granted. I appreciate it. When signage does go up, there's an expectation that there will be construction. So the timing of it, this breaking ground this year?

Mr. Chomiak: I always get in trouble when I make these commitments. I think almost all of the capital projects I've been involved with since I've been minister, Selkirk mental health, redesign of HCS, the Brandon health centre, et cetera, have all been built.

Mr. Faurschou: Fair. I appreciate there are a lot of fundamentals especially working with the federal government as another dynamic in the equation.

There was another recommendation, though, within the report of 2003 that recommended the Province work in harmony with like-minded organizations for transitional healing centres. The AFM and Elizabeth Fry foundation were interested in seeing this type of facility in Manitoba so that women that have come in conflict with the law have an opportunity to adjust back into society with the supports that a transitional centre would provide. There was, within the report, that there be one located in southern Manitoba, i.e., Portage la Prairie, and one in the north, i.e., Thompson. Is the department progressing with this recommendation from the report as well?

Mr. Chomiak: We are working with the Native Women's Transition Centre on the project. That continues. We're working with Family Services, as well, related to that. Because of the nature of the facility we're proposing to construct, which we anticipate will be state of the art, some of the planning related to the transition centre relates to the actual capital construction, but we're still working on that. I've spoken with several Aboriginal First Nation leaders who've been advocating as well. It's a work in progress.

Mr. Faurschou: Well, I do appreciate that it is a work in progress, but I'm sure the minister is aware that the Long Plain First Nations was quite enthusiastic to the location of the Women's Transition Centre, and felt that it would work very, very well as it pertained to the national museum for residential schools and the park-like setting that they're planning for that facility. So I hope the minister will look favourably proceeding with that.

The reason I'm asking these questions is that you have a staff within your department, sir, that is trying to make their own plans. They've been working in an overcrowded facility, an antiquated facility, with very, very scant expenditure on that facility because you know you're going to be replacing it. So the ladies that are government employees in that facility are really being asked to go an extra mile on this thing, because of not only the overcrowding, but working with a facility that hasn't seen, basically, any upgrade over the past 10 years because of the pending construction.

So I appeal to you, sir, in regard to the well-being of personnel within your department, that

it is of grave concern that we see this project move ahead in a most expeditious fashion possible because I would not like to see an incident in the women's correctional facility that could potentially happen, as we're all aware, when there's overcrowding of this nature. The remand component within the population at the correctional facility is of a different dynamic as well. I know the minister is very familiar with those that have been sentenced and those that are awaiting sentence or even trial. There are different personalities and expectations.

So I truly want to leave this with the minister, that he's fully aware of the importance that this project has on not only Portage la Prairie, but Manitoba government employees within his department.

Mr. Chomiak: I entirely agree with the member.

Mr. Goertzen: I thank the Member for Portage for his questions, not referring specifically to any potential legislation, but just generally on the issue of policing. I know that certain communities have municipal police forces, and they vary in size, obviously, from the city of Winnipeg to a community like Ste. Anne.

Can the minister talk about the challenges that he might see existing with a council being directly involved with overseeing policing in a municipal force, particularly in smaller communities?

Mr. Chomiak: Certainly, the existing Manitoba legislation allows for a police commission at the local level. It's discretionary. Probably, I think, if one were to canvass the public hearings that were undertaken for the police act, there was a relatively strong feeling among smaller communities that the operations of a local police force should be operated by the local council as it has in the past. The issue, then, becomes at what point does one have an independent operating governing body, and it would appoint it as one, maintain it with the local community. At some point, there has to be a decision and/or a balance. In some provinces, the local governing council is appointed by a provincial entity. In some provinces, it's exclusively by the municipal authority.

* (16:30)

Wherever we will end up in Manitoba, I think it will be a trade-off between the pluses and minuses of either having some kind of independent governance, and, at the same time, not alienating the already existing structure that's in place.

Mr. Goertzen: I wonder from the discussions or from the presentations at the hearings on proposed legislation, is there a sense that cities that are maybe smaller than Brandon or the size of Brandon, or smaller, do they have a more direct relationship with their councillors and so they feel that, if there are concerns with policing, that they have more of a direct input because they're maybe closer to their councillors than maybe in a large city like Winnipeg. Is that why there's maybe resistance to going towards an independent or quasi-independent board?

Mr. Chomiak: I think that's one of the reasons. I think that there are conflicting principles. There's a public interest in having some form of independence and some form of separation with respect to governance of policing. There's been a very strong public demand over the last little while for that. At the same time, there are experiences both in Manitoba and other jurisdictions. Brandon is an example of having an independent commission that wasn't very effective. Somewhere in the middle, a decision has to be made as to a go or no-go.

But, at the same time, the kind of governance put in place that reflects the balance between the principle of independence and at the same time, the connection between the municipal council and the community. An easy cut-off point might be large urban centres over 500,000 ought to have, but if the principle is, in fact, a valid principle, then how does one ascertain at what level and at what number there should be an independent council and what level there shouldn't be. So, in some cases, it's a case of everyone's in or everyone's out, or finding a balance between the conflicting principles of local control and governance and a sense of independence.

Mr. Goertzen: Coming out of the Taman Inquiry, and before the Taman Inquiry, public concern raised, obviously, about whether or not or what role police should have in investigating their own members who are involved in incidents. The counter-side to that is people or someone will say, well, who else is there to do that who has the proper skills?

What sort of pool of people, who aren't police officers or retired police officers, would exist in Manitoba of individuals who would have investigative skills?

Madam Chairperson: Just before I recognize the minister, I want to make sure that we stay relevant to the budget. So I'm hoping that you can give me some indication on what part of the budget you're referring to.

Mr. Goertzen: I think there was a line in there regarding the Taman Inquiry in the budget.

Madam Chairperson: Okay.

Mr. Chomiak: I don't think there's a large pool. In fact, experience across the country is that in Alberta their investigatory unit is 100 percent police or ex-police. It's the same in British Columbia, and it's 80 percent in Ontario with, I think, a handful being civilian-trained.

Again, there are conflicting principles. The principle of having a thoroughly trained individual doing a sophisticated investigation versus the perception of independence. Those have always been the conflicting principles, and there are different viewpoints as to how that's applied.

From my own perspective, I don't know of anybody that has significant investigatory experience in Manitoba that is not an ex-member of police or some related kind of body. There may be, but I don't know of them to this point.

Mr. Goertzen: We'll move on to a different line of questioning related to some issues that might jump around. I would be inclined to do it systematically. I'm sorry that will not happen for the next little bit.

One of the things I saw coming out of the newspaper earlier in the year was, and I understand that there are a lot of challenges going on the crime issues in British Columbia, but their government made a public statement that they would use zero tolerance, and there's that policy or that phrase again when it comes to individuals who are using guns in relation to crimes. They would direct their prosecutors, through way of a directive, to not apply for any bail and to always not apply for any bail when there are gang-related offences.

Is the minister aware of that directive in British Columbia, and does he think it has applicability in Manitoba?

Mr. Chomiak: I think we had advocated that the Criminal Code be changed so that incidents involving use of a gun would be reverse onus, and I think we succeeded in that. It's in effect now. It's in Parliament, but not yet passed. Just proclaimed.

Mr. Goertzen: All right. So, then, the onus shifts obviously to the individual, who has committed the act, to prove why they should have bail. So, then, the Crown is always in opposition to any bail application that happens when there's a gun-related or a weapons-related offence?

Mr. Chomiak: I think that, as I indicated, we haven't put out directives, but it's very clear from our public statements on recommendations for changes to the Criminal Code, on both use of weapons and gang-related matters, the 14 matters that we've actually brought to the table as a result of the report done by the former deputy minister.

We actually went further in recommendations to the Criminal Code. We also called for it to be an offence to be within an area for gang members to be. There had to be gang-free zones, which we're still working on in terms of the constitutionality of that particular application, recruitment to a gang. We also advocated for the listing of criminal organizations to be already listed in the Criminal Code, as are terrorist organizations so that at each prosecution, it doesn't have to be proved that one belongs to a criminal organization.

The consequences from that are that more onerous provisions for both judicial interim release and sentencing provisions would automatically tie, in many cases, to activities in a criminal organization. So that's a long way of saying we haven't made specific directives, but it's clear that our asks of the federal government on amendments to the Criminal Code reflect the general policies of the government.

Mr. Goertzen: So, then, the minister is saying that—I'm sure he's being consistent, then, that within prosecutions, or for the last year and a half, two years, there's always been an objection to any asks for bail where there was a gun involved.

* (16:40)

Mr. Chomiak: No, I'm not saying that. The prosecution has the discretion. However, we've been strongly supportive of all weapon-related offences and offences related to peace officers being reverse onus. I think we made that clear at FPT—as well as trafficking and related matters that have changed in the Criminal Code, but we haven't taken away the discretion of the Crown prosecutors in specific cases.

Mr. Goertzen: I thank the member for the clarification. That's what I was seeking.

On the issue of weapons, generally, I know the government has looked and has had two gun amnesties—I think it was two—over the last number of years, and both were sort of promoted as a way to get weapons off the streets and not fall into the hands of criminals. That doesn't seem to have worked in the sense that it hasn't significantly had a reduction, and

I'm not sure that the minister would have suggested that it would significantly reduce crime.

Are there any more significant strategies? Rather than going to those who are law-abiding citizens generally and asking them to, or if they want to, dispose of their weapons that they can bring them into police in a station or call and to have them picked up—which, frankly, I think should be able to be done at any time—are there any other strategies beyond the gun amnesty that the government might be looking at to deal specifically with weapons in the province of Manitoba?

Mr. Chomiak: We've tried various approaches to this. I think Crime Stoppers has increased the reward on the tip line for weapon notification, at least for a period of time. The only other remedy that's available would be a form of legislation similar to what's done in Québec, which comes with a host of problems. Québec has legislated on the civil side—it causes problems for a lot of people outside of urban centres with their activities, so we haven't looked at that.

Smuggling and trafficking obviously are—the penalties have been increased and we've encouraged that strongly. We agree with the federal government on that, as well. The emphasis on gangs and organized crime, to me, again, captures the spirit of what we'd like to do in terms of organized criminal activities.

I think it's still true, for example, that there are more fatalities through knives than through guns by far in Manitoba. *[interjection]* There's no question that it's changing and there's no question that, when I was growing up in Winnipeg, one rarely heard of an armed robbery, just anecdotally, and that's changed dramatically.

So I agree, the attack has to be on organized crime and organized activities because, together with the illicit materials of drugs and other related matters, guns are a major item of contraband that's utilized. To the extent that we can deal with that, we do put resources in and if the member has any suggestions, I'm happy to take them, because this is serious. The drive-by shootings issue is serious, and I think that we're going to see action on that. It was funny, because when it was first—we found out that drive-by shootings even took place by drive-by bike riders—like literally, bike riders—in some American jurisdictions. So the prospect of someone shooting up a neighbourhood or shooting up an area is no longer considered just—it's going to be, as part of the

changes, a criminal offence, a serious criminal offence, and we think that's indicative of the kind of pressure that has to be put on.

Mr. Goertzen: We've brought forward ideas as a party before, not just in Justice, but in issues of drug addiction, and you've had no hesitation in taking them in the past. I'm glad. I think that's good. Where there are good ideas, I'm glad that they're adopted regardless of which party brought them forward.

You mentioned the issue of the tip line increasing the amount of money a person could receive for reporting weapons-related offences or weapons that are illegal. What sort of uptake was there on that program for the limited time it was in place?

Mr. Chomiak: I'll get that information for the member. It was a concept of an idea, and it's a good question in terms of the uptake. We were looking at various ways to increase awareness and notification of illegal firearms. There are several suggestions out in the community. That was one of them.

I think tip lines work, and I think social networking works as well. There might be a place for social networking of some of the stuff we've seen done in Point Douglas to be extended to other areas of the province and city in terms of providing notification and information that alerts the authorities as to illegal activities which would include weapons.

Mr. Goertzen: The minister references ideas that have come forward from the community and I think he's right. There are some good ideas, and I certainly hear them as well from constituents and other people around Manitoba. One of the things the federal Conservative Party did just prior to being elected is they had, I think it was called their safe streets, safer communities task force, I believe it was called.

It sort of went around the country and had input from individuals. I believe, if I'm correct, Jim Flaherty and member of Parliament for Surrey, Russell Hiebert were on that committee. I made a presentation to it. They got a lot of ideas coming out of that. We've had a committee in Manitoba on Senate reform which, I think it's fair to say, the attendance has been modest, at best. I'm not sure, it's not that Senate reform is unimportant, I just don't know that it's a top-of-mind issue for a lot of people as they go about their daily lives, where crime issues are certainly higher than Senate reform, and if you believe some polls, they might be top-of-mind issues.

Is there any thought of having that sort of an approach where you take in—I know we've had public consultations on very specific issues such as the police act, but have you looked at perhaps having that kind of public consultation in the fashion of a Justice Committee or something that would go out and get input from the public whether it was gang related, crime, or just crime in general?

Mr. Doug Martindale, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Mr. Chomiak: In fact, the most recent exercise of that was the Alberta experience, and in fact, Ron Stevens is here today. He was the minister. He's now the intergovernmental affairs minister. I think they had 22 recommendations, and they provided me with a copy of their safer communities recommendations. I was happy to say, I think it was something like, we had done 21 of the 22 recommendations. My point is, there may be merits—there are always merits in receiving information from the public. The most current undertaking done by a province, which was Alberta, I found that they reached the same conclusions that we had moved on a number of areas. We've now decided to have an ongoing quarterly meeting of all the western Justice ministers on various activities. We've been doing comparative analysis.

That's a long way of saying that I think we're looking at that in all jurisdictions, and there's never a problem with going to the public. I've discussed with my member of Parliament for some time about doing some joint community meetings in our end of the city in that regard.

Mr. Goertzen: I've participated in some of those public forums that aren't as formal as the government driving them, certainly on an MYMP basis, and I'm always surprised. There's always at least one good idea that comes out of every meeting. There are a lot of ideas that aren't workable or are more of an expression of the public's frustration, and they just simply can't be applied in our system, but there's always at least one good idea that comes from these meetings. So I leave it with the minister.

* (16:50)

I know that the government did the travelling committees on senators, and the uptake there was marginal at best. I just think that you'd get very good response and I think that you'd get some very good ideas that would come forward from the public. You would probably get a level of frustration that might

come from the public too, and that might be sometimes the resistance of government to have that kind of committee, but I think that you can determine the wheat from the chaff from that and come away with good ideas. Just because Alberta put forward many of the ideas that we may already have, it doesn't mean that there wouldn't be—I'd like to sometimes think that Manitobans can get a bit of a leg up on Albertans and have some specific solutions to the specific problems that we have here.

You were talking a bit about some of the initiatives that the federal government has put in place. I know that this federal government has been more aggressive than any that I can remember on the issues related to crime and have taken many of the suggestions that the provincial ministers have put forward, that they rolled into their platform and run on. I guess sometimes you have to be careful what you ask for because the excuses sort of fall away too at some point when these things are acted upon.

One of the remaining parts of the Conservative platform has to do with the elimination of statutory release for some offenders. Has the minister taken any position on that and has he been lobbying the federal government in that regard?

Mr. Chomiak: I understand that there's been a recent review done by Corrections Canada that took a look at the elimination of, or recommendation of, elimination of statutory release. I guess there are mixed feelings from the provincial side with respect to how the system will respond, i.e., we get people two years less a day, they get people beyond that. What the impact will have on the provincial system and our major initiative has been the front-end through the remand population. That's where I think we'll also do, in addition to applauding and supporting the removal of the two-for-one—or providing a Criminal Code amendment with respect to that provision of the Criminal Code. I think there's also room for the Province to do more work on the remand side with respect to people that are on remand. Statutory release, I think, is something that, in a policy sense, obviously, we want to protect the public. There are some operational issues that relate to our own population that will have impact. But, in general, we're still waiting for the actual policy decision from the federal government on that.

Mr. Goertzen: So it doesn't appear that there's a clear sort of position from the provincial government on the potential elimination of statutory release. It's

not something that you're advocating for actively with the government.

Mr. Chomiak: Insofar as the jurisdictional issues go, that hasn't been broached with us at the Province.

I don't know if any province has taken a stand on that particular issue. I'll canvass the department and I'll canvass our records. I don't think the provinces either individually or as a group have taken a stand on that issue.

Mr. Goertzen: Is the issue that it would have, you know, an impact on population numbers or is the issue that individuals would simply be released at the end of their sentence without any sort of conditions being placed upon their release? What might be the concern there?

Mr. Chomiak: I'm advised that the federal government itself has not taken a position on the issue of statutory release at this point, the government. Whatever would occur at the federal level, we would obviously want significant input because it would have a bearing on our population and on our work resources. Public safety's paramount, so whatever is decided upon that ensures public safety, then we'll be supportive of that.

Mr. Goertzen: Moving around to a couple of other different issues, under The Youth Drug Stabilization Act, which is either under the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) or the Minister of Healthy Living (Ms. Irvin-Ross), but, regardless, I know the act itself isn't under the minister's jurisdiction, but the orders, I believe are, right? I mean, the orders come through Justice if a parent's applying for a young person to go under the mandatory detox treatment. Does the minister have updated numbers on the number of applications under the act and the number that were granted?

Mr. Chomiak: I'll provide in writing the current data that we have. I've reviewed it recently, and I'll provide it in writing to the member.

Mr. Goertzen: Issue came up some time ago about by-law enforcement officers and the appointment of special constables in municipalities to enforce certain laws under the provincial jurisdiction. Can the minister just give an update in terms of where that's at with municipalities, and if municipalities have continued to look at special constables and have they taken advantage of any of that ability?

Mr. Chomiak: I think it's going to be rendered a moot point when our act is in place. There's been

application, I think, from a couple of municipalities, two municipalities. I think the issue will be discussed and applied under legislation. I'd like to say more, but I can't.

Mr. Goertzen: I'd like you to say more, but that's fine. I mean, we can have that discussion maybe another time.

In 2006, in May, there was a release regarding community prosecutors taking on local cases against johns and pimps. Do you have any—and I apologize to staff for sort of the shuffle that's going on—recent data in terms of how many cases the local prosecutors have brought forward since that act was replaced?

Mr. Chomiak: I'll provide that data to the member.

Mr. Goertzen: I wonder if the minister's had any discussions, or the Premier (Mr. Doer) had any discussions, with the mayor of Leaf Rapids who, relatively recently, was expressing frustration about the crime rate in his community and talking about sort of a three-strikes-and-you're-out municipal policy. You know, we can debate on whether or not he has ability to do that, but that was the level of frustration that he had. I think he indicated that he was looking for a meeting with the Premier.

Does the minister know whether or not either the Premier's met with the mayor, or the minister has taken that upon himself to meet with the mayor?

* (17:00)

Mr. Chomiak: I have it on good authority that the acting, acting premier met with the mayor of Leaf Rapids the day before yesterday. I met with the mayor of Leaf Rapids yesterday, in fact, together with a member of Family Services, to look at some of the issues and resolution of some of the issues. There are some very difficult circumstances that that community's facing. We've had some resources that we are—in French, we'd say, *en train de*, in the process of—implementing there, and we resolved to get back together again in about two months to see how the progress of the programs that we've worked on with that community are doing. So we had, I thought, a pretty useful meeting and we're going to do a follow-up and subsequent follow-ups to see how the assistance we're putting in place and working with the community works out.

Mr. Goertzen: I'm glad the acting, acting premier was able to meet with the mayor, and, hopefully, some resolutions can come for that community.

When you look at the crime, the violent crime that's happening in Winnipeg, it would seem, at least anecdotally, that there are more young women who seem to be involved in crime. I know this was the subject of a *Maclean's* article pretty recently, about how there seems to be an increase of violence among women, and young women in particular.

Has the department done any sort of offender analysis to confirm that that is a growing problem in Manitoba as well?

Mr. Chomiak: Unfortunately, it's true. It has been going up. The population involved has been getting younger and the level of the crime has been getting more serious. The member's correct.

Mr. Goertzen: And is that simply a function of gang activity, that that's the case?

Mr. Chomiak: I wouldn't want to jump to a conclusion. It's a national phenomenon. I think it is related to organized activity, though if one tours the province and sees some of the situations and circumstances that are occurring—if there's a more complete answer that I can provide to the member, I'll provide a more complete answer. I don't want to, off the top, just minimize the factors.

Mr. Goertzen: I'd be interested in data if the department has done that sort of analysis on the increase of violence that's being undertaken by women, and young women in particular, in the province. It seems like you have some grasp on that and there's been some discussion or analysis on that, so that would be helpful. I recognize that there are national issues involved here, but as it relates to Manitoba would be interesting.

On the issue of maintenance enforcement, can the minister indicate what the average caseload currently is for case workers, if that's the proper term, in the Maintenance Enforcement division?

Mr. Chomiak: We don't separate it into cases; it's by unit of service. We have the computer program coming into place and what I will do is provide a written—because time is shorter as we go along, I'll provide written information for the member on that.

Mr. Goertzen: I appreciate that. One of the things that I came across once—and I'm just curious to see how this might relate to Manitoba. In Australia and, I think, in Britain now as well, they've gone to, called family relationship centres, I think, is what the correct terminology is, where there are centres in various communities where individuals, if they're

going through marital strife or different sorts of challenges, can come in a non-legal environment and have advice—and not marriage counselling, but advice—about the challenges that they're having. If they are going to be going through a separation or a divorce, then a lot of that can be worked out in terms of division of assets prior to getting into a legal environment.

It seems to work there. That model might be being used in some fashion here in Manitoba, but these are specific centres where individuals can go and try to, even if their marriage doesn't have harmony, try to at least have some harmony in that separation, particularly for children that are involved. Has the minister looked at that or heard anything of that sort?

Mr. Chomiak: Not specifically. The idea of sort of a mediation centre would be—one of the things I've heard very positive results about is For the Sake of the Children, that's sort of mandatory for all people that are involved in difficulties. I had several acquaintances of mine who went through this and said how they thought they were really smart, but, after they went through it, they found out how much more they could learn. So I think we do that.

I suspect it's probably New South Wales or South Australia that are probably the—but we'd be prepared to look at the—the court system, as we found out the hard way, I think, is probably the last stop that should be involved in terms of relationship mending or relationship ending. Mediation and moving that way has now become—mediation, I think, is mandatory in Manitoba. But the member's making the point of just relationships in general and just rocky relationships. I think that's an interesting—it sounds like something the Mennonite Central Committee would do. I'll take a look at it. It's a valid point.

Mr. Goertzen: It probably went a little bit beyond even mediation, but certainly it was intended to keep people out of the legal environment and to keep things as harmonious as possible in that situation. Given the caution by the minister that the legal profession is going to be on hard times, I'm not trying to strip work away from lawyers, but I think that any ability to make that difficult time easier on the family, I think, is worth looking at. I can also try to look for the information that I came across. I know that that's a national scope, when you're talking about Britain maybe going to that and Australia having

that, but there may be ways to make model of that in Manitoba.

On the same topic, I mentioned to the minister, or I think the House Leader did, that I have my own parental responsibilities to attend to, and not to create disharmony in the Goertzen household this evening, I might have to move this along now. So, if we could go to the line-by-line Estimates, or the line-by-line consideration at this point.

I just want to say I do appreciate the discussion that we've had. I said at the beginning of this that there are different forums of discussion that we have in the Legislature. They're all important, but they take different styles, but I think that this was helpful and informative. I know that there's a number of undertakings that the department has committed to in terms of information. I appreciate that they're going to do that in as timely a fashion as possible.

Mr. Chomiak: I want to thank the member for being very helpful and patient. I think this has been a useful forum and has been the way that I think that Estimates was designed to do. So I appreciate the member's help in this regard and we will provide the information in a timely fashion.

Madam Chairperson in the Chair

Madam Chairperson: Resolution 4.2: BE IT RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$138,244,000 for Justice, Criminal Justice, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 4.3: BE IT RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$30,240,000 for Justice, Civil Justice, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010.

Resolution agreed to.

* (17:10)

Resolution 4.4: BE IT RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$158,324,000 for Justice, Corrections, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 4.5: BE IT RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$50,218,000 for Justice, Courts, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 4.6: BE IT RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,649,000 for Justice, Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 4.7: BE IT RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,288,000 for Justice, capital investment, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010.

Resolution agreed to.

The last item to be considered for the Estimates of this Department is item 4.1.(a), the Minister's Salary contained in Resolution 4.1. At this point, we request that the minister's staff leave the table for the consideration of this last item.

The floor is open for questions.

Resolution 4.1: BE IT RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$7,132,000 for Justice, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010.

Resolution agreed to.

This completes the Estimates of the Department of Justice.

The hour being 5:12, what is the will of the committee?

An Honourable Member: Committee rise.

Madam Chairperson: Committee rise. Thank you very much, committee.

**AGRICULTURE, FOOD
AND RURAL INITIATIVES**

* (15:30)

Mr. Chairperson (Rob Altemeyer): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will now resume consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives.

As has been previously agreed, questioning for this department will proceed in a global manner. The floor is now open for questions.

Seeing none, the honourable Member for Turtle Mountain.

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain): Sorry, Mr. Chairman. I was actually waiting for the minister to respond to my question yesterday. I don't know if

the minister had prepared a response for the question yesterday.

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): If he can repeat the question.

Mr. Cullen: Okay, for the minister's sake, then I will paraphrase the question.

We were in a discussion about carbon credits and the new sustainable agriculture program that's going to be initiated some time in the very near future. We're just trying to get our heads around how the new program is going to unfold, and what the ramifications are in terms of the BMPs and how that might work with, you know, the carbon trading, carbon credits system that's certainly been active in Alberta. I know some of our agriculture producers are interested in getting involved in that and, quite frankly, are getting involved in that.

So I'm just wondering about the implications of those two programs on how they may co-exist.

Ms. Wowchuk: I thank the member for repeating his question. As soon as he started to ask the question, I recalled the discussion that we were having late in the day. It is a timely discussion that we should be having.

As I said yesterday, there are some companies that are out buying credits up from farmers. There are some that are offering certain practices, if you reduce your summer fallow then you will get paid for those credits. There is a program with lagoon covers, and in each one of those cases—this is new territory, producers have to be careful.

But, with regard to BMPs and the program that we are putting in place now, generally, if government puts a significant amount of money into it, then the government has the credits. Those credits are not available to be traded.

Mr. Cullen: The minister is right. It is a very important discussion that we should be having. I think, quite frankly, it's a discussion that we should be having in public. I don't think that we've had that discussion in public. Anything that we've heard, and this is kind of through the grapevine through various avenues, any discussions, whether it's been agriculture or whatever other department, all those discussions have been behind closed doors. So I just wonder what type of consultation the minister has undertaken in this particular avenue.

Ms. Wowchuk: Well, in actual fact, what the member says is not true. There have been a lot of discussions. There have been climate change meetings, meetings related to climate change that farmers were involved. But then agriculture is one of the sectors that was drawn out as, or put out as the various areas that were important and the industries have been involved. Industry players have been involved and will continue to be involved in this.

Mr. Cullen: Well, my understanding, some of the industry players were, maybe, how would we say it? I wouldn't say it was a consultation process; it was more of a where are you at and what are you doing in terms of carbon credit trading. I don't think there was an open dialogue.

I look at Keystone Agricultural Producers, for instance, as the No. 1 farm lobby group representing most of Manitoba farmers. What position does Keystone Agricultural Producers have on this particular issue? I'm sure if the minister is up front in saying that there are open consultations that she would have garnered the opinion of Keystone Agricultural Producers.

Ms. Wowchuk: There was a discussion. The Province was preparing a position on it. It was called Beyond Kyoto, and certainly, Keystone Agricultural Producers were very involved in that consultation and had the opportunity to have input as the paper and the position were being developed. So to say that they weren't involved is inaccurate because they had a lot of input into it.

Mr. Cullen: Well, I guess, maybe more specifically, the question should be: What input has KAP had in terms of the Manitoba Sustainable Agriculture Practices Program, the BMP component and how it relates to carbon credits?

That's a very specific question, and I think it has to be addressed, which, obviously, has a very important concern for all Manitobans, especially when you read your document that says that the primary purpose is designed to achieve greenhouse gas reductions. So, obviously, those producers should have a fairly key say and stake in how that program is unfolded.

Ms. Wowchuk: Since we made the announcement of MSAPP, the Agri-Environment Knowledge Centre started to work with other departments and organizations in many aspects of climate change. Some of the examples are: Identifying Opportunities: Climate Change and Agriculture in Manitoba.

Workshops with many stakeholders in collaboration with Manitoba Rural Adaptation Council were held in November 2007. Climate Change: Agriculture Round Table was a workshop organized by STEM in September 2007. Climate Change Orientation Training Session for Agriculture Stakeholders: Collaboration with Canadian Standards Association was held in January 2008. The regional adaptation collaboration proposal was done in collaboration with STEM in 2008, and the BMPs related to climate change workshop was organized in August of 2008. MSAPP workshop to investigate climate change BMPs was held in January 2009. Farm organizations such as Keystone Agricultural Producers were involved in those and had the opportunity for input.

Mr. Cullen: I just want to try to get the minister's opinion in terms of how this is going to unfold. So, if I have, for an example, a manure storage lagoon, and I decide I'm going to enter into a BMP. I'm going to cover that lagoon and I'm going to collect the gas and do all those good things with it. You, as the Province or the program, are going to come in and pay me to do that, and, as a result, I will assign or turn over my potential carbon credits to the Province. Is that intended to be a long-term commitment that goes on indefinitely, or is it a short-term arrangement that that producer would be entering into with the Province?

* (15:40)

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, there's still discussion on how this should work, and there's discussion with the industry. I would give an example. In the private sector, if a private company came and gave the farmer a lagoon cover, they would get those credits for the life of the cover. Then, when there's a need for a new cover, you would have to make some changes.

I'm assuming, and as I said we're still working on this, but if government puts the money in for some renovations to capture methane, then those—for the life that equipment or whatever is being used, and I'm using equipment, it could be a cover. This is a hypothetical situation, so whatever it is, then the government, I would assume, would be the same as a private company where they would get those credits for the life of that investment. But those are things that are being worked out yet. It has not been finalized.

Mr. Cullen: Well, you know, a couple of things that I want to raise with the minister. First of all, when we look at these BMPs, the government money that's

involved here is going to be, I'm assuming, a percentage. Historically, it's been 30 percent or somewhere in there. The other thing that's factored in here is the federal government is picking up roughly 60 percent of these programs. So, as a result of those different percentages, does the Province think that they have the full right to take on those particular carbon credits? Basically, then, it would exclude the ability of that producer to gain any potential upside in case the value of those particular credits were increased into the future.

Ms. Wowchuk: We've had discussions with the federal government on this, and the federal government's view is that the government should retain the credits. But, if that is, as I said earlier, one of the details that have to be worked out, what proportion, but it's not finalized yet. It is the view that if—and in the discussions with the federal government, those credits that have been earned because of government investments should stay with government. That's the discussion that's happening right now.

Mr. Cullen: I guess I did make the point that obviously the producers are going to put up probably the biggest share is probably—

An Honourable Member: Proportionately.

Mr. Cullen: Yes, probably 70 percent and, again, we have to wait to see what these BMPs are going to look like. I think everyone is interested to see what these BMPs in the program are going to look like. Clearly, we're looking at a lot less money in the past than we have been, so there's obviously going to be some restrictions there.

Now, you know, we're into these discussions, you're having these discussion. How soon can we expect the full roll out so that producers can start making some concrete plans?

Ms. Wowchuk: As I said, this is an area that we're moving into. It is not completely defined as to how it will work. But there are specific areas where you will—there are best management practices that will not fit into the category that the member is talking about. If you look at areas like water quality management, that won't fit in. But the areas where it will fit in are in livestock and manure management, fertilizer and crop systems, where you look at how you're placing the fertilizer for the best usage. Pasture and forage management is another area, and the announcement that we made today about use of biomass in a better way—those are things that will fit

in. But some of the other things that fall under best management practices will not be the kinds of programs that will qualify for carbon credit. So there's a variation and there is a variety.

There's a sequence of how we're going to do this, and certainly we announced some research and development, and there are various places where there is testing being done on how we could get the best results out of this. Then there'll be the qualification of the emissions, and then from there it will be determined what BMPs will be prioritized. Those BMPs will be implemented. So this is a five-year program, the Kyoto agreement. We have to meet our targets by 2012. So, as we do this work, it will be towards the end of that time period where we will see the results of the work that is being done in agriculture.

Mr. Cullen: I think an important comment was made by the Premier (Mr. Doer) yesterday in question period. He was questioned on the government's records on terms of greenhouse gas emissions. In part of his response in regard to a federal report that just came out on greenhouse gas emissions, he says: We have some legitimate challenges. The report indicates agriculture and livestock is one of the challenges we have in Manitoba. So you couple his comments and then your budget document that talks about the priority being a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in agriculture. We take those two things together; it looks like agriculture is certainly going to be impacted very significantly. So I think producers in the industry who are going to be impacted are looking to the government, to your department, for some kind of a long-term vision, long-term plan, how it's going to affect them, how it's going to affect their business, and how it's going to affect them financially.

* (15:50)

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, certainly, this is a very important area. The member talks about this as if it will all be negative for the producers, but I don't see it as all being negative. If we are able to have better fertilizer placement where there is less evaporation or less of the fertilizer being lost, the farmer will use less fertilizer and perhaps will have some better cropping out of it. So that's why we have to do some of the research and development and work on the various projects to get the best possible information.

On feeding strategies. If feeding patterns can be changed and there is a way for farmers to reduce their costs and get a more efficient use of feed from livestock, then that could be a positive.

On the biomass. If we can start using biomass in a way that will create another revenue stream for farmers then there is an opportunity there, if there is a possibility of job creation by using some of these different products that are now considered a waste, that create challenges for us.

It's change. There's definitely change happening and producers have been making changes all the time. We aren't farming like we were in 1950. We're not farming like we were in 1970. Every year something changes and producers are adapting to those changes. We think that there can be some positives, but that's why this whole series of meetings has been held and producers have been involved with us. That's why we've laid out this plan of how we're going to do the research and development and then develop the BMPs in a way that will be the most beneficial to the farmer but also help us reach our goals to meet the Kyoto targets.

Mr. Cullen: Well, yes, and that was the point I was trying to make: producers are trying to make decisions for the future and how future programs are going to impact them. They have to know how the government's going to be involved in these programs and how they move forward because producers are making decisions with other companies on these carbon credits. I can keep going back to the carbon credits.

Specifically about BMPs and carbon credits and how they relate, what are other provinces doing in this regard? Are all provinces taking the same approach that you're taking here in Manitoba?

Ms. Wowchuk: You know, if we look at what other provinces are doing—and I see this, it's very important that we do the work that we're doing to develop BMPs because nobody has a cookie-cutter approach as to what the BMPs should look like. Every province is doing things a little bit different, but we couldn't say that one province is farther ahead than others, and there is a difference of opinion. In British Columbia they introduced a carbon tax credit. *[interjection]* A carbon tax. I'm sorry, it's not a credit. They were the first jurisdiction in North America to introduce a consumer-based carbon tax, and it applies to fossil fuel, gas, fees on natural gas, coal.

Alberta doesn't want the cap-and-trade system, which they think will unfairly target the oil and gas and drain the Province of its revenues, so Alberta has a technology fund. It's a \$15-a-tonne carbon levy on Alberta's large emitters. That's how they've been collecting their money, so that they can do their BMPs.

Saskatchewan doesn't support the cap-and-trade system. They're concerned about the cap and trade on the oil and gas sector. You know that here in Manitoba we support the principle of cap and trade on the basis that reductions can be achieved through market mechanisms, ensuring reductions that met the lowest possible cost to the industry.

Ontario is actively engaged in cap-and-trade development. So is Québec, and the eastern provinces have shown interest in cap and trade as it relates to offshore development.

So everybody is working towards this, but nobody has it worked out yet. That's why, again, I will say it's important that we do this kind of research work that I've been talking about so that we can get the base line that we need.

In Manitoba, this is more of an agriculture issue than it is for other provinces because we have large renewable energy. We have that energy, and so then it looks like agriculture is a high emitter compared to others. In provinces where they would have high emitters, agriculture comes in lower. So, if they have large emitters, they don't have to focus as much on agriculture. Because we have all of the clean energy that we do, we have to focus on agriculture and that makes our numbers look bigger.

So, in Manitoba, our number in agriculture looks high because of our clean energy on the other side, but we have to continue to work on agriculture issues.

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): I thank the minister. If the minister has to take a phone call, we can certainly take a break for a minute.

An Honourable Member: No, I just shut it off. Sorry.

Mr. Derkach: You know, I've been listening attentively to what has been transpiring with regard to the carbon credits, and the impression I get is this is a very vague area in the department's mind and one which is not very well defined at this point in time.

When the minister talked about consultation, I can assure her that, from the people that I've talked to which are a large number of both farmers, producers and people involved in the agricultural industry, there is very little understanding of what is really intended here. There are all kinds of assumptions being made by people, and yet government, as such, has not come out with any plan or principles that it is looking at. There have been no round table discussions by producers or people in the industry, specifically on where we are going on carbon credits.

So, therefore, I'm wondering if the minister could give us perhaps some insight into what she plans to do in the future in terms of bringing Manitobans who are engaged in this industry together to discuss the implications.

* (16:00)

She indicated that agriculture is going to be a focus in Manitoba. Does the agriculture community even know that at this point in time, given the fact that, in talking to KAP just very recently, they certainly don't know that they are going to be the target in all of this discussion?

Ms. Wowchuk: I'm not trying to discredit the member with what he's saying. He's obviously talked to somebody, but I want to assure him that there have been discussions with KAP. For three years now we've been talking about this. The agriculture community is very aware of what's going on. They know the breakdown. They've seen the reports of where the breakdown is. We've had discussion. There's been disagreement about how much responsibility agriculture should have, but we've had that discussion. They know it and they've been—This discussion started when David Roth was the president of KAP; it has continued on with Ian Wishart to look at how we could work through this, but certainly there is need for more discussion.

It's been going on for some time now. They have been part of it. They're aware of and they have participated and attended meetings that were going on in 2007, 2008, and are going on in 2009. They have been involved in it. There was a climate change-agriculture round table that was held in September of 2007. There is a climate change orientation training session for agriculture stakeholders in January 2008.

There is work to be done. We have to set out and be able to qualify the emissions that are being talked about here. That's why the research and development

portion is started and the data is being collected. That's why we have to determine what BRMs will be prioritized. Then when that work is done, they'll have to be implemented.

Again, I want to state clearly that the farming community has been involved and will continue to be involved, and we are going to have to continue to have discussions. They are aware and they have been aware for the past three years of how this is evolving.

Mr. Derkach: Well, I hate to disagree with the minister, but she is being less than truthful when she says the agriculture community is completely involved because that's not true. She's talking to somebody who's involved in agriculture right now. I'm an active farmer, and I certainly talk to a lot of active farmers in my area. I also talk to the KAP representatives in my area, and yes, there have been meetings on climate change.

As a matter of fact, our farm attended one of those, but in terms of specifics on carbon credits and that sort of thing, that was never ever a specific part of any discussion where people had input into what may happen in the future with regard to carbon credits. The staff, as a matter of fact, were asked for a plan, and to date, I would ask the minister whether or not she has filed a plan or has laid one out before the public to show the direction that she's going to be going in.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairperson, if the member is saying were these meetings specifically about carbon credits, no, they weren't specifically about carbon credits. In order to trade carbon credits, you need multiple jurisdictions that are willing to trade, and it's only been since the change of government in the United States that there has been a willingness to make some movement on this.

We have been working. We have been talking to producers. We've been working at how it would work, and the Chicago Exchange has developed some trading mechanisms on how it can be done. There have been some meetings on carbon, but the meetings that we have had with farmers are not specifically on carbon trading. There are people out there; there are people that are out selling carbon credits, but I say to those people, be careful. There are some companies that are selling them, but they are—there's no framework as to how it can be done, and some of them could be less scrupulous than we would want them to be.

But, when you talk about what Manitoba has been doing, Manitoba has been involved with the Western Climate Change Initiative. There's a Midwest Climate Change that our government has been involved in. Our Premier (Mr. Doer) has taken a lead on this, and we definitely have stated our position. Now that there is interest in other jurisdictions, I think that some of these groups, like the Western Climate Change and other initiatives, where people have been trying to work out how this can come about, how this cap and trade will work, how we can trade these credits, more detail will come out with it. Manitoba has been in the forefront working on this; we will continue to work at it.

Mr. Derkach: I don't know where the minister has been, but she certainly hasn't been paying attention to what's happening across the country. She talks about Obama and his administration. Let's talk about Canada, because Alberta has indeed been trading carbon credits now and, as a matter of fact, is using an open-minded approach in terms of how to treat carbon credits. Now, if she wants to take some lessons, I would suggest that she may want to take a trip to Alberta and find out what's going on over there.

Mr. Chair, I want to ask the minister when she will be putting a plan before Manitobans as to what approach she's going to be taking with regard to carbon credits in rural, agricultural lands.

*(16:10)

Ms. Wowchuk: Indeed, I did mention earlier to the member that Alberta was capturing \$15 a tonne from their larger industries, and that is the money that they are using to make payments for things like zero till. It's an in-house—it's in the province. It's not a program that can be used in other provinces. It's not something Manitobans can buy into. It's an Alberta program where they are taking money from their large emitters, at \$15 a tonne, and then they have the money that can be used then for some of the farming operation things that are being done. As I said, Manitoba can't buy into that system.

But there is trading that is being done. There are companies that are buying credits here in this province, and they're selling them on the Chicago Exchange, which I mentioned. What we really have to do is establish the guidelines and ensure that there is the proper trading platforms and the proper trading—clear policy that will be in place to ensure that people who are selling their credits are treated fairly, and it has to be on a much larger basis than a

province. One province cannot do it; you will not be able to develop trade. That's why we are very interested and feel that the work that we have done—the work that has been done by the Western Climate Change group will fit in with what the U.S. administration is talking about, and we feel that this will lead to further development of the cap and trade and then the opportunity.

But, in each case, we have to be sure that there are firm, clear policies and trading platforms in place, a very clear policy to ensure that it works in the best interest of producers. Right now there is some trading going on, some purchases that are happening and farmers have to be very careful on what they're doing in those areas.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chair, that's why all the more reason for this minister to put her plan on the table, so that Manitobans would know where it is she is leading this province in that respect, and she hasn't done that. There is no evidence of it coming forward, so, you know, while Alberta companies are coming to Manitoba to buy credits, there is nothing here in this province showing the direction that we're going in. That's what I've asked for now for the third time, and I'm asking once again: When will the minister put her plan on the table so that Manitobans know which direction she is taking with regard to this issue?

Ms. Wowchuk: As I've said, we've been involved with the agriculture community and have been having discussions with them for almost three years now, but this is not just one department. This is multi-department, multi-jurisdiction, and there are a lot of people working together. It's a federal issue; it's a provincial issue and an industry issue. But the federal government hasn't put forward a paper on carbon trade yet to guide this process. That is why we need to do the work that we're doing to set some base lines so that we can do it here. But, ultimately, we don't want to have a cap and trade just for one jurisdiction, just for Manitoba. We want to continue to work on a multi-level jurisdiction working together with everybody to put in place a program that will work for Canada.

It is going slowly because there are so many levels of involvement: federal, provincial, industry, the farming community. There are various levels of involvement and we have to continue to work at it.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chair, I'm going to leave this area because, I think, we could probably go round and round and really not get too many answers from the

minister because she doesn't have any. So, therefore, it's probably best to leave it alone for the time being and move into areas that, I think, are important in rural Manitoba.

I'd like to ask, first of all with regard to the rural development side of this department, if the minister could outline exactly what percentage of her budget is, in fact, going specifically to rural development programs and whether she can outline the total number of staff who are dedicated solely to rural development initiatives and not agriculture, rural development initiatives in her department.

* (16:20)

Ms. Wowchuk: Before I answer this question, I just want to go back to the previous topic that we were discussing, and say to the member that I want to, although the staff isn't here in the room, many of them—there has been a lot of staff that have worked very hard on the BMPs and on climate change. There's a lot of time dedicated to that. So, I just want to recognize the people that are working on that.

Specifically to the question that the member asked about, we have 39 business development specialists. Of those, 10 are directly involved in community development, plus six more from the knowledge centre. So there are 16 that are directly involved in rural development.

But, then, if you look at the other business development specialists, they are also involved in rural development because there is the agri-energy office, which is very much a rural development issue. Agri-tourism. Working on marketing and those kinds of developments. So, there's a total of 39 of them.

Out of that, 16 are directly involved in rural development, but of the other 39, their roles cross over. If you look at it, many of them—it's very hard to draw a line between what is happening in agriculture, what's happening in rural development, particularly in the way that we're working to further value add and create jobs from agriculture products though it's difficult to separate them out.

With regard to the budget, at least 11 to 12 percent of the budget is dedicated to that, but that would be on the low side. There would be additional costs and things that money is spent on that you can't spell out. But, at a minimum, 12 percent of the budget.

Mr. Derkach: That's really the figure that I was hoping the minister would provide for us because it just shows how diminished rural development has become within the context of this government. That's a tragedy because this is a government that has watered down this department and has diminished the effectiveness of what is happening in rural development. I can tell her that, I think, that is felt throughout the province.

But rural development also crosses over into agriculture programs, so I respect the fact that there are people from the agricultural department who are working on rural development types of initiatives. That's certainly respected and appreciated. I have no qualms about the dedication of these individuals to the cause and the fact that there are a lot of synergies between agriculture and rural development because rural Manitoba is, in fact, about agriculture and about integrating the economy of agriculture and rural development.

One part of rural development that I think is extremely important is the whole area of delivery of water services to rural communities, ensuring that municipalities and rural communities have access to water programs and water initiatives that will indeed contribute to the economy of their communities.

I want to ask the minister why it is that when I compare the program that was entered into between the Government of Canada and Manitoba, on the Growing Forward program, to that of Saskatchewan that, in fact, there is an absence of any farm and rural water infrastructure program in the Manitoba-federal government agreement and there's a substantial segment in the Saskatchewan agreement. The Saskatchewan agreement has something like \$52.8 million that is dedicated out of that program to farm and ranch water infrastructure programs, including rural municipalities. It's for things such as community wells, large diameter and small diameter on-farm wells, shallow or deep-buried pipelines and dugouts. Now that is specific to the agriculture sector, but indeed this also helps the communities in being able to attract industry into their areas, especially food processing industries, value-added industries.

So I want to ask the minister whether she can clarify for us where this might be found in the Manitoba-Canada Growing Forward programs that were announced.

Ms. Wowchuk: The member covered a lot of territory there, so I'll try and get to some of his

information. First of all, he talked about rural economic development initiatives and how we have reduced the budget for rural economic development initiatives—

An Honourable Member: Programs.

Ms. Wowchuk: Programs. So I want to share some information with him. In 1992-93, there was 3.3 million; in 1993-94, it went to 12.2; then went to 14.0; in '95, it went to 17; by 1999, it was \$21 million; in 2001, it went to \$15 million; 2002, \$15 million; 2003, 23,016.2; 2003-2004, it was 16.24; '05, it did go down in '05 to 14.9; '05-06, it went to 21.7; '06, it was 21.3; '07, it was 21.1; in '08, it was 24.4; and, this year, it is 24.4.

So, for the member to say that we have gutted this department and are not putting money into rural initiatives is a little bit far from the truth. The money is being continued. I guess, I would also remind the member that under rural development the Food Development Centre used to be under that budget. That is now outside that budget, and that has grown tremendously. In 1998-99, there was \$912,000, now it is \$2.4 million. So we have made significant investments there. Just to remind the member.

* (16:30)

However, now he's talked about Saskatchewan. On rural development, we have continued, and have continued to increase the funding because we believe in development and value-added in rural Manitoba, in rural communities.

With regard to the national water program and what Saskatchewan is doing, when we were negotiating the Growing Forward agreement with the federal government, as we were going forward, we were always told by the federal government the national water supply would be outside the agreement. And then, at the very end, the federal government said it had to be within it. Saskatchewan has made a decision to cut back on—they've taken money from other programs to address the water supply in their communities. We have not made that decision because we do not think we should sacrifice other programs that are important to us in order to backfill a federal government position. Because that's what Saskatchewan is doing; they're backfilling through this program what the federal government pulled out of in the national water supply.

We continue, with other provinces, to lobby the federal government to live up to their responsibilities and continue with this national water supply. This

means roughly \$4 million a year for Manitoba that we are losing, and if we backfill that, then we are going to have to take out of other programs that we have budgeted for or spelled out and developed in this agreement. The agreement was developed jointly with the federal and provincial governments. We've set the parameters out, and in all the time we were working, they were not talking to us about adding the water supply into this program until the very last minute. I would be okay with them doing that if they wanted to give the responsibility into Growing Forward; that would have been okay if the dollars would have come with it, but they didn't. Now there is a shortfall and it is a serious problem for us.

Mr. Derkach: I think the minister has just admitted how badly she has dropped the ball in this whole area. I mean, when you look at Saskatchewan and what they have accomplished, and now she points the finger at the federal government. Well, who was at the table? She was at the table; therefore, she has to accept the responsibility for that on behalf of Manitoba producers.

Mr. Chair, I want to make a comment about the budget for rural development. In 1999, when we left office, it was \$21 million, by admission of the minister. She then dropped the budget down to \$15 million and then gradually it has grown to \$24 million after 10 years of government. So I think our point has been made in that respect.

But I want to get back to this water infrastructure program that Manitoba dropped the ball on and, indeed, this minister has dropped the ball on because, when I speak to municipalities, one of the areas of concern to all municipalities is water delivery to their residence, because there are many areas in Manitoba where you have to have water lines because community wells or even individual wells just don't work. We have parts in Manitoba where people can't use the water from the ground to either use in their homes or even to use for their animals, so they're experiencing tremendous costs in bringing water in either by pipeline or hauling it in by truck.

So, to municipalities and to farm and ranch people, this kind of program is extremely important. Now, once again, we see how Saskatchewan takes the advantage over Manitoba. This is a \$52.8-million announcement that was made in Saskatchewan. Now, our populations in Manitoba and in Saskatchewan are relatively the same, so I would assume that Manitoba should have negotiated an agreement with the federal government that would

have taken us to that \$50-million mark for farm and ranch water infrastructure if, in fact, that was a priority for this government, because the federal government, as I understand it—and in having experience in negotiating with federal officials and federal government—to them, it is up to the Province to identify where it wants to place its money, and the federal government, if in fact that's a priority for the Province, will indeed go along with it. It's not something they're going to resist. If this was a priority for Saskatchewan, and the federal government went along with it in Saskatchewan, then I'm sure they would have gone along with it in Manitoba as well. They weren't treating Manitoba as the poor second cousin here. They were simply following the lead that the Province was taking, and, indeed, it looks like in Manitoba, this whole section was ignored.

Now the minister tells us, well, we didn't know about it. I mean, you can't claim ignorance when you're at the table negotiating. You're either working on behalf of producers or you're not. Obviously, by what I see that was negotiated in Saskatchewan, and the absence of that in Manitoba, the minister has left Manitoba producers, again, in the dark.

Whether she missed me or what, I don't know, but this is very specific and it's very important to Saskatchewan. Now the minister may treat this lightly and might find it humorous, but it isn't humorous. This is a serious issue and a serious concern to ranchers and farmers in this province and to municipalities who have to deliver the infrastructure to these people because water is such an important element.

It's also important to rural communities because through proper water delivery and water resources, we then can attract industry into rural communities and rural municipalities. Without it you can't. I have some experiences in my part of the world where this becomes an extremely important issue. So I want to ask the minister, why it was that she dropped the ball and left farm and ranch people, rural people, out on the lurch, again, with regard to water development in the province?

Ms. Wowchuk: I want to just say to the member that Manitoba hasn't left farmers in the lurch here. Manitoba's money is—it's a one-third, one-third, one-third program and Manitoba's one-third of the money is still available. It is the federal government that has pulled their money out. They've pulled their money out. The provincial money is still available for rural

water and Saskatchewan didn't get any additional money.

Saskatchewan is in the same boat that Manitoba was. We were at the table negotiating what our *[inaudible]* would be, and the federal government said, the national water program would continue to stay in place. Then at the end they said, oh, no. They cancelled the national water program in their budget and they said, oh well, you just take it out of this money here.

Again, now the member talks about Saskatchewan having about the same size population as Manitoba. I know the member knows better than that when it comes to agriculture and that Saskatchewan's agri—this is not based on—the Growing Forward, the AgriStability, is not based on the population of a province. It's based on the size of the agriculture industry and Saskatchewan's agriculture is about three times the size of ours. So when you look at that—their whole package, their whole size of the industry is larger, always has been. So proportionately our programs for agriculture are slightly smaller.

But I'll also say to the member that the Saskatchewan money cannot be used for rural pipelines. It's for community wells for on farm. We do have money available, but I'm surprised that the member opposite is so willing to let the federal government off the hook. The provinces are there with their money, and he thinks that we should just cut other programs so that we can fill the gap for the federal government. Saskatchewan is filling some of that in, but they are also going to have to give up on some other programming as well because there is only so much money within this.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chair, nobody's suggesting to the minister that she should be cutting programs elsewhere to put money into this program. This is all a process of negotiation. I really don't care whether Saskatchewan's population is two and a half times bigger. The reality is, Saskatchewan got \$52 million, Manitoba got zero put into this program, and she says, well, it's not for pipelines. Well, I don't know how else to read this, but it says shallow or deep buried pipelines. So it is for pipelines as well.

* (16:40)

Secondly, there's a maximum cost, or a maximum eligible cost of 50 percent or \$60,000 per applicant. Well, how does that compare to a Manitoba applicant? Maybe the minister can

enlighten us in that regard, and whether or not applicants in Manitoba will, in fact, get 50 percent, because she says the provincial money is still there. Will they get their 50 percent? Will their projects max out at \$60,000?

Ms. Wowchuk: There are two parts to the program. There's the municipal part that is the pipeline program that brings water from the water treatment plant to farms. The provincial share of that is one-third, and that money is still there; our share is still there. Then, there is the other portion of it, which is on-farm projects, which is irrigation projects, and the Province pays 32 percent of that. The federal government was paying for the engineering cost; that is now gone, now. So our money is still there, through MIT for the pipelines and for the irrigation, but the federal money is gone and we are still trying to convince them that that's still an important issue and we still should have that money.

It's not only Manitoba; it's other provinces. Saskatchewan, as well, is lobbying the federal government to continue on with their share of that money.

Mr. Chairperson: Just before recognizing the next honourable member, I'll remind all members of the committee that we'll be sitting today until 5:30 p.m., as per agreement between all parties, rather than 5 o'clock. Just for your information.

Mr. Derkach: Well, Mr. Chair, I think the minister has agreed to a shortcoming in terms of where they negotiated this agreement, in that it was left out of the Manitoba agreement, and that is truly unfortunate for our farm and ranch people. I mean, what she's just told me about what money is available is the standard. It is not an additional program. I'm sure Saskatchewan has those programs as well. But what they've negotiated here is a special program with the federal government to allow for community well development, to allow for large diameter and small diameter on-farm wells, to allow for shallow and deep buried pipelines, to allow for dugouts, and that program is going to be cost-shared with the federal government. Applicants are able to apply for these projects for up to \$60,000, and 50 percent of those eligible costs would be covered.

For approved community wells, the program will cover two-thirds of eligible costs to a maximum of \$150,000 per R.M. or Indian band.

So, Mr. Chair, this is a very significant program for any rural area, and especially in parts of Manitoba where these kinds of projects are badly needed. So I guess there's not much that we can say about this, except that the minister, unfortunately, has dropped the ball on behalf of our residents of rural Manitoba. That has to be communicated, indeed, to them, because this is a pretty embarrassing situation, I think, for Manitoba, especially when we enter into negotiations with the federal government, that we again fall short because we didn't include a specific sector that is truly important to not only the farm development, but is important to the viability and the life of a rural community. I just regret that this kind of thing has happened at this time. Again, it's going to impact negatively on our rural communities in this province.

Ms. Wowchuk: I have to state clearly to the member that Saskatchewan—this whole program is formula-driven. If it was based on population, we would get about 2 percent of the money, but because it's based on the size of the industry, we had a little over 10 percent of the amount of money that's allocated in this package. Saskatchewan gets about two and a half times as much as we do, driven by the formula. It's driven by the formula. So Saskatchewan did not get any additional money over their 25 percent. If that's the size of the industry, they did not get any new money.

So Saskatchewan didn't get more money. What happened here is there is room within the agreement to move your money around, and that's what we tried to negotiate. We tried to negotiate a flexible agreement so that we could move. If this was where we wanted to move, we could take money out of another program and put it in here. We don't believe that's the right thing to do.

We believe that the federal government has dropped the ball on the national water supply funding and we believe, as other provinces do, that the federal government should reinstate that program, so I think it would be wrong to start to backfill a federal program so quickly. In the meantime, our money is available, our third is available on the rural hookups and our water is available for the irrigation, and if the member has friends in Ottawa who are part of the federal government, I would ask him to encourage them to recognize, as he said, that this is an important program for Manitoba. I couldn't agree more. It is an important program for Manitoba, but the federal government cannot pull out and then ask us to

backfill. Saskatchewan is changing their dollars around and is backfilling what the federal government has pulled out.

Mr. Derkach: I hate to persist, but, Mr. Chair, the minister's comments just don't make too much sense because she's talking about us influencing Ottawa to allow funding to flow, and what is she suggesting is that somehow Saskatchewan had a different negotiating team or a different set of principles they were negotiating from, because they—well, they had a different minister for sure—because they were able to include in their agreement a significant portion of money for water development. In Manitoba's case, there's a complete absence of it. Now, you can't blame the federal government in saying, well, they treated Saskatchewan better than they treated us. That's what the minister's saying? I don't think so. It just shows clearly, to me and, I think, to all Manitobans, that this minister has dropped the ball here. She has neglected a very important issue under her watch.

Certainly, as I say, I think this needs to be communicated to rural Manitoba farm families and rural Manitoba in general because this is going to have an impact on us in terms of our competitive position, in terms of our ability to attract industry to our rural communities and in terms of having a good, safe supply of drinking water for, not only the homes, but indeed for farm family operations.

* (16:50)

Ms. Wowchuk: I think this is an important discussion to have, and I hope that the member will understand what has happened here. We have negotiated an agreement where there is flexibility in it. If this was what we wanted to do, we could take money out of BMPs, out of tracking and tracing, out of food safety, out of research and focus it in this area. Earlier in the day, we were having a discussion with other people at the table about how important BMPs are, and people are wondering when we're going to be able to start doing those programs so that we can flow money through that. I've heard from the industry that tracking and tracing is very important because that's what's going to help them get into the international market.

Food safety is one of the things that our consumers are looking for, and we have negotiated and put our money in here. No matter what anybody says, research and development is important to help our industry move forward, and we will continue to invest in research and development. If we want to,

we can move money, but where are we going to take the money from to fill the hole that the federal government stepped away from, because the federal government did step away from the national water supply?

If the member can't understand that—we had some numbers yesterday about how much we got. If you add in all of the programs like the national water supply and the whole safety net, the wedge money, all of the money, the transition money that we had, under the last agreement we got \$101 million from the federal government. That's what we got.

Now, under this agreement, we have 70.5. That is the reduction that we have seen in federal funding. The same kind of reductions have happened in other provinces as well. So the federal government has said, you take on the responsibility of water, but they have not flowed the money with it as well.

Mr. Derkach: I hate to continue this agonizing discussion, but, you know, you just compare apples to apples in a discussion, and if Saskatchewan were able to include it in there for a price tag of \$52 million and Manitoba got zero, it tells me something about the negotiations that went on and the abilities, I guess, of the minister to negotiate on behalf of our producers.

But I want to turn to another part of the agreement and that is the business development portion that was negotiated. In this specific area, I just want to read from the—[interjection] This is the Canada-Manitoba Agreement, the business development side: Business development programming will focus resources in four broad areas that will enhance the business management skills and capacity of individuals managing farm and agriproduct-processing businesses. Target clients include farm and post-farm business managers, ensuring the inclusion of Aboriginal young farmers, new Canadians and women.

Can the minister perhaps explain whether the money—and there's \$4.4 million here—is specifically targeted just for agri-related businesses or can the money be used for business development outside of agriculture?

Ms. Wowchuk: The money can be used only for ag-related programming and that was at the insistence of the federal government.

But I will say, again, I just can't let that other topic go, where the member keeps talking about how we didn't negotiate well, and I want to give my staff

full credit for the negotiations that they did. I wanted to tell him that the national water supply agreement ended in March 2009. It ended for Manitoba and it ended for Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan has the same kind of shortfall because of what the federal government did. They have chosen to take money that we have decided to take into these other areas that I outlined and backfill what the federal government has dropped. I will continue to lobby the federal government to put some of that money back because I couldn't agree more with the member that water supply is very important, but it is also something the federal government has to be part of.

Specifically, to the question about the business development, that money can be only used for ag-related training, agri-processing and production, in those areas, not other areas.

Mr. Derkach: In the Industry Innovation Fund, can I ask the minister to explain? It says: supports investment in innovative projects brought forward by participants in the sector.

Now, I'm assuming this talks about the whole sector of value-added processing in Manitoba. I'm wondering whether or not, in this area, it means the federal and provincial governments would support the development of a project that is specifically geared to an innovative food product or an innovative process in processing value-added products that are grown in Manitoba.

Ms. Wowchuk: Yes, this is for the development of a product, the research that is going—it's not for building a facility to produce a product, but it's for innovation. If people develop new products, this money will help them there. You know, food development, they can work at the Food Development Centre where they can develop their product, but this is the kind of things we envision with this money.

Mr. Derkach: I'd like to ask the minister whether or not this is a fund that can support the actual development of a product and take it from the very primary stage to the refined state where it's going to be mass produced or produced for market and whether this includes also the ability to do marketing strategies for an innovative process.

Ms. Wowchuk: That's exactly what this can be used for, and it would fall under our Manitoba Agri-Innovation Suite of programs. It's called MAIS and it is exactly that. People can get money to develop and commercialize. They can get money for

marketing. There's a whole suite of programs that fall under that, and many people have taken advantage of it to this stage. We have increased our budget in that area, and we are hoping that we will even see more development of these products.

You know, people have some really good ideas that they're working on right out of their homes, and they need a little bit of support, whether it's to finalize the product, to get it to commercial stage development, whether it means just developing it, and then marketing is a key part of this. There are funds available for them there.

Mr. Derkach: Could the minister tell me what the annual allocation from this fund is? It's \$12.3 million over a period of time, but what is the annual allocation for it?

* (17:00)

Ms. Wowchuk: It's about 1.85 on the federal side and about 1.225 on the provincial side per year.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chair, I want to just tell the minister that I've got a meeting at 5 o'clock, so I'm going to turn this over to the critic for Agriculture, but this is an area that I would like to pursue again Tuesday, because, as the minister will know, there are some fairly important projects out there that probably could take advantage of funds. The areas that I'd like to ask questions on are on the types of applications that people have to follow in order to be able to access these programs.

So, I think, if it's all right with the minister, if I can just postpone it until Tuesday, I'd appreciate it.

Ms. Wowchuk: Certainly, I just want to say to the member that this is a very important area, and there have been companies—it's new, we started in September, it's our first year at it, companies are taking advantage of it, but there is, I believe, a lot more that can be done in this area. So I would welcome the opportunity to have further discussion on this.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the opportunity of our Agriculture critic to provide me with the opportunity to ask a few questions today on rural development and rural initiatives on behalf of some of the concerns that I've heard and raised throughout my discussions with farmers across the province and with rural communities.

I'm just wondering, of course, I've spoken with the minister in regard to the circumstances around

the livestock, but I may talk about that, perhaps, next week because I'm more focussed on the rural initiatives today and rural development.

I know that she has spoken with some of the AMM people last night and today, and I have, as well, this morning. I know that there's still a concern in some of those eight municipalities in southwest Manitoba on the drought situation. It's a bit ironic that we're going to be dealing with an increased dike on a flood plain tomorrow at Melita, but there's been very good measures taken there in the last week to alleviate any kind of catastrophe there, we hope, at least.

So I guess mine's more along the lines of planning, and one of the things we continue to hear about is the cutbacks or the changes, I guess you should say, from the federal area, that I know the minister's been involved in with her cohorts nationally across the country, in regard to the changes in the federal government and provinces are making. I don't know how much you've had, influence, in making those changes, but in regard to the PFRA changing, Western Economic Diversification, any information that you can provide me with, changes to the Western Economic Diversification and that area, if there are any planned.

I wonder if the minister could just expand on the changes, and I think that the programming there is going into AgriStability.

Ms. Wowchuk: Talk about PFRA first. I will say to the member that we were very disappointed in the changes that the federal government made to PFRA. We thought, all the time that we were doing negotiations, that we were negotiating on the Growing Forward and that the PFRA or the national water supply was going to continue as it was. It was not until just at the end that we found out, and, in fact, we were ready to sign the agreement and somebody started to ask about water supply, and they said, oh, no, that's just built into the other program. Well, yes, it's built in but there's no money with it, and that's a pretty significant amount of money. So we're still lobbying the federal government. All western provinces were taken aback by that and we're still lobbying. We still want to do it.

With regard to Western Economic Diversification, I can't share very much but, perhaps, if the member asks the question again next week, there are some meetings that are happening, we might be able to share a little bit more information

then, but as of today I don't have very much information.

Mr. Maguire: I wonder if I could just follow up on that then a little bit. Forgive me if I'm covering ground that we've already covered with my colleague from Russell that just finished asking questions, because I came in as he was maybe finishing asking a few questions on irrigation. I heard some discussion there about water as well, but mine are more along the lines—I know that Rural Forum is on in the next few days as well, and the planning and that sort of thing around Rural Forum continues to go well, I'm assuming from the events that we've always seen.

Can the minister just outline to me any changes that might have taken place for this year in that event?

Ms. Wowchuk: First of all, I'm just going to go back to the PFRA question that we talked about earlier. The other thing that's different, as well as the funds going, there is no more PFRA stand-alone. It is being built in, incorporated into Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, so there will be no more stand-alone PFRA.

With regard to capturing opportunities, this is a very important event for entrepreneurs. Each year, we choose—we have a sector to thrust and to focus on something in particular. Last year it was nutraceuticals functional foods, this year it's the green economy. So all of the speakers that are at this conference are focussing on the green economy, on entrepreneurship. There is a tremendous amount of interest in building entrepreneurship. A lot of people are there, so we're bringing some good speakers in. In fact, the Clodhoppers boys are going to open up the conference. Of course, you look at them as a real success, who can take their grandmother's recipe and convert it into something and commercialize it and market it internationally—very successful. So we're hoping that will kick the conference off in a way that will build some enthusiasm.

Then, the second one is community foundations. Community foundations play a very important role in entrepreneurship and funding, so we're bringing in a speaker from Nebraska where community foundations play an important role. This is an important speaker, so we're hoping that community foundations from across Manitoba will be able to attend and learn from what is happening in another place.

* (17:10)

The other event that is a special event and quite exciting is the Great Manitoba Food Fight. This is where we bring people together who are developing products. We were just talking with the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) about how we help people bring products to commercialization. Well this is one of the steps. People come here with their ideas; they test them; they're judged, and some of them win money that will then help them take their product to commercialization, go to the Food Development Centre, develop it further. Of course, there's the youth component, and I'm always interested in the youth component and the business development side that they work on. Oh, yes, and then we have another speaker that is going to be there, his name is Ben Barry, and he initiated the Dove campaign, Dove Soap campaign, and the value of it and just built it, and so we're hoping as well that he and other speakers will provide information because capturing opportunities has changed. It is very much business focus, building skills, getting people together that can provide information that people can then go home with and then build their business from there.

Mr. Maguire: I was asking the minister what changes were there and I know the entrepreneurship, the young classes, Reston and Swan River will continue to battle out for the top prize and I appreciate that. I think you've maybe won that a few times as well. But I know that there's a great component of young people involved in that entrepreneurship, and I commend the schools for the program that they've got and continuing that role for them.

A number of the things that you've mentioned are continuations of things that I've seen. Obviously, the theme changes, but the focus is the same on some of those. I guess I'm looking at other programming, then, in the department as well, and how do you determine the programming that will continue, that you work with in the program from year to year, just a—there may not be a magic answer to this, but it's just—I'm wondering about the processes that you go through in looking within the department or outside the department in establishing the procedures that you'll follow throughout the year.

Ms. Wowchuk: I would like to ask the member, are you talking particularly about capturing opportunities, how we would determine that, or are you talking about the department.

Mr. Maguire: No, not capturing opportunities. I was talking about more the department on the rural initiatives side at least that you're working with.

Ms. Wowchuk: It is an important area to look at, because if you have a program, should the program stay forever or should you reorganize it? I will just say, briefly, that when we had Rural Forum, and that's the one that members are more familiar with or were familiar with. We looked at that and we decided that we wanted to change the focus on that. That's how we came to change the name, but also very much change the venue of what is offered there.

How do we do that? Well, ever since we organized the department, we have had 11 advisory councils that operate right across the province. They play a significant role and have input into what is being offered at the GO Centre level. So we're very much engaged with the community and these advisory councils play an active role. We have the knowledge centres that are also playing an important role; there's the AMM, municipal governments, the Economic Development Association that has the opportunity to have input. So those are sort of short term; as you work through the year, you review that.

But we've also established, and I brought this in, this legislation to establish a Manitoba Agri-Food and Rural Development Council. This is a council of a broad range of people from agriculture, from the academic, from the research, from the processing side, who look more at long-term, where they see the industry going. Then from there, what role do they see the department playing in moving these things forward. Then, of course, we have strategic planning. That is something that happens each year and our departments or ADMs all are involved in strategic planning. That's how we set the priorities for the year.

The other point that I want to make to the Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire) is that staff in my department are very involved. They're involved in a wide variety of committees so that from the involvement of staff, whether it's with CDCs or with AMM, we get a broad range of feedback of what's happening out there and what is needed out there. Whether it's for the Manitoba Cattle Producers, Manitoba Pork Producers, various groups, they are very much in touch with what's going on. It's those things, straight from the rural—from the local advisory councils to a broad group like the Agri-Food Rural Development Council, all

of those come together and help as the department puts together a strategic plan each year.

You have to review programs because sometimes programs outlive what they were supposed to be doing. I always say, the only thing that's constant is change. As things change in the industry, sometimes it's time you have to change a program. Sometimes the federal government gives a direction and we have to make change according to that. So we work closely on that.

Mr. Maguire: I just wanted to know, there's obviously a great—you've outlined to me well, council, the staff.

Does the agri-food council then, does it hire people to do reports? Does it look at, I mean, do these councils all provide the minister with reports? Does she hire outside work to help in that area or not?

Ms. Wowchuk: For the Agri-Food and Rural Development Council, they have the ability to hire staff. They have the ability to hire people to come in to do reports for them, but they haven't to this point. What they have done is they have brought experts in. So there have been experts that have come to them and then from there, they have developed some priorities that they are working on. As this moves forward, they may end up hiring. So they do have the ability but they haven't done it yet.

* (17:20)

Mr. Maguire: And that's the agri-food council that has that ability?

Ms. Wowchuk: Yes, the agri-food council has that ability. The local advisory groups, that's all done in-house. They don't have the ability to hire anybody. They work with the GO team staff throughout the regions.

Mr. Maguire: So I just wondered if either of those councils or the minister herself has hired outside support or help from the department to provide her with direction as perhaps just a third party with new ideas, that sort of thing, that maybe something might have been missed from time to time that's beneficial. I just wonder if the minister has done that at all.

Ms. Wowchuk: We could hire for specific works. One of the places that we did hire people or brought people in was on COOL, to develop a strategy and working on that.

There's one that we have hired and one that I very much—one of the areas that we've hired someone is on the economic development delivery co-ordination. We hired a consultant in to look at this and work on a strategic plan on how we might better deliver—to develop a better economic development model for Manitoba. We know we have some fragmentation. We know that we deliver economic development. There're other deliveries. There's the federal delivery. So what I did was hire a consultant to come in and look at that and make some recommendations about how we might do that better.

We've also done studies on biodiesel and on meat processing. *[interjection]* Oh, yes, and, of course, one of the important ones is Buy Local. That's one that very much is industry supported and one we're looking at how we can get more of Manitoba products into Manitoba stores and more Manitoba product into restaurants.

So those are the areas where we hired somebody.

Mr. Maguire: I just wondered, just, you know, I guess I spent quite a bit of time in my neighbouring provinces in the prairies in my previous life before politics as a farmer as well, and there've been some political changes in some of the regions.

Some of the farm groups and that sort of thing that I have talked to in the last little while have indicated that there may have been some work done by the former Minister of Agriculture in Saskatchewan. Is that the consultant that the minister is speaking of? Has he done work, Mr. Serby done work, for the minister here in Manitoba as well?

Ms. Wowchuk: Yes, we did hire Clay Serby to do the economic development delivery co-ordination study.

Mr. Maguire: I've met Clay myself in a previous life as well. I spent some time at a football game with him in Vancouver once, I guess. I had a Canada Grains Council meeting that he and I were at years ago, that some of the farm groups there had indicated that he was looking and doing consulting work and that sort of thing now, as well.

So I just wondered what he has done. You've indicated that he's done some consulting work for you.

Ms. Wowchuk: He's written a report and I'll be able to release that report fairly soon. We have to determine—you know, you get a report and now you have to determine what you do with it.

A lot of people were involved. He talked to a lot of people, and that's where the member might have heard about it because he talked to AMM, he talked to Economic Development people, First Nations, Métis people, because Economic Development covers all of them. So, yes, he's written the report and we haven't released it yet.

Mr. Maguire: I guess time frames are all I was interested in. Now, how long have you had the report, and what will you look at releasing it? I guess, how much time did he spend dealing with it?

Ms. Wowchuk: We hired him in July. He did his work, his consultation, September, October. We're just trying to confirm here. I think he gave us a draft report in December and a final report in February, and I'm hoping to release the report within days.

Mr. Maguire: Great, well, thanks. No, I believe economic development is important. There's no doubt about it, so I wasn't a bit surprised that it'll be released that soon. I didn't even know if you had one. I just had been told Mr. Serby was looking at doing consulting work and that sort of thing, so I thought I'd just check with the minister on that.

I believe, you know, it's important, too, to look at the depth, the time frame, that sort of thing is clear; six, eight months here, that sort of thing. Does the minister have any attached value or is it a contract basis that Mr. Serby was hired or can she tell me just exactly what the contract's value might have been?

Ms. Wowchuk: It was a very specific contract. It was for \$23,975 and that included him and the team he had working with him.

Mr. Maguire: The minister indicated that one of the things she was very concerned about, as we all are, is the COOL legislation, cattle and livestock side, and Mr. Serby has experience in the livestock side of the industries. Can she indicate to me whether there'll be any kind of recommendations around COOL in the report?

Ms. Wowchuk: No, not in this report. That was a different issue. This one deals specifically with economic development.

Mr. Maguire: So the economic development is initiatives within rural initiatives, the rural development that the minister's—that part of her department, not the agrifood side, or not the agriculture programming side. This would be separate to that area. Is that correct?

Ms. Wowchuk: It deals very specifically with—what we're looking for is how do we deliver economic development services better? How do we deal with overlaps? There are, as I said, different people dealing with it. So this is the delivery, but you really can't separate out rural development and agriculture, but you can separate out the delivery and how we might better deliver.

Mr. Maguire: Will the report contain recommendations in regard to processing and enhancing processing in Manitoba?

Ms. Wowchuk: The report deals basically about how we can deliver services better. It's a framework of what we do now, how are we doing it now, and how do people in the community perceive what we're doing and what did people recommend about where the improvements could come.

You know that we've changed. We have more economic development officers. In every GO office we have people who are working on this. We have increased staff in this area, and we want to see how we can better deliver with those staff.

Mr. Maguire: I have just the one question in regard to the document I've got before me here, the '09 budget, in regard to, of course, what we're talking about, but it's the Speech from the Throne itself. In there, I believe it indicated there were a number of capital items that the, and I'm not sure if I've got the right document in front of me, but it's either this or one of the other supplementaries, where I read, you know, the infrastructure budget is outlined at 1.6 billion in this budget. A number of areas all across the province in varying amounts, most of them had a dollar figure in the document, and I just noted that the Keystone Processors didn't have a dollar document. Can the minister indicate to me just exactly what might have been there for a dollar value?

Mr. Chairperson: The hour being 5:30 p.m., committee rise.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

* (15:30)

Madam Chairperson (Bonnie Korzeniowski): This section of the Committee of Supply has been dealing with the Estimates of Executive Council.

Would the First Minister's staff please enter the Chamber.

We are on page 29 of the Estimates Book. As previously agreed, questioning for this department will proceed in a global manner.

The floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): Madam Chair, I wish to ask the Premier two different questions, one dealing with PTH 15 and that is the bridge going over the floodway. As the Premier may know, Springfield has seen substantial growth since the initial bridge was built. When the floodway was put through Springfield, cutting off a substantial portion of it on the west side of the floodway, there had been a commitment initially to put a secondary bridge on Springfield Road, and that never did happen. In the meantime, there's been substantial growth in Springfield and the PTH 15 bridge is actually the only real meaningful crossing for the residents of Springfield.

There's one where you go down Garvin Road, which is a fairly hazardous road, then cross 59 and head into the city. The other option is to head down to No. 1 and cross by Deacon's Corner. The latter two are not really viable for most people in Springfield, so the PTH 15 floodway bridge is the main bridge for individuals to use if they want to enter the city or return home.

I know the Premier has heard myself ask many questions in the House, certainly present a lot of petitions on this issue. I understand that now there is a proposal for a three-lane bridge, even though we were calling for a twinned bridge, because of the traffic volumes and safety issues.

Can the Premier tell us, there seems to be a discrepancy: Is the third lane a turning lane or is it a collector lane? There seems to be some disagreement on what that third lane will be.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): I'll double-check with the engineers. As the member knows, it's two lanes in Winnipeg; I think that's Dugald Road going to 15 and then there are two lanes after the bridge, and as I understand it, I'll double-check. I did say on the radio, and I'm sure the member opposite monitors it, that I thought it was a turning lane, but I'll double-check that and I'll send him a note on it.

Mr. Schuler: I also understand that normally when any kind of monies are forthcoming from the federal government for any kind of flood proofing, which obviously the floodway is, that the money is only there to replace what exists currently insofar as structures are concerned.

I've also been told that, in the case of the PTH 15 floodway bridge, permission has been given, an exemption, if you will, and they're very rarely given, that not just would it be a replacement bridge, that also monies could be used for a third lane.

I'd like to ask the Premier, in light of the fact of the growth taking place in Springfield and that eventually there will have to be twinning taking place, from Dugald into the city—it's just a matter of time just because of the volume of traffic—will the Premier consider twinning the PTH 15 bridge? It's supposed to be a 75-year lifespan on the bridge, and wouldn't it be a shame to build the bridge and then find out, 10 to 15 years later, that the twinning doesn't really work—of the highways—because the bridge wasn't twinned. Will the Premier consider, seeing as the bridge already is at a three-lane bridge, will he consider twinning the PTH 15 bridge over the floodway?

Mr. Doer: Well, it's also problematic to build a bridge that's larger than the lanes that feed it—the egress and access lanes of highway, both inside the city of Winnipeg and inside the rural municipality. I would also point out that the floodway does protect some businesses, farms and individual homes in the R.M. of Springfield, as it does with other parts of his constituency. Parts of St. Clements, parts of East St. Paul are protected by the floodway which goes right around to Lockport. So there is some protection of the floodway to many of his constituents, in fact, a great number of them. Not all of them, of course, Dugald and other places that are higher ground than Winnipeg.

We committed to the Prime Minister to stay within the 665, when the new Prime Minister came in. We also committed ourselves to staying within the 665. He was revisiting the issue of going from 300-and-some million to 665. When we were concerned about costs, particularly fuel costs with the earth-moving machines, et cetera, we did put the brakes on some projects, including that project, the bridge, and I believe it was Highway 44 bridge. There was a railway bridge, owned by the City of Winnipeg, that they're actually—and the bridge to Pine Falls. One of the bridges will be redundant from the City's decision-making. The other two bridges are going to be improved. So, of the four bridges, two are going ahead. The City's not using a third one, as I understand it, in terms of long-term planning.

But I don't know of any plans, and I haven't been presented with any plans for the City of Winnipeg to

take Dugald from the Transcona golf course, where I believe it goes into a single—I'm just going by memory now—but, I think, at the Transcona golf course, it goes from four lanes to two lanes, and from there it proceeds past the barley plant, past McFadden Avenue, past Shirley Timm-Rudolph cutoff, the Buhler park—Shirley Timm-Rudolph lake, I guess. *[interjection]* Lake Shirley? I thought that was true—and keeps proceeding.

Now, it's a route I use. As somebody that takes their children to different volleyball and soccer games, I probably could use a four-lane bridge myself. But, having said that, sometimes I use Garven Road, sometimes I go down Highway No. 1. There are a lot of choices in terms of that part of the province, but I know that people would prefer to have the four lanes. I accept the fact that the member opposite is expressing the views of his constituents east of the floodway. I'm not disputing that.

Mr. Schuler: One more question on this issue and then I'll move on to the next one. The Premier is absolutely right. The people of East St. Paul and West St. Paul, and north, and even some in Springfield who are affected by some flooding, thank Premier Roblin for his vision and for what he did. There was flooding right up to Hoddinott Road in the '50s flood and there was a lot of damage. They appreciate that vision and understand the necessity of the floodway. It's just that there had been a commitment made to Springfield for a second bridge, which was never lived up to, and then there was a commitment to twin the PTH 15 bridge on Dugald over the floodway.

I'm going to ask the Premier one more time: Will he consider twinning of the PTH 15 bridge?

Mr. Doer: I think the member opposite would understand in going from two lanes to three is an improvement. It's not what he wants, but we're trying to live within our means.

Mr. Schuler: To use the Premier's discussion about travelling various routes to get to soccer games. I wish to have the Premier shift his mind over to the complex, that wonderful University of Manitoba soccer pitch that was built. I have spent a lot of time there and spoken to the managers. I don't know why Seven Oaks soccer and sports complex seems to be able to have a canteen, but the U of M complex doesn't.

But, they're going to work on that one. Seeing as I spend a lot of mornings there without coffee, we

are hoping that eventually they'll get some kind of coffee station. In fact, Albi, who has the Red Card sport shop, we told him to put a coffee machine into his store and start selling coffee.

It is a magnificent facility. It's changed a sport in the province. It's brought a lot of discussion about whether or not we should be having boards at Gateway and at Seven Oaks. I keep threatening we're going to, as parents, one day break into both facilities with hacksaws. We're going to cut the boards off. There's way too much injury that comes from the boards.

But, back to the U of M. I'd like to ask the Premier, how often does the University of Manitoba men's soccer team actually use that facility?

Mr. Doer: I don't know. I do know the popcorn is good at Seven Oaks and the Gateway community club, having participated at—

An Honourable Member: Actually, it's fries at Seven Oaks.

Mr. Doer: Well, that's good, too. I have the popcorn, and I do know that there is none at the University of Manitoba. But I can't tell you—I don't manage the place. It's got good managers, I assume. From all I've heard, it's all good.

Mr. Schuler: The question was actually a little bit misleading, and, I think, the Premier will be surprised to know, as almost all of us who were following the project, who supported the project, who believe in the project, that there is no University of Manitoba men's soccer team. In fact, Mr. Premier, there is no college or university men's soccer team in the province.

There is a university of women's soccer team, and they do practice there, and they love the facility. But I have to tell the Premier, I was mortified to discover this, and I will tell this House, I'm probably one of Manitoba's biggest soccer moms and supporters of soccer. I spend an awful lot of time with my three children doing soccer, coaching, assistant coaching and all the rest of it.

Here, of the 22,000 children that are involved in soccer in Manitoba, we can assume half of those would be male. They are basically involved in soccer because somewhere along the line they're going to try out for a university men's soccer team, but they need not apply for one in Manitoba, because there isn't one.

I would like to say to this Premier, and to this House, I'm dismayed by that. I spent the weekend at the Winnipeg Youth Soccer Association Harvest World Cup soccer tournament and watched girls and boys playing their hearts out and doing magnificent soccer.

There was a game on Saturday evening. We finally had to get home and the kids have to get to bed. You just didn't want to tear yourself away from the game. These 15- and 16-year-olds were playing world-class soccer, and, yet, if they wished to apply that skill and talent, and I'd like to tell the Premier, there is unbelievable talent coming up in this province.

* (15:40)

My son, who's going into U12, my daughter is going to U14. I've got another daughter going into U9 soccer. The kind of talent coming up, the kinds of players that are now coming up because they're being trained. What used to be Northern Lights is now going to be called FC Northwest, in case the House didn't know that. They are putting clinics on that, even a year ago, the clinics were marginal. Now, the kinds of clinics they're putting on are just unbelievable.

We're putting all this money in as parents. I've been asked, my son's been asked to go into a special clinic for a mere another \$120. Thank goodness Stephen Harper is going to let us take a little bit of that money back. But we're putting a lot of money into our children, whether it's our daughters and are sons.

Again, the hope is that somewhere along the line, they would be able to get into a university soccer team. I have spoken to Walter McKee. I understand that it might have to do with a gender issue. They're only allowed to have so many of one gender in one sport, and then they have to have so many of a different gender, the other gender, in another sport.

I am very, very perplexed with this. We built, we being taxpayers, not we here, but we as taxpayers built a \$12.5-million soccer pitch at the U of M. I think most of us were under the impression that there were men's and women's soccer teams at all the universities, and there's not. The facility is being used, and it's being used by other sports. It's being used certainly by the younger ages. The weekends, it's unbelievable if you've ever gone to that building.

It is so full and it is so energized and exciting and all the rest of it.

But the kids are doing it because along the line somewhere, they want to try out for a university team and don't want to have to go to Toronto and don't want to have to go to the United States. I keep hearing over and over and over again all over the soccer pitches: Oh, did you hear so-and-so from such-a-team got a scholarship, one to Toronto, one to Texas. One's going there. They're being scouted. They're being taken out of Manitoban.

We've got this great soccer program being developed for our young people, so that they again leave the province because, if you want to further your sport and move on—I know of two guys that are in Europe and they are 18-year-olds, 19-year-olds. One's playing for a Belgian team. He's playing as a goalie because we don't even have a men's soccer team at a university or college here in Manitoba.

I want to raise that with the Premier and I want to ask him if he would—certainly I'm going to approach, I've approached Walter McKee, my former phys ed teacher from Elmwood High School. I saw him at the MSA banquet, and he's willing to sit down and talk. I certainly hope the Premier would be supportive in this, that we would push our universities and colleges. We've got outstanding, we've got world-class soccer players coming up, and, Mr. Premier, I would be prepared to even give you the names of some of these kids that are coming up. They are unbelievable. It's breathtaking how magnificent these kids are playing and they're playing so one day they can leave the province to get into a soccer program at the university level, and, obviously, they would like to move on to more professional soccer.

So, hopefully, the Premier will support me in this. It's something that I've endeavoured to take on. I think it's important, and 22,000-plus children in a soccer program, certainly we should be having the universities reflect that a little bit better.

Mr. Doer: I want to thank Walt McKee for trying to set me up a number of times when we opened up the soccer pitch, and, obviously, he's a very good player.

Secondly, I don't know whether the universities in Canada follow the Nixon funding model, which has led to a lot more women in sports and actually led to a lot of success in the United States with women's soccer at university, where they required equitable funding at universities for men and women

which has made a lot of difference, as I say, to female sports in the United States, certainly, and I think in Canada.

I don't know whether there is that Nixon formula or not in place. I'll have to check. I'll take that as notice, and I would point out, there is a lot of soccer in the public schools now. The high schools now have, a lot of them have soccer teams where they didn't before. So there is a longer season.

I want to congratulate Miles Mac in beating my daughter's team at River East last year. It was a bitter but very good win for them. Of course, they won volleyball this year as well. I think I watched the other game, I think, Kelvin and St. Paul's. I think Kelvin beat St. Paul's, I'm not sure. I better double-check it. I don't want to be in trouble.

So, in terms of high school soccer, it's really being encouraged, it's really expanding, and I can't speak for the universities who, of course, have academic independence.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Chairperson, I do have a few questions I wanted to ask the Premier. The Premier might recall a number of years ago, in the late '90s, the Premier, myself and Mr. Chomiak went to schools, we had public rallies here at the Legislature and it was in regard, in part, to Seven Oaks Hospital.

The government was going to be making, or suggesting, some significant changes, and we were challenging the Premier to not go with what the bureaucrats were recommending back then. We asked Premier Filmon then to reverse the decision, even though we we're being told, well, it's not a final decision, it's not a final decision, but the writing was on the wall. In fact, I could show headlines that said, it's a done deal, it's closed, and I can provide that article to the Premier if he so likes. But the Premier and I, along with Mr. Chomiak, didn't accept that and we continued to fight on. Ultimately, the Premier provided leadership on the issue and said that this isn't the way we want to see health care in our community hospital, in particular at the Seven Oaks Hospital, to move forward.

I wonder if the Premier today would be as bold to protect Seven Oaks emergency services today, and I'm talking about the cuts. A few months ago you could have gone in there for appendix issues, ulcer issues, and been dealt with in an emergency situation. Today that is not the case. I believe that, if Premier Filmon was facing this particular issue, the

current Premier would be onside with me, advocating for the residents of the North End. I would ask if the Premier would at least commit to reviewing the decision with the idea of ensuring that there's more accountability on this issue.

Mr. Doer: Well, you always listen to advice you get from medical experts. The closure of the emergency wards throughout Winnipeg, in my view, was ill-advised, you know, turning off the lights at Seven Oaks and Concordia, Victoria Hospital, even the former member of Fort Garry—or not Fort Garry, but St. Norbert disagreed with it, Grace Hospital, there were four of them, I think, that were proposed to be closed. I can't recall whether there was an urgent care centre at that time in Misericordia or not. Maybe it was five of them at the time, and maintaining St. Boniface and Health Sciences Centre.

The lights are still on and will stay on in the emergency ward at Seven Oaks. The emergency ward at Seven Oaks has received a significant investment to improve it. Area issues such as isolation rooms for infectious diseases have been installed where they did not exist before. Staffing levels for emergency room doctors and nurses, especially in terms of doctors' salaries, have been enhanced to try to maintain our strength at that hospital in terms of patient care. You know, in terms of surgical decisions, we rely on a team of surgeons to make the decisions. I know of a friend just recently that went to Grace Hospital, was stabilized in the emergency ward, and then proceeded to St. Boniface, as all patients do for major cardiac operations that are needed on an urgent basis. Virtually within an hour we've been going to an emergency ward, if that's what's called for.

* (15:50)

So, with a state-of-the-art surgical unit, including all the latest equipment to have the various tests, and you can stay right on the table from the test to surgery, if that's what's needed, including quadruple bypass, if that's what's needed. So I'm not relying on bureaucrats; I'm relying on doctors, and that's the advice I've gotten. The member's right. We argued—I remember the Grace Hospital—we argued with the former Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba who was part of that group. I remember arguing in the Victoria hospital with the former MLA who was on the government's side at the time. I remember being in Concordia, very concerned about the lights going off there. That's why the nurses had a candlelight vigil. They had a candlelight vigil

because they didn't want the lights to go off. And the lights aren't off at Seven Oaks.

Do I listen to advice? Yes. Do I have an open mind always? Yes. Do I take the advice of surgeons on surgeries? Yes.

Mr. Lamoureux: Does the Premier believe that in certain situations he might receive bad advice?

Mr. Doer: Well, I'm going to take the advice of a surgeon over my own advice. If I was listening to myself, I would say I would never want surgery because I wouldn't want to be put under—might lose your heart, in the full sense of the word, the emotional sense of the word. I listen to surgeons. I'd listen to a doctor if I was getting medical advice and I'd listen to surgeons about the best way to deliver surgery to patients.

I think if he went to Concordia Hospital and he was stabilized as a patient because he may be under a lot of stress and might have some cardiac challenges and he's eaten too much McDonald's food at his constituency office, then he was sent to St. Boniface hospital and has the best cardiac surgeon available, it might be better, although the doctors at Concordia are great. I'm speaking in my own quadrant of the city and I just think that's what they tell us.

I mean the politics of changing anything is always challenging. For example, getting hip and knee in Concordia and taking it out of St. Boniface was negative. Getting all the excellent services at St. Boniface was always challenging, but the latest information is that this provides safer, more effective patient care and is a critical mass of people that are now attracting other people. That's the advice surgeons are giving, so I'm not going against surgeons' advice.

To the member opposite—I don't know whether he would want a meeting with the head of surgery in the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority. Certainly, I think the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) has offered that, but I would recommend he sit down with the head of surgery and listen to their advice and you know what? Ask those questions to them, and then he can answer the question whether he'd rather follow a surgeon's advice on surgery or his own advice.

Mr. Lamoureux: It's somewhat sad in one sense when the Premier makes reference to his own area. I have been contacted by Concordia Hospital staff—whatever else it might be there—and they're asking me if I would be able to come and help out because

they're not getting the attention they believe that they need with some of the changes that are taking place in health care at Concordia. I've also been approached in regard to Victoria hospital. I do feel bad that I don't have the resources and as much time as I would like to be able to commit to helping these people. I can tell the Premier that there is the potential for a huge backlash and that's why I tried to raise it.

I've talked to three general surgeons. Manitoba doesn't have very many general surgeons, and I give the Premier credit: the number has actually increased. So we've seen a significant increase in general surgeons while at the same time we're cutting back on emergency services in some of our community facilities, and my focus is on the Seven Oaks hospital.

The general surgeons that I have talked to have indicated that this is a bad decision. Once you continue to move in this direction, it'll be very difficult to change it. I genuinely believe that what's happened is, you have Winnipeg Regional Health with their own vision—some bureaucrats that have a vision of what they would like to see—and they're just implementing it, and no one's holding them to account for those decisions. Quite often, I am offended when I'm told by health-care professionals that they're being told that they should not be talking to me. They're being discouraged to provide me information.

The Premier made reference to the head of surgeries. I would welcome a meeting with the head of surgery, along with the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) or the Premier, on the condition that I can bring a medical professional or two to attend that particular meeting, and there wouldn't be any repercussions for that particular medical official. I would love the opportunity to have that meeting.

I genuinely believe that there is a mistake here. The Premier is in a position—I know, there's no doubt whatsoever in my mind that, if this was in the '90s, the Premier back then would've been doing exactly what I'm doing. The things that I'm doing now, in terms of going to the mall, you know, circulation of some petitions, these were all ideas that actually, probably, originated out of the NDP caucus back in the late '90s. You know, the response that we've been given, I've been overwhelmed. With the few resources that I have, there is a great deal of opposition.

The public is not aware. Let me give you a quote. When the Premier (Mr. Doer) was the Leader of the Opposition, he said: Madam Speaker—and this is referring to Gary Filmon—we are pleased to see the government will utilize public consultation for decisions affecting health care. This is what the Premier said back then.

An Honourable Member: Wise man.

Mr. Lamoureux: Wise man, the Premier is right, that was a wise statement to make.

Having said that, do you realize that the Winnipeg Regional Health had absolutely nothing, zero. The closest thing that they had to public consultation—and this was admitted—was when I had a public meeting after the fact. That's the closest thing that they had to public consultation. Look at the change that was being made.

You say, well, yes, the light's still on. But if nothing's happening and the light's still on, or the services have been cut back, realize this: Seven Oaks Hospital emergency was the busiest emergency in the province of Manitoba in terms of a community hospital facility. At times, there were months in which that emergency was busier than the St. Boniface emergency.

But, because of one or two bureaucrats and their vision of what emergency should be—because it's not on cost, it's not based on dollars, we know the decision is not based on dollars because I've been told that. But, because of this perceived need for change, this dramatic action is being taken, and it goes against what people in the North End want to see. They have not demonstrated, and I have brought, in question period, examples of—you know, I'll take another quote from the Premier, same era, and I quote: I would like to ask the Premier, in light of the subcommittee's report which indicates that bypassing an emergency department at a hospital in adding an extra five minutes to a call could affect the quality of care that a patient receives. Is it his decision to put in jeopardy, or potentially put in jeopardy, the safety of Manitoba patients or people in our community areas who rely on these hospitals, to add the extra five minutes? Is it worth risking life or limb to save \$1.6 million in terms of the decisions of his government in making these community hospitals in our communities?

Madam Chair, there is no cost saving here with this particular decision. I brought up in question

period an incident where a person would've died had they been put into the ambulance, and I've had several health-care professionals that have told me that that individual would have died.

There's a tragedy that's occurring in terms of the way in which we are moving in emergency services. Again, I would ask the Premier if he himself would participate, or his Minister of Health, would participate in the discussion with the head of surgery, or Mr. Postl, to have some dialogue to make sure that we're moving in the right direction.

* (16:00)

Mr. Doer: Yes, I would remind the member that Dr. Koshal recommended this for cardiac care. It was supported by the member's leader as heading in the right direction, and quoted in the medical journal on October 28, 2003. But, in terms of having a meeting, I'll talk to the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald). I've always had an open mind about debate.

Mr. Lamoureux: I'll wait for their correspondence. Thank you, and I thank the Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): Just want to come back to a matter that we had covered in last year's Estimates. It was just in connection with the provision of benefits to Manitobans with catastrophic injuries arising from a motor vehicle accident. We had a dialogue last year about Mr. Fletcher's situation, but also the cases of many other Manitobans who have been severely injured; in some cases, people who have had severe head injuries, others left paraplegic and others still quadriplegic and suffering a variety of catastrophic injuries.

At the time, we had discussed the desire to have a meeting to allow the Premier to hear from some of the people who have been impacted by these accidents for a variety of reasons, including schedules of both myself and the Premier and the Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger), St. James, Assiniboia and others. We've had a challenge in pulling that together, and there was reference a number of months ago to an intent to deal with the issue, and then a couple of weeks ago my office was advised that something was pending.

I wonder if the Premier can just indicate whether there is something impending with respect to benefits and support for individuals with catastrophic injuries under MPI.

Mr. Doer: Yes, the member's right about the meeting, and I'll endeavour to get a time in the next period of time. I've been a little occupied with the flood and everything else and the economy. So I do apologize. I did make that commitment.

Secondly, on the issue of amending the '93 legislation, the no-fault legislation, I think it was '93-94. We're working on it and the issues we're trying to resolve is retroactivity, and what would be retroactive. I haven't got an update, you know, I don't have the final picture. We're also trying to look at how this would be accounted for with all the, dare I say, balanced budget legislation requirements and summary financial budgets and sinking, you know, different Crown corporations.

But the principle's still solid, you know, that if you replace tort with the no-fault, you should have benefits that provide dignity and independence. There were some—I mean, the Fletcher case had two elements to it, as you know. One is that he was handled in a capricious way by the entities that be, and that was not ruled by the judge to be the case. Secondly, there was a legal decision by the court, but certainly a moral statement that I would support.

I don't have any problem with the moral recommendation from the Chief Judge of Manitoba, and the Supreme Court has now dealt with the case and, you know, I'm hoping we can have a non-partisan discussion about it because it did get a little charged. I'm not blaming anybody; it was—I respect Mr. Fletcher's tenacity and his passion for his politics, but not all things are political.

So I'm hoping the bill will go a much further step forward on all the issues that have been raised by him and by others. Mr. Chomiak has been meeting with—Minister Chomiak, and before him Gord Mackintosh, Minister Mackintosh, so—

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. I would just remind both parties use the title, not the name.

Mr. Doer: Yes, Mr. Mackintosh, so—

Madam Chairperson: No.

Mr. Doer: We'll try to set up the meeting. We are working on the bill for this session.

Mr. McFadyen: I thank the Premier for that response. I want to just be clear and on the record that it's been a few different calendars that have been difficult to co-ordinate—and not just the Premier's—in terms of setting up the meeting. So I wasn't wanting to suggest that there was any problem with him or

his office in terms of scheduling that meeting. Mr. Fletcher, as everybody knows, has a busy calendar, as do I, as does the Premier, and there were others. I think he was hoping to have us part of it. That meeting may very well be moved once the bill comes forward, if it resolves the issues that those individuals wanted to bring forward.

My understanding is that it is a relatively few number of people that fall under that category, but the needs are quite severe, and I made the point last year and, again, not wanting this to be partisan, but just wanting it to be something that we work together on, I made the point last year that, while many will have welcomed rebate cheques, I think many Manitobans would be prepared to forgo that if they could know that there was going to be an adequate level of coverage under legislation that has been there for a long time.

So that's the only point I would want to make on that issue, and I thank the Premier (Mr. Doer) for the comments and the indication that something is forthcoming. We'll look forward to seeing that bill, and I think the Premier said that we can expect it in this sitting.

Mr. Doer: We're working, and, again, I expect there'll be some—there's always disagreement about how far somebody goes, but there will be improvements from where we were in the legislation and the escalators from '93. We are dealing with a very important issue. On a go-forward basis this legislation is not as difficult to deal with as on a retroactive basis, so the member would probably appreciate that. The whole issue of retroactivity is unusual in government. Governments just say, you know, on a go-forward basis we're going to correct a problem. I'm not saying that the minister has that corrected yet, but I know that's one of the issues he's trying to definitely work with MPI on and the comptroller and the provincial government and all the other bodies on this. It's been a little more challenging than we originally thought, but on a go-forward basis it's easier; if there is retroactivity, it's harder. So I'm giving you the complexities of what we're trying to deal with.

Mr. McFadyen: I appreciate the comments from the Premier on that issue. Another issue which is in the realm of health care, which has generated a lot of discussion over the last period of time, is the issue of general accountability within the health authorities, and the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority in particular. Without wanting to go over the details of

the Brian Sinclair case, which are properly being dealt with through an inquest, I do want to ask the Premier whether he or his government are contemplating changes in terms of accountability and openness when it comes to the health authorities because the Sinclair case is not an isolated situation where Manitobans are feeling frustration at the approach that the authorities will sometimes use when it comes to dealing with issues where there's a large and significant public interest.

The Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) has correctly brought forward views and concerns of people in his constituency about community hospitals and their role and concerns about the way the authority makes decisions, but there are lots of decisions that are made, not just in Winnipeg, but outside Winnipeg where members of the public feel that the decision was not the right one in terms of meeting their needs, but just as importantly, that they have no recourse when a decision is made that they don't agree with.

While we certainly subscribe to the view that the experts have an important role to play in formulating policy and making decisions, it is ultimately a system that is there to be responsive to the people of the province in a democratic way, and there is frustration, as the Premier knows, at the seeming inability of members of the public to get any kind of response from the authorities on issues that really matter to them and their communities. And there's a long list of examples. The Sinclair case, I think, highlighted an approach that people find maddening. I wonder if the Premier can indicate whether there are any plans to deal with these structural issues of accountability.

*(16:10)

Mr. Doer: We tried to make changes post Justice Sinclair's report on health care arising from the tragic deaths of babies at the Children's Hospital. We made a number of changes, including trying to be as fully open about what happened rather than waiting five or six years, you know, right in the Legislature knowing that, at the end of the day, as more information came out, the more fulsome the information would be.

We have made some interim changes for patient care. The whole issue of accountability, I agree with the member opposite, it's broader than just the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority. We have some ideas on it. We think that more ideas will come forward through the inquiry. The status quo is never—you know, we never believe anything in government,

including health, should be status quo. That would include health authorities.

The judicial inquest is going to be early enough so we can take action, we think, by the next legislative session if there's action recommended. Obviously, breakdowns took place, so I'm sure action will be recommended.

The interesting issue is that they were first established as health authorities with the full meaning of the word authority, and authority and responsibility go together. There's a fair amount of that in the existing legislation, but where does the health authority end and where does the minister's authority interact and the government's interaction take place.

So the answer is we definitely believe that there's some concern about the health authorities. Some of it's fair. Some of it's not fair and there's some concern about government about health care. There was some concern about every part of a health-care delivery system that affects 250,000 people, has moving parts and people that generally do a tremendous job, but status quo is never an option.

Mr. McFadyen: I would want to put on the record my own comments about the excellent people working in the system and just family members and others. Our interaction with people in the system is that they've been very professional and very committed to providing good care. So I want to second that comment by the Premier.

The issue of accountability, it is a challenging one in a system as big as health care. I know that it may feel this way sometimes, probably to the minister under the government, that we blame the minister or the Premier for everything that goes wrong in health care. In actual fact, it may feel that way. It's not actually the case that we do, but we are expressing, I think, some of the frustration that many feel because we are not able to ask direct questions in any open way to decision-makers at the authority.

We have to be able to come to this House where we have opportunities to ask questions and ask for responses, but there is this inability to really bring forward members of the health authority decision-makers in an open forum like the Legislature or a committee to have them respond to questions about things that are going on under their watch and why certain decisions are made the way they are.

As one, I think, really important interim step, even before the inquest has done its job on the Sinclair case, I would simply ask and members, other members of our caucus have made the same suggestion, and I credit our Health critic for also bringing this forward, that if we could have the CEO of the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority and other authorities come to committee in the same way that the CEO of Manitoba Hydro will come and testify at Crown corporations and other officials will from time to time from the Crown corporations.

This would provide some measure of relief, perhaps, for the minister and the Premier, and also, I think, provide a more satisfactory level of dialogue in a public forum for members of the media and the public who have an interest in these things. So I wonder if the Premier would agree to allowing us to call officials from the health authorities to committee in a timely way to respond to questions about significant health policy issues in the province.

Mr. Doer: Well, first of all, I just want to say that, yeah, we do get questions in the House, and I would expect that will, no matter what authority, I think the former government thought the word "authority," having a health authority would maybe have less questions in the House. I'm not sure that will be the case, ever, so I have no illusions about that. That's just the way it goes.

A couple of points, the public is really smart. They actually know, through their own friends and family, when the health-care system works. I talk to people all the time. The member opposite talks to people all the time. Just a friend the other day that had a little tap on the shoulder and had, you know, his wife's comments, through e-mail to everybody, tell Gary the system is a way better than people think or read about in the paper. I'm not going to mention any papers, because you can't compete with people that buy their ink by the barrel. I know that because, one thing about health care, all of us get touched by it all the time, and we know when the health-care system works.

So I want to start by saying, the public is smarter about all this stuff than some of the chatter and noise. They know when things break down and they expect us to say it broke down. They actually know when things went right, and they know that we're dealing with very dedicated human professionals that, 99.9 percent of the time, get it fully right and save lives, even when lives would be against the odds, in a sense. So they know all that.

On the committees, I would have to consult with the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald). I've got an open mind on accountability, but I want to do it not by lurching toward something, I want to think through, you know, what we're going to do. I mean, I'm going to be going to Brandon tomorrow. Ms. Olson is a tremendous head of that health authority, at least in my view. She gives me great advice. Sometimes we want to do stuff and sometimes we don't, and she gives us great advice. I get pretty good advice from people.

I have a lot of respect for people in the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, you know, and I have a lot of respect for doctors I know that are friends of mine in the Pan Am Clinic that tell me how good people are. When I go to Concordia Hospital on Friday night, I'm going to also hear a lot of good things.

But I've got an open mind about, I mean, we obviously had—we tried to advance accountability after the pediatric deaths, of children, and obviously, has it gone far enough? I would say no. So I've got an open mind. Do we lurch now and then lurch again after a judicial inquest? I would prefer to move with all the advice. We have our own intuitions. The member opposite has his own intuitions.

I want to start by saying, as I say, I've got a lot of advice from Dr. Postl, who worked with the previous government, and our government. I think the world of him. I know that people are trying to recruit him every day to other places. I know when Paul Martin wanted to write a report on the issues of wait times, he asked him. We didn't want to lose him for a couple of weeks or months. I know he worked in Shamattawa. He worked in Churchill. I know he worked at the Health Action Centre which, of course, was the first point of entry for the individual, and then it fell horribly wrong after that. I've got an open mind on how this can work, and I would prefer to have a comprehensive response that includes the information that's going to come forward under cross-examination.

It will be painful for people on the front lines. It will be painful for administration. It will be painful, ultimately, to the government but, out of the pain, I hope we can get—part of what we can do is the medical care and part of the issue we've got to deal with is the accountability issue.

They are called health authorities under Mr. Praznik's act. He created them as authorities. I

remember he said—you know, the member opposite, when he was chief of staff to the former premier probably heard the same thing I did. Mr. Praznik always walked around saying, I got these health authorities established and we'll never get any more trouble in this government. I'll never get any more flak as a Health Minister; I'm just brilliant. Well, perhaps, perhaps not. But the word "authority" was his word, and I know he won't be—well, he might be listening to *Hansard*. He's still a political junkie in spite of his exalted role in a pharmaceutical company. But, yes, we're going to learn, always learn, always change.

*(16:20)

Mr. McFadyen: Just a last question on health care. The inquest will deal with emergency room issues and particularly as they pertain to Health Sciences Centre, what happened around Brian Sinclair. But the issues that are arising in connection with the authorities go far beyond that. They go beyond Winnipeg. They go beyond emergency room services. They relate to what is a theme in terms of comments of a lack of responsiveness and accountability.

We've seen a big increase in the budget for the Department of Health over the years, and I don't think there are very many people arguing on the question of resources particularly. There are always areas that could use more resources, but the debate is really on the issue of management and accountability and how those resources get deployed in a way that provides a high level of service that ensures high morale among those working in the system. That's the other issue that we hear a lot of, is that the authorities are so far removed from what's going on in the front lines that front-line people very often feel like they're not being listened to, and these are really issues of management and accountability.

I would just ask the Premier to commit to starting a debate, and maybe committee is the vehicle. We have an obligation, opposition, to not overly politicize these discussions too. To be constructive, but to not wait for that report to start the debate about structural changes and new accountability within health care, not wait until that inquest report because that simply could be perceived as a delay tactic to get on with some of the other work that many think needs to be done.

I want to ask the Premier if he'd be open to starting that debate on accountability sooner than later.

Mr. Doer: [*inaudible*] would welcome the member to start that debate with the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald). I'm sure they will be asking a lot of pointed questions about the broader issues.

We listen to constituents. We're all accountable to constituents. So I agree with the member that a judicial inquest will deal with part of it, although I note, with the specific case of the Taman death, there was a more broader set of questions from the judge that has now assigned himself to do the job of this inquest.

There will be questions, I'm sure, about information to the public, which also deals with accountability and what has to be held for an inquest and what has to be held for the Chief Medical Examiner, and what should be released to the public I think is, to me, a very, very important part of this accountability.

So I think every idea—I mean, we are going to be accountable and we're not going to delay things because if we do want to make changes, quite frankly, we all have a day of accountability. It's called October 2011. So we are ultimately accountable in the big scheme of things, and that's as it should be.

But we feel accountable to our own constituents and accountable to opposition members. So am I saying that it's all love, trust and pixie dust in terms of the public's view of the authorities? No. And some of it is interesting. I was meeting with the United Way the other day about a building they were planning, potentially, in downtown Winnipeg. I mentioned the new Winnipeg Regional Health Authority building would have a number of clinical services available on the ground floor, and they didn't even know. They were moving into the neighbourhood, and they didn't even know that. Of course, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen), I think, emphasises the edifice part of it, which is, of course, his job. But, you know, who else is supposed to get the other part of that job out?

Sometimes accountability is, you know, not being a little more forceful about some positive things as well as being accountable for negative. So I'm open to suggestions the member will make. We've got an open mind on this issue because we do listen to constituents. I'll go to Brandon tomorrow and people will say, you know, this and that about the health authority, but they will also say they really

respect this person that's running it and the people that she has hired. So at least that's what I hear.

But there always is a feeling that, if you're on the front lines of health care, there's not enough of you on the front lines and there are too many of you removed from the front lines. I heard that before under the old system. I had comments about Mr. Swerhone years ago about the Health Sciences Centre. I don't know whether Mr. Quaglia, I think at St. Boniface, you always heard those things even though you knew some of them were doing the walkabout management style as well as trying to manage all these very, very complicated health and financial issues. But, yes, we have an open mind.

Mr. McFadyen: Moving on just to the Winnipeg waste-water project. There was the review undertaken by the CEC, that we supported the decision to review the position of the Clean Environment Commission on nitrogen removal from the Winnipeg system. We're surprised, after seeing so much scientific commentary on the issue of nitrogen removal, its added cost, and the fact that it could, in fact, not only be ineffective, but counterproductive, in terms of dealing with the blue-green algae situation on Lake Winnipeg, surprised that the Clean Environment Commission went away and came back with essentially the same position, and not very much in terms of clear, scientific justification in its review for the ongoing, dogged determination to stick with its recommendation that nitrogen be removed from the system as well as the other elements.

I just wonder if the Premier can indicate whether he's satisfied that the Clean Environment Commission is listening to science, or is it a case that they are wedded to a position that, it was adopted earlier, that maybe they feel they can't change because of having dug in their heels and taken a position in the public debate that they may feel is politically difficult for them to reverse at this stage?

Mr. Doer: Well, we reversed ourselves by asking the Clean Environment Commission to take another look at it. We got the headline appropriately about the whitefish metaphor. I knew that would happen, but with the material that was coming out, I thought a new chair, a new body at the Clean Environment Commission should take a look at it again. I had talked to people I knew that had different views on this, and, I mean, different views.

Would I have preferred the Clean Environment Commission to come out with a different conclusion

about nitrogen? I didn't think they would on the South End Treatment Plant because of the ammonia levels. I mentioned last year in question period, everybody agrees phosphorus is the culprit, but it was ammonia levels, and that's another nice scientific word for something a little more graphic at the South End Treatment Plant and the North End Treatment Plant.

The government has pledged one-third of the money, and we would prefer to just move on with phosphorus because it would be quicker. So my political preference is for you to say, I told you so. We already said it back to the commission. I could take a day of—*[interjection]* What's that?

An Honourable Member: Gentle tactics.

Mr. Doer: Yes, for one-third of the cost and quicker time. Or one-half the costs. The Clean Environment Commission did document that nitrogen itself—and a lot of the debate has been about nitrogen, nitrogen into itself is only, I think I've said in question period, I think the number was even less than what I said—under 10 percent of the cost. It's nitrogen and ammonia together that represents a significant difference in costs. The Clean Environment Commission also said if you left the ammonia and nitrogen alone, and only the phosphorus, it was a non-starter at the south point because ammonia levels were so high. There was a debate about the ammonia levels at the North End Treatment Plant.

My preference would have been for the quicker, less cost, because we have other challenges like the sewer system in Winnipeg and raw sewage. So people say that the government forced the City. Well, we're actually imposing the same cost on ourselves and in places like Brandon and Portage.

* (16:30)

Now, some of the people—and part of the testimony included some assessment of what happened to Lake Winnipeg. They assessed that Lake Winnipeg would be negatively affected by phosphorus. We all agree. By ammonia, that was part of the nitrogen removal process, and that, at minimum, fish would be negatively affected in the Red River on the way to Lake Winnipeg, in rivers. So we had people from the University of Manitoba testifying one way in favour of removing nitrogen ammonia together; we had people testifying from Regina. Regina is not sending waste to Winnipeg with nitrogen in the Assiniboine River—or is that South Saskatchewan? I better—it goes into the

Assiniboine—I think it—where's the geography major?—the South Saskatchewan, but eventually goes into the Assiniboine River. I don't know whether it goes through the Souris or through the Assiniboine.

Anyway, eventually it all comes to Winnipeg. It all comes to Winnipeg. So we have scientists in Calgary, scientists in Regina, scientists in Edmonton, all recommending to their political bodies to go with the nitrogen removal. I respect Mr. Schindler, particularly his views on the east side, as the member will know, but I respect them quite a bit, and I would have loved—we didn't send it back knowing that we were going to get ridiculed by the media. I was hoping that we could have just the same amount of environmental protection with less costs. I was hoping that. But I can handle a day of, you know, I told you so, or two days or two weeks. I mean, for \$100 million or whatever it would be, although the nitrogen wasn't that great a cost. It wasn't, and the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) can point this out to his leader, it wasn't the 350 million or 400 million that the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) used for half his election promises. But it was quite a bit less.

It is now documented how much the nitrogen removal was, although his candidate in Fort Rouge, Mr. Hesse, had a different position than the candidate from River Heights in the last election. But that's Liberals; that's what they do—*[interjection]*

Yes, we do. So—probably on an OlyWest plant.

So it wasn't political, believe me, and we wanted to take a second look. I did want to make sure that one clean environment commissioner was supported by another one. I don't think he had an easy time making the decision or recommendation, because I know they were going back and forth trying to get ammonia information. That's the only thing I know because I heard it from another source, not from him.

Mr. McFadyen: Just on to another topic related to the environment: On the issue of cap-and-trade discussions and agreements that the Premier's been part of, could he just outline where those agreements stand as of today and if he could just outline how they're intended to work. One of the questions that we're getting is whether industry and private landowners and other emitters of CO₂ or CO₂ equivalents are going to be able to be active players in the carbon credit trading market under the system that the Premier is pursuing through the agreements with other jurisdictions.

Mr. Doer: Well, we now know that the new President of the United States—I don't know what he announced today in Iowa, although I have met with Governor Culver, Chet Culver, the Governor of Iowa, who, in the past, and he's certainly signed the Midwestern agreement, which we're part of with Minnesota with Governor Pawlenty and Governor Doyle from Wisconsin. They are moving towards the Western Climate Initiative which, of course, has common counting and common calculations in this.

I think it's safe to say with the election of President Obama and the discussions that have gone on in Ottawa, the discussion is becoming more of a continental approach and more of an approach of, I would argue, provinces, not just emitters or, you know, a much bigger scope of how this is going to be managed. Minister Prentice is discussing this with his counterparts in the United States. To some degree, a little bit of this regional work is still going on, but the big "P" political policy issue is, is this going to be a country of Canada to have a cap and trade? Are emission reductions that are, ultimately, going to take place in British Columbia, Manitoba, Québec going to impact emitters that are going up—dare I say, Alberta, after question period? So how do we have a national approach to this? My belief is Manitoba should be part of the country of Canada on the national approach on this, in the sense of that's what the Prime Minister, I believe, has to do to deal with the U.S. government having a national approach.

If we go off into provinces it's, obviously, to our economic advantage. Even the sales we have of hydro-electric power to places like Minnesota in the past have included—the credit would go to the producer, not the purchaser. So that's an economic advantage, as well as being an environmental advantage. I would say, now, that I think the federal government's got to move quickly on what its plan is. You know, they've gone from intensity targets to cap-and-trade feasibility with the Obama administration.

We've got to move quickly because I believe what's going to happen in Copenhagen in December is President Obama, or his representative, is going to go there and plant a new flag on the world. I've argued this with governor friends of mine as well. You know, it would take two years to study. This guy, from what I can see, he's not slowing down things in terms of announcements of policy. He's got a pretty rapid pace, and that's only my read of it. So I think I would like to be a participant with the Prime

Minister and his administration on where Canada is going on cap and trade. Once we know the big picture, then we can start continuing to work on the work that we've been doing, and we will continue to do.

In terms of regional governments themselves, Jean Charest and I, who were excluded from consideration by this report yesterday—electricity was omitted from the report; how convenient for Ontario—we co-chair the sub-national governments along with your favourite governor from California. So we're going to try to do some work on regional government's roles, but I'd rather have that in conjunction with Canada, not separate from it.

I think, also, having Ontario, Québec, Manitoba and B.C., now, on cap and trade, and the national government, we're probably, in terms of political commitments, in a better place than we were for the last five years.

Mr. McFadyen: On the issue of TIF legislation, we know that municipalities already have the ability to use tax incremental financing to support development initiatives. The intent with the TIF bill is to deal with education property taxes and where they would be utilized to support development.

We've said a few times that we support the idea of applying TIFs to areas that are underdeveloped and where there's no other reasonable prospect of development absent for use of TIF financing. Immediately, without sitting down with a map and drawing lines, downtown Winnipeg makes sense to us; downtown Brandon makes sense to us as places where TIF would apply.

I know the case is being made for CentrePort as part of that. It's not a classic example of a project that would qualify, but it's significant enough as a strategic investment for the province that we would support its use in that case.

But I wonder if the Premier can indicate whether other projects that he contemplates using TIF financing for that would go outside of the scope of the three areas just mentioned.

Mr. Doer: Well, the only other one would be rapid transit, whether it's in Winnipeg or another jurisdiction. The mayor believes that that could be very helpful to his plan. We talked about rapid transit, I think, with the Leader of the Liberal Party, about the whole idea of having the rapid transit system in place. So that would be the fourth one.

* (16:40)

We did make slight changes from the original draft to the legislation based on the calm speeches that the Leader of the Opposition made about detail. So we did try, you know, pursuant to the idea of listening to what he said. We think that we're actually better protected on a rational basis than, say, even the legislation in Alberta. But, having said that, we made some changes based on the calm speeches the leader made last year, you know, because our goal is to get it passed. That's what the goal of business is. The inland port—in some places we're just dealing with tumbleweeds; in some places we're dealing with land that's owned by private landowners, et cetera, et cetera—is going to be developed.

We had a report from Chris Lorenc and the business community, a trade report to the mayor, and he recommended that we do what we can in terms of tax policies provincially, and go for a federal policy as well. So, to us, this is one of the policies we can bring in, and it's got a fair amount of support from businesses, the member knows, and now we have tremendous support from the Prime Minister with his announcement a week ago yesterday. In terms of the inner city, should there be something in Point Douglas or doing something in downtown Brandon? Yes, I think there should be.

TIF has worked well where it first started—in Chicago. It's a classic example of urban renewal with using it, and that's why it had limited application when we brought it into municipalities, so we had to, with this legislation, be broader with the education portion.

Mr. McFadyen: Thanks for that response. I think I did make calm speeches about it. I may not have had calm questions in question period, but question period has a different dynamic altogether. I don't see a lot of calm and sober commentary coming out of question period from any side, but, nonetheless, I appreciate those comments.

We are, obviously, looking at the bill. We want it to work in the way it's intended to work, and so we can have some further discussion on that as we go along.

On the issue of the government's announced intention to reduce its debt repayment this year from \$110 million down to \$20 million, a \$90-million reduction on a growing provincial debt, which, we believe, is ill advised, given the debt level already

being significantly in excess of what we're seeing in provinces to the west of us on a per capita basis, I wonder if the Premier can indicate why it is that they feel the need to reduce this year's debt repayment by a sum of \$90 million, which represents less than 1 percent of the operating budget of government this year, whether there was any way that they could find savings to direct toward ensuring that we're not leaving this negative legacy for the next generation.

Mr. Doer: Well, I think the member would know that, on the operating side of government, there are only a couple of provinces that are running operating surpluses: Saskatchewan, of course, has repaid a considerable amount of money, I think \$500 million from their stabilization fund; and ourselves, credit goes to the people for that. Certainly, the balanced budget legislation or the legislation of Manitoba doesn't just require the operating budget to be balanced; now with the GAAP financial accounting, it also requires a balance. Then we have the debt payment.

Now, in relative terms, the spending levels in Manitoba over the last nine years, and the chart is pretty clear, between StatsCan numbers: B.C. was the lowest; we're second lowest; Saskatchewan was third lowest; Alberta was highest on a per capita basis. We think that this was just a prudent decision to make in terms of, you know, most people are running deficits; we thought, on balance, we could get close to a balanced budget under GAAP financial accounting, but we want to be prudent in terms of our own flexibility to maintain vital programs or vital services and defer part of the debt payment—defer in the sense of reducing it, not deferring it.

Mr. McFadyen: The Premier won't be surprised that we would be concerned about that decision. We felt that they provided themselves with a high level of flexibility with Bill 38 last year and are surprised that there is an added flexibility required so soon after Bill 38 was passed.

The amount of \$90 million in reduction is a significant amount but, in the scheme of an annual operating budget of \$10 billion, represents less than 1 percent of that budget. The claim of a balanced budget is defeated if debt is going up. The purpose of balancing the budget is to prevent situations where debt is rising, and so, if debt is rising, it really seems to us to be hollow to claim a balanced operating budget.

Mr. Daryl Reid, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

So this is a matter for debate as we go along, but I guess we would want, at every opportunity, to put on the record our concern about the decision to reduce the amount of the debt repayment and urge the Premier and his Finance Minister, through Treasury Board, to undertake a review with the goal of finding \$90 million in savings without reductions in front-line services to Manitobans, less than 1 percent of the overall budget.

Maybe they won't be able to get all the way to \$90 million, but surely there has to be room for savings within the system, maybe government advertising and some other areas that seem to us to be running it with some frequency these days, and other areas where perhaps Manitobans will see no decline in the level of public service but some savings to prevent a buildup in debt.

Will the Premier do that kind of a review?

Mr. Doer: I always review. Boy, I get fond memories of that great wild memo every time I hear the member talk about government advertising.

My view is the former Filmon balanced budget legislation actually provided greater flexibility. For example, let me give you an example: the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, to be utilized under the former system, to be not considered above and below the line, and it actually was easier to balance. We knew going into the legislation that the Minister of Finance brought in that we were actually putting another \$100 million in. I knew we were going to be over \$800 million when we brought the legislation in, and I knew we'd need that. You know, we knew by September that we'd need a lot more flexibility.

So, actually, I find because you can't count this under GAAP to be—it's counted as expenditure in the sense of the above and below the line. I actually believe, politically, that we would have had greater advantage and flexibility by not changing the old Filmon balanced budget law. You're going to disagree with me, but, quite frankly, you know I'm right. If you take, for example, your last Filmon budget, \$185 million from the rainy day fund and a \$75-million debt payment you still claim that to be a surplus or a balanced budget. Now, if you took X number of millions of dollars from the rainy day fund, under GAAP it's calculated.

So, you know, here we had built up the rainy day fund, and our Minister of Finance implemented the Auditor General's report. Well, my flexibility preference would be to stick with the old Filmon

balanced budget law. It provided a lot more flexibility with an \$800-million rainy day fund. It provides less flexibility if you had no money in the rainy day fund.

* (16:50)

That's my view, but my view also was that we made a commitment to the Auditor General to implement it. We did it after we had promised to—we promised in the '99 election to maintain Filmon's balanced budget law. In 2003 we promised to maintain the Filmon balanced budget law until the end of our term. We said we would balance the budget where possible, and the '07 election wasn't as defined as tying back to that. We committed to the former Auditor General and the current Auditor General that we would implement the GAAP financial accounting, but I don't believe, from a political perspective, with an \$800-million rainy day fund, that that was the best thing for us to do, for our own self interest. For the public interest, I think, it was the best way. In terms of considering ideas, if we do better than we think, I'll consider all ideas.

Mr. McFadyen: There are several things in that response that we will take issue with, and we'll have lots of time for debate on a go-forward basis. We don't have a lot more time today, so I'm not going to take the bait of responding to a couple of the points made in that response, but we'll, instead, move on. I know the Member for Brandon West (Mr. Borotsik) has a couple of questions. I'm not sure about the Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Briese). Okay, the Member for Brandon West does.

But, just in wrapping up, I want to ask the Premier whether he plays any role in connection with hiring on the part of the NDP caucus?

Mr. Doer: The caucus makes the decisions.

Mr. McFadyen: We've had some discussion about items under the Leg Assembly budget already, in connection with the party grants, but there's another issue under the Leg Assembly budget with respect to caucus hiring, and that is that, by observation, we've noted a number of new faces working out of the NDP caucus in recent times.

I wonder if the Premier can provide any information about who the new hires are and whether they're hired underneath their caucus budget.

Mr. Doer: Well, I can't answer that question. The caucus has an executive, like the members opposite, I'm sure, have a caucus executive, and they manage

the accounts. The only thing I can say is the last year's legislation did provide for mandatory accounting of those accounts that weren't always in the light of day. So I don't know where the member is going. It's so cryptic, I don't know what he's going after. So I don't even know what I would want him not to know, because I don't know enough about it.

Usually, people hired in the caucus are outstanding citizens, usually, but I don't directly hire them. Even staff in the Premier's office, the chief of staff—I'm sure the member opposite had a delegated authority from the Premier. You hire a chief of staff to be a chief, and even there you have people that make decisions. You hire people to hire people. So the caucus chair and the caucus executive would be involved in that, and we will be fully accountable because, I think, the accounts are going to be made public at some point. I believe we changed that to make it public. So you will know all our deep and dark secrets and we'll know all yours, including your mailings. Surreptitious documents have arrived at my doorstep in the middle of the night.

Mr. McFadyen: We'll look forward to that discussion about mailing. *[interjection]* Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I'll ask one more question about it, which, I think, will point them in the right direction. We had just observed that there were some new faces in the hallway. There seems to be quite a line of NDP staff in the hallway on any given day coming out of question period. I understand that there are three new staff working out of the NDP caucus, hired by Jason Woywada, who, I believe, is the chief of staff in the NDP caucus. I've just asked the Premier if he could inquire as to where those individuals are being paid from and what exactly is it they're doing.

Mr. Doer: Well, they have to be paid for by the funds available through MLAs and caucus and, sometimes we actually have volunteers in there as well. So I don't want the member to be too paranoid. I don't think any of them are filming the member opposite yet, are they? Because I know I get filmed by your caucus people. You know, I could end up on YouTube or something. We are kinder, gentler researchers over there. Maybe we should toughen up our Republican culture and film the Leader of the Opposition and get right under his nose with those cameras, like his people do.

An Honourable Member: We get everything we need from question period.

Mr. Doer: Oh, well, that's good because you can't get right under my nose, though. We'll have to find out.

An Honourable Member: I'll leave it there.

Mr. Doer: They're all pretty faces, though.

Mr. McFadyen: I'm just going to turn it—the Member for Brandon West has a—

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon West): Mr. Premier, I do understand you're heading to Brandon tomorrow, and I, unfortunately, will not be able to attend your State of the Province Address to the Chamber of Commerce. I do have a ticket. I can also tell you that it's been sold out. So it's going to be well attended and certainly well received.

I do know, and I know the Premier is aware of the fact that he knows where Brandon is. He's there on a fairly regular basis, which we do thank him for that. The last time, I think, was the Royal Manitoba Winter Fair, in the snake pit was the last time that we had the opportunity of sharing some opportunity to discuss the issues of Brandon.

I'm going to be a tad bit parochial; we'll talk about the second largest city in the province of Manitoba right now. As I said, I do know that the Premier is certainly very aware of our needs and the needs of not only our citizens, but those of all of southwestern Manitoba, as we are the service centre for a very great market area. As the Premier indicated earlier to my leader, we do have, as MLAs, the opportunity to discuss a number of major issues, priority issues with our constituents.

I have to admit one of the priority issues that comes up a great number of times when I'm dealing with my constituents is one of the proposed, the announced Cancer Care Unit in the city of Brandon. I understand, as of today, the CEO, Carmel Olson of the RHA, has indicated that this may come sooner than later. Well, the announcements have been coming hot and heavy over the past number of years, and I wonder if the Premier has any information just how soon that sooner-than-later could be. It is a dramatic need.

As the Premier is aware, we travel the highway, Highway No. 1, to the city of Winnipeg on a regular basis with a number of people getting absolute necessary cancer care and cancer services, particularly radiation.

Can he give me a better understanding as to just when that sooner-than-later may come? Can we look

for the Cancer Care Unit to be developed relatively soon, as opposed to having another announcement prior to the next election?

Mr. Doer: Well, we won't have a cardboard box announcement, but I'll have to take the question as notice and get a specific time.

When people tell me it's going to be sooner, my view is, I'm from Missouri, show me, because sometimes things are sooner than later, but sometimes they're not. I'll take it as notice and write back to the member. Specifically, I can assure the member I don't have anything secret in my speech tomorrow on this, at least not that I know about. I'm going to write it after I give the volunteer speech tonight.

Mr. Borotsik: Thank you, Premier. It's not necessary you write it to me. We can talk about it in the hallway, that's fine. I do know that a press release has gone out from the RHA as early as today, indicating that there is some sort of a—the time line, as I understand it, was not a part of that press release. So perhaps you could just come up with the time line at some later date.

The second issue, and I know the Premier is very cognizant of this particular problem. It has to do with infrastructure. It has to do with the 18th Street Bridge over the railway in the city of Brandon. We are going to get, eventually, two new bridges over the Assiniboine River. One is in the process of being constructed. The other one will be sooner than later. However, that's only part of the problem as the Premier recognizes. Removing one bottleneck and just transferring it to another bottleneck does not resolve the issue nor the problem.

* (17:00)

I wonder if the Premier, again, has any indication from his government whether this is, No. 1, a priority infrastructure project, as there have been priority infrastructure projects in the city of Winnipeg, and legitimate ones. I say that and I know that the Premier's gone to bat for a number of those infrastructure projects, as he should. I wonder if he's prepared to seriously look at this particular infrastructure deficiency and go to bat for this one, to have it put up the priority list, if, in fact, there is such a list available.

I would ask just one favour, that tomorrow, when he's in Brandon at approximately 5 o'clock, go onto 18th Street and try to head north over the overpass, the 18th Street overpass and just, perhaps,

get a better indication as to the kind of traffic bottleneck there is in that area.

Mr. Doer: I expect I'll be in Souris at 5 o'clock tomorrow. I'll be in Melita before then. So I apologize for—I don't want the member to have Brandon perimeteritis; I have to get into other parts of southwestern Manitoba, but I thank him for that invitation.

The 18th Street Bridge is across the Assiniboine River. We're delayed. They had to pressurize, as he knows, the bank in terms of stabilizing the construction there. We're also working on the Eastern Access road, Eastern Access highway to the Trans-Canada Highway, partly relying on the railway, and we'll continue to work on priorities like Keystone Centre in Brandon for infrastructure. So we will continue to work on infrastructure.

Mr. Borotsik: I appreciate that, Mr. Premier, but, again, the 18th Street overpass is three lanes at the present time, which will go into four lanes. The infrastructure requires an additional lane to be added. The bottleneck is to the point now where it's almost intolerable with the amount of traffic going to the north over to the new shopping district, which is referred to as the Corral Centre.

If you can't do it at 5 o'clock, perhaps when you're coming in from the north, it's a little easier to make that traffic movement. However, going to the north, it's much more difficult. So, maybe, if you have five minutes, Mr. Premier, you could just try to get north going into No. 1 highway. At any time of the day, it's certainly a bottleneck, and, as I say, it is without question the priority.

So I appreciate your other commitments to the city of Brandon. This is one that is absolutely vital, as is the Cancer Care. I'm doing these in priorities, actually, because I believe that health care is certainly equally, if not more important than the 18th Street overpass, but they're certainly both important.

The other one is, and this is something that we have in the city of Brandon over the last numbers of years, even another administration's looked at trying to improve upon, and, I think, the flooding that we're experiencing right now in the Red River Valley points to the need for flood protection in other areas. We're talking about it.

You're going to Melita tomorrow, and I congratulate you on that. I think it's very important that you see those areas as well. But the city of Brandon does have flood protection, currently, with

the dike system that we have around the city. However, it is not to the one-in-700-year flood levels that has been identified for the needs in the city of Winnipeg. I wonder if the Premier would look favourably upon expanding flood protection to other areas of the province and look at expanding the workability of that dike in the city of Brandon.

We're fortunate this year. Again, the Shellmouth Dam and the Asessippi basin have worked great this year. We don't have the same flooding requirement, flooding problems that you have in the Red River Valley. However, it's going to happen, as we know that, and we should probably be more proactive than reactive. I know the Premier takes pride in the ring dikes in the areas south of Winnipeg. Perhaps it's time now to look at the opportunity of rebuilding and refurbishing and building higher the dike around the city of Brandon. Has he considered that?

Mr. Doer: Well, the first step in doing that took us a little longer on the 18th Street, but after we committed to a certain time, one of the first realities we found when we surveyed the work is that, actually, Brandon, if we had just replaced the bridge at the same place, it was going to be below where the coverage should have been. In fact, the existing bridge was below one-in-100-years based on changes that happened, and that's also one of the reasons why we had another delay. I know members opposite had some fun with that, but had another delay on the pressurization of the riverbank to ensure that we—you know, we lost a construction season on both those measures.

So we have already started to build. Everything we're building in Brandon would be in consideration of a higher flood protection in Brandon, so that's the first step in acknowledging in our own infrastructure investments the longer-term issues in Brandon.

In terms of the Shellmouth Dam, we knew the moisture levels were high in western Manitoba. I believe the water stewardship people ran water out of the Shellmouth Dam in February and again in March. Again, its primary goal was to protect Brandon and I think that we—we have now passed legislation to provide protection to people in and around the Shellmouth Dam for state-of-nature flooding and improved the gates, so, actually, we've provided—the gates improve the protection for Brandon in twofold: one is springtime flooding and secondly, the gates will allow us to store more water, and in one of nine years, there is a drought situation in the Assiniboine River and the nutrient levels are below standard, so

it'll also protect us that way. So those gates are also very important as Brandon—well, the member knows this. It's a beautiful piece of engineering for the Assiniboine River, but it must be used assertively, as it was this year, when we know the moisture levels are high, the snowpack is high, the water levels are high south of us. We must use it assertively, and we're trying to.

Mr. Borotsik: The water storage in the Asessippi and Shellmouth worked well this year, and as you're well aware, there is no flooding in Brandon because of it. There's minor flooding, but we do have, and have had in other years, dramatic flooding, and it's just a matter of trying to upgrade the existing flood dikes that we have currently in the city and it would be something that goes hand in hand with not only the Asessippi, but also the raising of the bridges.

We'll get into a topic that has been fairly hot and heavy in the city of Brandon over the last numbers of years and that's casino gambling. I know the Premier (Mr. Doer) knows my position on that. I believe that there is a strong economic opportunity in the southwestern Manitoba area. It's the only market that's been identified by a report to be able to accommodate another casino in the province of Manitoba.

Madam Chairperson in the Chair

We know the issues and the difficulties that have gone through locating a site for that particular casino. However, the site has been located under a First Nations proposal, but as I understand, the terms of the revenue sharing have been changed by the provincial government. The revenue sharing is not going to be the same as, I understand, at South Beach or at The Pas casino. Why was it that those terms of revenue sharing were changed for the southwestern Manitoba casino?

Mr. Doer: I'll have to take that part as notice, and I'm not disagreeing with the member. I'll have to find the genesis of that discussion in terms of its distribution broader than just the local area.

And No. 1, No. 2: I want to thank him for his support for the downtown Brandon casino and I think that would have—that was our preferred decision. I'm glad—I want to thank him. It's never been his style to be on the fence and I want to thank him for getting into the boxing ring along with the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell). Certainly, I try to make my views known in Brandon. I respect

democracy—preferred a different result. So I want to thank him personally for that activity.

Mr. Borotsik: I know that my leader has to wrap up the line by line of Estimates, and it shouldn't take any more than the time allotted, but I have one last question. As I had indicated to the Premier, I do know a number of people in the city of Brandon, needless to say, and they do bring issues to me from time to time. From the business community side of it, the issue—and it's the burning issue and it's the one that probably elicits the most response from the business community—and that's the one of payroll tax. I know that I'm going to have an opportunity to discuss the payroll tax with the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) tomorrow and days after that, but I wonder if the Premier could just explain to me if, in fact, there is a desire at any point in time to do away with the payroll tax. We're only one of two provinces that have it. It is an irritant to the business community. It is a tax that is distasteful. It seems to be one that stops employment development as opposed to encourage employment development. I want to just, from a political perspective, also an ideological perspective, does the Premier have any desire at any point in time in the future to, in fact, get rid of the payroll tax?

* (17:10)

Mr. Doer: Well, I'm sure the members opposite had the desire when they promised to eliminate it in four years, so my view of life is—and, of course, they didn't tell us whether it would be 2020, 2025, 2030. We're chipping away. We're chipping away at corporate taxes. We're chipping away at personal taxes, and we're trying to chip away at it without running deficits, operating deficits.

My view is we should try to deal with these issues as we're able, and right now we're in the process of eliminating two corporate taxes. One, the small business tax and two, the non-banking corporate capital tax. We've reduced the corporate tax from 17 to 12. The tax we got the most credit for this year is the R&D tax. I wouldn't underestimate the long-term ability of that to make a difference.

Now, some people say you should take the \$20 million and put that into a reduction in the payroll tax, but we'll continue to make this another time. The member's got lots of time with the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), and I anticipate it'll be sold right out just like the dinner tomorrow to watch the Estimates take place.

The most burning issue in Brandon for me is not an issue that members opposite have raised. It's the Wheat Kings winning tonight and prolonging the series as they should.

Mr. Borotsik: I was going to wrap up, Madam Chair, but that last comment obviously deserves a response. If I thought the Premier had any influence in having the Brandon Wheat Kings win tonight, I would have asked that question. But I have to say, as much as he has a high opinion of himself, I would hate to see him on skates to try to assist the Brandon Wheat Kings in winning that game, but we will all hope and all wish we can extend the series to a seventh game and the Wheat Kings, in fact, can represent Brandon and this province in the Memorial Cup.

I will just say one other thing. I thank the Premier for his involvement in bringing the Memorial Cup to the city of Brandon and the province of Manitoba for next year. We have a great team. It may not be reflected in the Calgary Hitmen right now in their series. We have a great team. Only two of those players will not be returning next year. We have a core that will make us very very proud when they represent this province in the Memorial Cup in 2010. I wish the Premier had the opportunity of passing that legislation that would make it a necessity, if you will, to win the Memorial Cup. He can try that. I don't know how it's going to fly, but we thank him for his support for the Brandon Wheat Kings.

Madam Chairperson: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$15,000 for Executive Council, Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010.

Resolution agreed to.

The last item to be considered for the Estimates of the department is item 1.(a) Minister's Salary contained in Resolution 2.1.

At this point we request the minister's staff leave the Chamber for the consideration—the floor is open for questions.

No questions?

Resolution 2.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,901,000 for Executive Council, General Administration, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010.

Resolution agreed to.

This concludes the Estimates for this department.

The next set of Estimates that will be considered by this section of the committee are the Estimates of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs.

Shall we recess briefly to allow the minister and critic the opportunity to—*[interjection]*

There's been a request to recess until 5:30. Is there agreement? *[Agreed]* Committee is in recess.

The committee recessed at 5:16 p.m.

—————
The committee resumed at 5:30 p.m.

Madam Chairperson: The hour being 5:30 p.m., committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Mr. Speaker: As previously agreed, the hour now being 5:30, this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow (Thursday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, April 22, 2009

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