



First Session - Thirty-Seventh Legislature

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**

**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report  
(Hansard)**

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The Honourable George Hickes  
Speaker*



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

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
AGLUGUB, Cris	The Maples	N.D.P.
ALLAN, Nancy	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
ASPER, Linda	Riel	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky, Hon.	Inkster	N.D.P.
CALDWELL, Drew, Hon.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary, Hon.	Concordia	N.D.P.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHEU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
FILMON, Gary	Tuxedo	P.C.
FRIESEN, Jean, Hon.	Wolseley	N.D.P.
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GILLESPIE, Harold	Minnedosa	P.C.
HELWER, Edward	Gimli	P.C.
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
JENNISEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LATHLIN, Oscar, Hon.	The Pas	N.D.P.
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	P.C.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
LOEWEN, John	Fort Whyte	P.C.
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MIHYCHUK, MaryAnn, Hon.	Minto	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
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PENNER, Jim	Steinbach	P.C.
PITURA, Frank	Morris	P.C.
PRAZNIK, Darren	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
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ROCAN, Denis	Carman	P.C.
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SALE, Tim, Hon.	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Wellington	N.D.P.
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SMITH, Joy	Fort Garry	P.C.
SMITH, Scott	Brandon West	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Eric	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, June 21, 2000

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

### PRAYERS

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

##### Committee of Supply

**Mr. Conrad Santos (Chairperson):** Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has considered certain resolutions, directs me to report progress and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar), that the report of the Committee be received.

*Motion agreed to.*

#### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

##### National Aboriginal Day

**Hon. Eric Robinson (Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I have a statement for the House.

Today is National Aboriginal Day and I would like to make a statement to the House with the intent of explaining something of the significance of this day for Aboriginal Manitobans and indeed for all Manitobans.

The actual proclamation of National Aboriginal Day was issued by the Government of Canada through the Governor General of Canada, Romeo LeBlanc, on June 13, 1996. That proclamation noted that the Constitution of Canada recognizes the existing rights of the Aboriginal people of Canada, and it further described the Aboriginal people of Canada to include all Indian, Inuit and Métis people.

To quote the proclamation: "Aboriginal peoples of Canada have made and continue to

make valuable contributions to Canadian society and it is considered appropriate that there be, in each year, a day to mark and celebrate these contributions and to recognize the different cultures of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada."

The proclamation also observed that many Aboriginal peoples celebrate the summer solstice in their cultures, and they regard this day of symbolic importance. June 21 marks the changing of the seasons. It is traditionally considered to be a time of year when the seeds have been sown and will begin to grow on the land and bear fruit once again.

While it is a day of celebration, there is a sombre and respectful aspect of this day as well. It is also a time when we think of the many Aboriginal veterans and the sacrifices that they made for the freedom we all enjoy. We think of the critical role that Aboriginal people have made in the fur trade in opening up western Canada and our role as founders of this province.

As the day when the sun shines the longest, it is often observed with ceremonies involving prayer, dancing and singing. These are the Aboriginal person's way of giving thanks to the Creator for the life-giving warmth and goodness of the sun.

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, the RCAP, as it is known, emphasized the need for a national First People's day that would be celebrated across Canada. It was one of the many recommendations the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples made that called for ways to encourage all Canadians to begin building awareness of Aboriginal people and aboriginal cultures through public education and the sharing of information.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that Aboriginal people are thankful for this day of celebration and recognition of their cultures. I can also tell you that this special day was requested, recommended and anticipated by Aboriginal people long before it was proclaimed. My own personal

experience and involvement in making this official day a reality dates back to at least 1982 when I was associated with the former National Indian Brotherhood. That year, we wrote a resolution that called for June 21 to be designated as a national day of solidarity for Aboriginal people. The constitutional battles back then and again in 1990, when Meech Lake was defeated in this Legislature that June, are also on the minds of many on this very day.

This will explain why you may also hear June 21 referred to among Aboriginal people as a national day of solidarity for all Aboriginal people. It is an expression of the fact that Aboriginal people have observed this day as a culturally significant day since the beginning of time.

We are also pleased to share with the people of all cultures our celebration of the summer solstice day and everything that it means to Aboriginal people. We welcome all people, whatever your heritage may be, to participate and to learn about aboriginal culture. Observe the special day with us and help us in our efforts to build greater public and cross-cultural understandings of aboriginal issues, aboriginal rights and the changes that are affecting aboriginal communities.

June 21 is not only the longest day of the year and the marking of a summer solstice, it is also a day to celebrate Aboriginal people's survival in spite of often insurmountable challenges. I would urge all Manitobans to join in some of the celebrations marking this day, and I would like to ask all honourable colleagues to partake in some of the activities taking place in Winnipeg today and tonight as well as other events occurring across the province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Frank Pitura (Morris):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister for his statement. It is a pleasure to put a few words on the record about National Aboriginal Day.

This day is an opportunity for Canadians to recognize the diverse cultures and outstanding contributions of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people.

National Aboriginal Day coincides with the summer solstice. The summer solstice holds special significance for many aboriginal groups who already celebrate their cultures and heritage on that day. As the Minister said, it is traditionally considered to be a time of the year when the seeds have been sown and will begin to grow on the land and bear fruit once again.

Setting aside a day for Aboriginal peoples is an important step in the recognition of First Nations people's important place within Canadian society. Indians, Inuit and Métis have made unparalleled contributions to the development of this country.

\* (13:35)

June 21 has been declared National Aboriginal Day so that all Canadians may share and experience the cultures of Indians, Inuit and Métis people. This day of celebration is an opportunity for all Canadians, especially young people, to learn more about aboriginal cultural heritages of Canada. By sharing our knowledge and experience, there will be greater understanding and harmony among all Canadians. Canadians from all walks of life have much to gain from a greater understanding of the heritages of Indians, Inuit and Métis. By celebrating together, we can promote an appreciation and acceptance of each other's points of view.

I know that National Aboriginal Day is being marked with a variety of events across Canada and here in Manitoba. For example, a full slate of activities is planned in Brandon, which includes a sunrise ceremony, a powwow and a healing circle. So I would like to encourage all Manitobans to take part in National Aboriginal Day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### Bill 32—The Victims' Rights Amendment Act

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), that leave be given to introduce a Bill 32, The Victims' Rights Amendment Act; Lo

modifiant la Loi sur les droits des victimes, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, having been advised of the contents of this bill, recommends it to the House. I would like to table the Lieutenant-Governor's message.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Mr. Speaker, this bill is Canada's first comprehensive and enforceable victims bill of rights. It has been developed in consultation with victims, some of whom are in the gallery today, and other stakeholders in the justice system. It provides that a victim of crime is entitled to information and to be consulted about police, court and corrections proceedings.

It protects victims from workplace sanctions when attending certain court proceedings. It provides a complaint process to enforce these rights and extends victim compensation for counselling to family survivors of homicide.

*Motion agreed to.*

**Introduction of Guests**

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the gallery where we have with us from St. Alphonsus School 23 Grade 5 students under the direction of Ms. Jean Gilbert. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway).

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

**ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

**First Nations Casinos  
Proposal Alterations**

**Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (Interim Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the First Minister. For weeks on end, in this House, we and Manitobans heard the rhetoric from the Government around the

independent selection committee that was going to be choosing five aboriginal casinos for the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, we heard time and time again that it was an independent selection committee. There were certain parameters, certain rules that had to be followed in the selection of the proponents, and the committee finally put forward their recommendations on who the successful proponents were and that was accepted by the Government, but since that time we have seen significant changes to those five proposals.

We have seen managers that have been changed. We have seen participants that were changed. We have seen partners that have changed. We have seen locations changed. I guess my question for the First Minister would be: What else is going to be changed that we have not heard about yet?

\* (13:40)

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Again, Mr. Speaker, when one reads the recommendations from the site selection committee, in a number of places throughout that report it recommends that certain conditions be met, whether it is compliance conditions, whether it is public support issues, whether it is approvals from the Gaming Commission, and these are recommendations on site selections. They are recommendations to the Government.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** What we have seen time and time again, Mr. Speaker, in this Legislature and what Manitobans certainly are hearing is just a major fiasco around this issue perpetrated by a government that seems to have—well, I guess I am just extremely concerned that we seem to have a government that really does not know what it is doing. It is changing its mind on a day-to-day basis, and policy is changing on the fly.

The First Minister did not really answer the question. We have seen significant changes in the proposals that were recommended by the independent selection committee that this government bragged about as being completely and totally independent of anything that they—completely out of their control.

**An Honourable Member:** Ramble.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** I heard the word "ramble," but I think we have heard a lot of rambling from ministers that have been rambled in very different directions on a day-to-day basis.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

#### Point of Order

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader):** On a point of order. I think what is on everyone's mind is the question. Does the Member have a question? Now I understand that there is a convention in this House that leaders, recognized leaders of the parties, have the ability to go on supplementary questions with preambles and sometimes more than one sentence, but could you please provide some guidance and some direction to the Member who seems to be going on and on and on without getting to a question. Could you please ask her, Mr. Speaker, does she have a question?

**Mr. Speaker:** The Honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on the same point of order.

**Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader):** On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker. The House Leader has not got a point of order, but he has stated one fact clearly that the leaders do have the ability to put forward a little more clarity towards their questions than we as MLAs do, so I do not believe that the Leader has exceeded her time yet.

**Mr. Speaker:** On the point of order raised by the Government House Leader, the Honourable Member does not have a point of order. Manitoba practice has been to allow leaders latitude, and I will follow that same direction unless I am directed otherwise by both House leaders.

\* \* \*

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thanks for that clarification. My question, again to the First Minister, is we have seen changes in managers, we have seen changes in participants, we have seen changes in partners, we have seen changes in locations to

the casino proposals that were accepted from the independent selection committee. The Premier did not answer the questions. He talked about site selection, but clearly the recommendations that came from the selection committee were all-encompassing. What other changes are they hiding from the people of Manitoba?

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, I think, and I am just going by memory now, but I believe that the former minister responsible for gambling and gaming—sorry for that slip—was the Member opposite who of course appointed the former board, many of the members that we have dealt with in the past. You know, when one talks about changes, at least the report and the conditions of the report are out there in the public arena, out there for the public to see, unlike members opposite, when we talk about hiding, announced to the public that they were not going to build a downtown casino because it was going to cost more than the \$55 million for the expansion of the suburban casinos, and then we found out to our horror in government that it was well over \$110 million. Those are changes that members opposite should be embarrassed about.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Mr. Speaker, I believe that the First Minister has a responsibility to answer questions for the people of Manitoba when in fact an independent selection committee made recommendations on five proposals. We know that this government, since those proposals were submitted to this government, has made and has seen changes. They have seen significant changes. It has become a fiasco in the province of Manitoba.

\* (13:45)

We have ministers on both sides of the issue. I would ask the Premier today which minister he supports. What is his position? Does he support the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs (Mr. Robinson) who says there could be many more than five casinos, or does he support the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Lemieux) who says that this is it? What is the position of the Premier? Are these the only five casino proposals that are going to be looked at by this government, or what is their plan?

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, I support the fact that members on this side of the House made a promise before the election, they made a promise during the election, and they are implementing that promise after the election. That is what I support. We clearly stated that we believe that when the members opposite—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Doer:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, if I may continue. We committed ourselves in '92, like Minnesota, like North Dakota, like Saskatchewan and like Ontario, to having some part of the expansion of gambling have First Nations allowed to participate in that. We supported that in the '95 election, we supported that again in '99. Members opposite excluded Aboriginal people from the original terms of reference from the—*[interjection]* Perhaps I could finish—excluded people—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Doer:** Thank you. Members opposite excluded people from the original Desjardins report in terms of the terms of reference. They then included people through the Bostrom report. Then they led Aboriginal people to believe that there were going to be two casinos. In fact, I believe I read in leaked reports to the media that the former government was planning on two casinos, and then they announced in the media that because of polls they were not going to proceed.

Well, we made a promise in the election. It was out front with the public. We are trying as best as possible to implement that promise, and we are trying to implement it through an independent process of site selection recommendations with conditions to the Government, Mr. Speaker.

#### **First Nations Casinos Selection Committee—Criteria**

**Mr. Harold Gilleshammer (Minnedosa):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of gaming defends the decisions of the selection committee by saying it

was an independent depoliticized body. We on this side of the House do not question the competency of Mr. Nadeau or Mr. Freedman. They and their 16-person assessment team based the final recommendations on very specific criteria.

To the Minister of gaming: Would the Minister agree that his confidence in the selection committee's recommendations is based on their strict adherence to the criteria outlined on pages 8 and 9 of the RFP?

\* (13:50)

**Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister charged with the administration of The Gaming Control Act):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to hear that they support Mr. Nadeau's and Mr. Freedman's report, because obviously we said it has been depoliticized, non-politicized, and that it had been an independent process. We are very pleased to hear now—after a number of months that we have heard some hedging on that—that they support that.

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** Mr. Speaker, just so the Minister understands, we support them as individuals.

Would the Minister agree that the consistency of the criteria on which the selection committee based its recommendations to government is essential to maintain the validity of these selections?

**Mr. Lemieux:** Mr. Speaker, I just want to state that all the First Nations proposals that have been recommended certainly have a lot of conditions attached to them. It could be land, it could be finances, it could be other conditions that the current casino implementation committee will be looking at and ensuring that all those conditions are met prior to any proceeding with any kind of casino in Manitoba.

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** Mr. Speaker, would the Minister agree with Mr. Nadeau's and Mr. Freedman's statement that the RFP, its criteria, and the information provided by the various proponents was their, and I quote, "bible" on which they made their decisions?

**Mr. Lemieux:** Well, those are Mr. Nadeau's and Mr. Freedman's words, and certainly, as the Member opposite stated, they have full confidence in Mr. Nadeau and Mr. Freedman as individuals and certainly in their selection process. We would agree that they are very, very competent individuals and took a great deal of time in looking at these proposals very carefully and have come up with conditions and criteria that these proposals have to meet prior to proceeding with any casino at all.

### **First Nations Casinos Partnership Agreements**

**Mr. Frank Pitura (Morris):** Mr. Speaker, the selection committee was presented with a set of information on which they made their final recommendations. Since the release of the final report three weeks ago, this government has significantly altered the information presented to Nadeau and Freedman. This has completely undermined the rationale on which their decisions were based.

Will the Minister of gaming confirm that unsuccessful proponents are now allowed to partner with one of the successful proponents?

**Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister charged with the administration of The Gaming Control Act):** These five recommendations were made to us not that long ago, and certainly these specific sites were being recommended to us as a government. Within the report of Mr. Nadeau and Mr. Freedman it states that it is possible that individuals and businesses that originally applied to the MGCC for business and personal background investigations in this process may differ from those who eventually comprise the proponent-participant relationship.

Now I am trying to read into that, Mr. Speaker, and maybe members opposite have a different reading of it, but certainly what that states is that some partnership or members within a consortium may change at the final end of the process. I mean, we are just entering another phase in this long process. So here we have recommendations made to us. Now the next phase is that the ball is in the First Nations communities' court to try to address a number of conditions for success that they have to meet,

and the implementation committee will certainly look at those conditions and ensure that they are met before proceeding.

**Mr. Pitura:** I thank the Minister for putting that on the record.

### **Operations Managers**

**Mr. Frank Pitura (Morris):** Will the Minister of gaming confirm that, since the final recommendations were released at least three successful proponents have changed their operations managers?

**Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister charged with the administration of The Gaming Control Act):** No, I cannot confirm that. The First Nations communities, if they want to use a management company to proceed into the next phase, that is their prerogative, and that is their option to go ahead and do so. If they feel that they can go ahead and meet all the conditions for success without a management company, that is their prerogative, and that is their option. Certainly we on this side are not going to ask First Nations people or state to them that they need a management company or they do not need one.

**Mr. Pitura:** I then would like to ask the Minister responsible for gaming as to why yesterday, when he addressed this House, he had indicated that some of the successful proponents had to change their operations managers.

**Mr. Lemieux:** That question from the Member opposite, I thank you for that question. It was stated that, with regard to one management company, even the Government of Saskatchewan informed SIGA that they should not be continuing with any kind of association with gaming and the First Nations community in Manitoba.

I did recommend to Mr. Luke, because of what is happening and the revelations coming out of Saskatchewan, that we recommend to those First Nations communities that they not look at SIGA, that if they are going to be looking at a management company at all, they should not look at one that is currently embroiled in some controversy in Saskatchewan.



Yes, Mr. Speaker, I did tell them: Yes, absolutely, Mr. Luke, please contact them, and if they are going to contemplate looking at a management company to please consider others.

### **Gaming Facilities Market Assessments**

**Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield):** British Columbia and Ontario have decided that it is time to impose a moratorium on gambling. They have reached the saturation point and have put a halt to the expansion of gambling in their provinces.

\* (13:55)

Can the Minister indicate whether he has undertaken any market analysis to determine how many Manitobans currently have access to gambling and what that number will be with at least five additional casinos in this province?

**Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister charged with the administration of The Gaming Control Act):** My understanding is, and I have been advised, that in Ontario, I believe it is called the Thousand Island Casino, they are certainly looking at expanding there.

But I just want to state I mentioned yesterday about VLTs in every location in Manitoba, and those hoteliers were provided with that opportunity, and as good business people, they took advantage of that. This is something coming from a member of a previous government that put VLTs in every location in every hotel in Manitoba, and now they are talking about what are you doing with regard to gaming in the province. I do not believe they have any credibility with regard to this issue, but I thank the Member opposite for the question nevertheless.

**Mr. Schuler:** Will the Minister commit to undertaking a similar market analysis as was done in Ontario to determine precisely how many Manitobans have access to gambling and how much that number will increase with the addition of at least five new casinos?

**Mr. Lemieux:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the Member for Springfield for the question. These five recommendations that were made to us as

government, first, No. 1, we are not sure whether or not any will be successful. We are certainly hoping that some of them will be, we are hoping that all of them will be, but we do not know necessarily whether they will be. Then we will be able to ascertain the impacts with regard to gaming in Manitoba. I know that members opposite, hopefully they will join with us and wish First Nations people success in their endeavours. With regard to some of the questions that are coming from members opposite, sometimes I wonder whether or not they truly want First Nations people to be successful with gaming. Now that is not—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, order.

**Mr. Lemieux:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am trying to answer the question, but one week we get all of a sudden we are doubling gambling somehow, and those numbers are totally off and certainly not even close because if all five were successful—in the proposals it stated that they are up to only 1200 VLTs or slot machines within their establishments and throughout Manitoba there are 7000. That is not even close to doubling.

**Mr. Schuler:** Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Minister: Given his colleague the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs' comments about the further expansion of aboriginal casinos in another mandate, at what point will Manitoba reach the gambling saturation point just as B.C. and Ontario have? When is enough enough for this NDP government? When is it enough gambling in Manitoba?

**Mr. Lemieux:** What I will take from the Member for Springfield, through his question, is, and I hope I am not reading too much into this, that maybe there is a concern there with regard to gaming. We on this side of the House also have a concern with regard to gaming. There is no question about that, and we try to tell the public about that.

\* (14:00)

I thank the Member for Springfield for that question, because I just want to put on the

record, yes, indeed, we are concerned about gaming, but on the other hand, we want First Nations people to have an opportunity. They should have been brought into this process many, many years ago, and it took an NDP government through a promise in an election, and here we are. We are going to carry out this promise, but there are going to be conditions associated with this, and First Nations people have to meet those before we proceed.

### **First Nations Casinos Audits**

**Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet):** Mr. Speaker, we would like to talk a little bit about those conditions that the Minister continues to hold out as the answer. We want to talk a little bit about their detail. The Minister, in his press release, indicated that it was important that this process ensure accountability and transparency. The New Democrats in an article in the *Thompson Citizen* said that they were modelling much of what they were doing on Saskatchewan.

I want to ask the First Minister, who is responsible for these five new private casinos in Manitoba, if he is prepared to follow the advice of the Auditor, the Provincial Auditor in Saskatchewan who is calling for value-for-money audits on how these dollars are dispensed and dealt with. Is the Premier prepared to accept the advice of the Auditor, the Provincial Auditor of Saskatchewan and have value-for-money audits as a condition of these contracts?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** We have followed the advice of the Provincial Auditor on the lack of value for money on the frozen food fiasco initiated by that member opposite. I thank him for his conversion on the road to Damascus on fiscal responsibility and effectiveness for value of money.

We have followed the Provincial Auditor's recommendations on the cost overruns in the suburban casinos under the stewardship, I believe, of the Member opposite and the acting leader of the Opposition, and that is why we are implementing major changes, a fact that \$170 million in capital expenditure is not being budgeted for in the Lotteries Corporation. We

are going to change that based on the Auditor's recommendation.

We are following the Auditor's advice on having hospital capital in Schedule B with no plan to pay for the capital in terms of payments in the Budget. We are following the advice of not having—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, the Honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on a point of order.

### **Point of Order**

**Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Taking into account the First Minister's latitude, which we allow in questions and answers within the House, I would bring your attention to *Beauchesne's* 417: "Answers to questions should be as brief as possible." We do not have to deal with that because of the Leader's latitude. "Deal with the matter raised," I believe he did mention it once, but the last one, "should not provoke debate," that is exactly where the First Minister is going at this time.

If the Honourable First Minister wants to have a debate, Mr. Speaker, he will be able to deal with this when we bring forward a resolution in this House to deal with this gaming issue.

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

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order. I listened very carefully to the carefully worded text of the Member's question which included four sentences which quoted from a variety of documents and which the essence of the question was about the Provincial Auditor and following the Provincial Auditor with respect to financial matters. I believe if you look at the term "relevance," the Premier was clearly answering the issues with respect to financial matters as followed by the Auditor, and I think the response was in order. Unfortunately, members opposite did not learn when they were in government, and they still have not learned.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet, on the same point of order, with new information?

**Mr. Praznik:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. I do not intend to debate the issue in this particular question, but I would be delighted to. I would like to just make some advice. Since the Premier feels so very strongly about value-for-money audits, he could end this point of order by just simply committing to do it here instead of running away.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. On the point of order raised by the Honourable Official Opposition House Leader, the Honourable House Leader does not have a point of order. I ruled earlier that the leaders have great latitude under Manitoba practices, and I will follow that same direction unless I am given alternate directions from both House leaders. Until that is done, I will follow the directions of past Manitoba practices.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Doer:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To continue on, on the question, the Member opposite announced a number of capital projects that were contained in two budget years that did not have a budget to pay them back. We have put that in the Budget, following the Auditor's advice, and hospitals that are promised to be built will now have a budget to pay for them, again advice received from the Provincial Auditor.

**Mr. Praznik:** Mr. Speaker, if the First Minister, if the Premier really believes what he says, then I just challenge him. I ask him today why will he not simply commit to this Legislature for value-for-money audits for these casinos as he would like to do for everything else. Why does he run away from that issue and hide behind others? If he believes in it, I just ask him, just say yes, it is a condition of the new five casinos. I ask him not to be a hypocrite.

#### Point of Order

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader):** I believe a few questions were asked by the Member in his last round of supplementary. He, Mr. Speaker, I submit, used unparliamentary language in referring to an

individual, an honourable member of this House. I ask that you direct him to withdraw and apologize for the use of that word "hypocrite."

**Mr. Laurendeau:** Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, *Beauchesne's* 490: "Since 1958, it has been ruled parliamentary to use the following expressions." If the Member for Lac du Bonnet had used it, and that was "hypocrites," but he had not said he was a hypocrite, he said if he was one—but it has been ruled parliamentary. So I think we have to choose our words very carefully in this House when we are bringing important—I think it is important that we take into context the terms that the words are being used. If the shoe fits wear it.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Member for Lac du Bonnet, with new information on the same point of order.

**Mr. Praznik:** Yes, I am the person who spoke the words. Given the Premier has felt so strongly about value-for-money audits on one hand, I just asked him to commit to do it on the other or he would appear hypocritical or be a hypocrite. He has the choice whether he is going to be a hypocrite or not in his answer.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Honourable Government House Leader on the same point of order, with new information?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker, I lament what I just heard. We just rose on a point of order about the use of an unparliamentary word. The unparliamentary words, of course, are always considered in their context. The Opposition House Leader referred to *Beauchesne's* Citation 490. I refer to *Beauchesne's* Citation 489 where the word is noted there. The word "hypocrites," July 8, 1961; "hypocritical," February 21, 1961, and a number of other dates.

What is relevant, of course, is the context that the word is used in. These words are ruled unparliamentary from time to time because it elicits what is often worst about this Chamber. I please ask that you ask the Member to withdraw and apologize.

**Mr. Speaker:** On the point of order raised by the Honourable Government House Leader, I

thank all members for their advice. I will take it under advisement because I want to be sure what I heard, and I will bring back a ruling to the House.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, words ring hollow from the particular member opposite who stood up here day after day after day in this Chamber and defended the frozen food decision of the Government and on March 23, 2000, after the election, stated it was quite a mess, it was a dog's breakfast. It is too bad he did not say that when he had an opportunity before this bad decision was made.

\* (14:10)

I committed ourselves, I believe it was two weeks ago and again last week or maybe early this week, to the Provincial Auditor being involved in the audits, unlike what was going on in Saskatchewan. That commitment has been made in this House. That commitment has been made by the Minister. The Provincial Auditor will use the same authorities he had to investigate the mess at the Lotteries Corporation. He will have those same authorities for the Gaming Commission, decisions that are being made here in Manitoba.

**Mr. Praznik:** Mr. Speaker, given that in the press release his minister issued it clearly indicates that the Manitoba Auditor may just look at these, I ask the Premier again—and I know he may not like me, and I know he may prefer someone else to ask the question—but I just ask him on behalf of the people of this province: Will he commit to put into practice what he appears, or would like the public to appear he believes, and that is allow the Provincial Auditor value-for-money audits on how this money is going to be spent? A simple question.

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to say to the Member opposite that we like you as much as your party does.

#### Elections Advertising Regulations

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier, seeking

clarification on his proposals to change the election finances. As I understand it, in the next provincial election some years from now, if a third party were to advertise to improve—*[interjection]* You used the term in the legislation, and you are trying to restrict us. For clarity purposes, if an organization other than a political party were to advertise: To improve health care, vote Liberal, they would be—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The Honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on a point of order.

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Just for clarification, I wonder if you might rule on whether it is permissible to ask a question on a matter which is a bill before this House.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. On the point of order raised by the Honourable Official Opposition House Leader, Manitoba practice has been that if we have been notified that the matter would be on the Order Paper today, then the questions would not be allowed, but as of right now we have not been given instructions that it will be on the orders today, so I will allow the question to proceed.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Gerrard:** In the upcoming provincial election, some say three and a half years from now, it would appear that the Premier's legislation would allow an advertisement by an organization, other than a political party, which said: To improve health care, vote Liberal, but restrict the spending on that ad to \$5,000. But if the advertisement just said: Health care has been terrible under the NDP; vote to improve health care without naming a political party, then that would be acceptable, because in fact it was not directed necessarily at one political party or another.

#### Point of Order

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, just when the Member

got over the first hurdle, I am just concerned that the question is not in order. *Beauchesne's* Citation 409(3) says: "The question ought to seek information and, therefore, cannot be based upon a hypothesis, cannot seek an opinion," and 410(12) says: "Questions should not be hypothetical."

It sounds as though the question is framing a hypothetical and putting a question then to the Premier, seeking an opinion.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Honourable Member for River Heights, on the same point of order.

**Mr. Gerrard:** I think an upcoming election, and the framework of what that is, is not a hypothetical situation. We are going to have an election some three and a half years from now.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on the same point of order.

**Mr. Laurendeau:** Mr. Speaker, I do not believe the Honourable Member's question was hypothetical, but if you did rule it out of order, we would be willing to give leave to allow the Government to answer that question.

**Mr. Speaker:** On the point of order raised by the Honourable Government House Leader, I was in discussions, and I did not hear the question. I would have to take it under advisement because I did not hear the full context of the question. I will bring back a ruling to the House.

\* \* \*

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Dealing with the policy issues in the question, which I believe is in order, Mr. Speaker, the proposed act is intended to ensure in a policy way that there is a level playing field in elections. In that level playing field, a number of elements are part of that: the banning of union and corporate donations, the limitation of individual donations, the former limitations being reinstated for advertising during an election campaign, advertising outside of an election campaign. We have rules in New Brunswick of 32 000. We have a proposed rule here on that issue to deal, again, with a level playing field.

\* (14:20)

On the issue of third-party proposals in a campaign, the question that has really been raised by the Member opposite, the adjudicator, that would not be the Premier but the Chief Electoral Officer.

**Mr. Gerrard:** My supplementary to the Premier: Would the Premier admit that, in fact, by opening the door to organizations who want to advertise without reference or naming specific political parties, he is opening the door to a lot of issue-specific advertising by groups like political action committees, as has occurred in the United States?

**Mr. Doer:** Right now, Mr. Speaker, that ability is there fully without any "restrictions." The provincial Chief Electoral Officer recommended to the former government and to former members that we deal with the issue of reasonable limits to third parties. The provisions in the Act, which the Chief Electoral Officer recommended to this Legislature that we deal with prior to the last election campaign, were developed on the basis of the symmetry between the restrictions on union and corporate donations, the banning of union and corporate donations, the individual restrictions, and on the issue of what is a reasonable limit in a democratic society for restricting parties.

The definition, the ability to speak out on an issue is clear. The issue to take a step beyond that and be partisan, for example, to say that one government is bad on property taxes versus another government and be partisan on that issue is restricted by the law. It has a reasonable limit of \$5,000. Beyond that, the partisan nature of any third-party campaign, unlike the United States where third parties funnel money into the actual presidential candidate—the advertising that is now going on with Gore and Bush is being funded to a great degree through so-called soft money. There is no such thing as under-the-table money to political parties in this legislation. It is banned.

**Mr. Gerrard:** My second supplementary to the Premier: Will the Premier admit that, in fact, in the immediate pre-election period, organizations other than political parties can spend as much as

they want, advertise as much as they want and be as partisan as they want?

**Mr. Doer:** Right now, parties, organizations, groups, people can be partisan. If there is an ability to go further in limiting reasonable limits, we certainly explored it. We are trying to make sure that the balance in this legislation is able to withstand Charter of Rights cases that have developed in provinces like British Columbia and, I believe, Alberta. The Supreme Court has supported decisions on reasonable limits for political parties and third-party organizations in the Province of Québec, as in the Liebman case [*phonetic*] in the Supreme Court.

Certainly the goal of this legislation is to ensure that there is a level playing field during elections, that there are reasonable limits on speech between elections, and that there is absolute transparency for the registration of third parties, and third parties, for example, cannot—like the example cited by the Member opposite—raise money, soft money, and fund partisan ads for a political candidate like they do for Al Gore and George Bush and what some of the controversy has been with Senator McCain opposing that soft-money funding. That would be illegal in Manitoba under this proposed act.

### **Flooding Red River Valley**

**Ms. Nancy Allan (St. Vital):** In light of the excessive rainfall that has recently caused flash flooding in North Dakota, I would like to ask the First Minister a question on this very serious issue. Because North Dakota's situation was a precursor to the flood of the century here in Manitoba, I am sure many members here in the House today have constituents who are concerned. Could the First Minister inform the House what impact this situation in North Dakota has on our floodproofing efforts here in Manitoba?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, there are a number of phone calls I am sure all of us are receiving about the rain over the last period of time and the reminiscence of pictures of flooding in the Red River Valley in 1997 which eventually resulted in the Red River Valley in

Manitoba in '97, particularly areas south of the floodway.

Mr. Speaker, we are advised, based on the present up-to-date forecast, that the flooding in Fargo was not a direct result of river flooding but a result of heavy storm water systems being unable to handle the 7-inch heavy rainfall, about 175 millimetres.

Obviously, the Department of Conservation is monitoring the situation. It does have an impact at the border. We are concerned about the situation. We understand the river will not rise above the banks in Manitoba based on present estimates. We also understand that it will be much higher in the city of Winnipeg and south of the city of Winnipeg in a number of locations. In the city of Winnipeg, I believe the levels will be higher in the south end of the city and moving to about half a foot downtown and less as we move to North Kildonan.

So we will continue to monitor the situation. We believe the river walk will be impacted, but as the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) has identified yesterday, some of the crops are definitely being affected negatively by the rainfall, whether it is hay, canola, flax, I believe, and it is important for all Manitoba producers that we keep a constant vigil on the water situation and whatever else we can be doing.

### **Treherne Hospital Summer Closure**

**Mr. Denis Rocan (Carman):** Mr. Speaker, perhaps if the Doer government had kept its promise to hire more nurses immediately and to convert part-time positions to full-time positions, there would be more nurses working in Manitoba today and the Treherne hospital would not have to close its doors this summer.

Can the Minister of Health explain what alternatives are in place for local residents who may need access to health care services during the hospital closure in Treherne?

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health):** As the Member indicated, Treherne hospital is closing for two weeks to allow the staff to take vacations. A similar situation happened last year

in Reston nearby with respect to the difficulty in dealing with staff. By way of our analysis, there are basically three problems that have occurred. Firstly, when the former government stopped the diploma program and cut down on the LPNs, our supply of nurses was dramatically affected, effects that we are experiencing this very day. Secondly, the closure of 1400 acute care beds in the system dramatically affected the system. Thirdly, the cancellation of the capital plan in 1995 had a dramatic effect on our system.

We have taken action in our first months in office on all three of these issues. Unfortunately, 10 years of neglect cannot be overturned in a few months.

**Mr. Rocan:** Will the Minister of Health advise the House if the closure of the Treherne hospital is his government's first step to implementing the recent proposal which, if implemented, would ultimately lead to the closure of several rural hospitals?

**Mr. Chomiak:** As I indicated, the former government closed 1400 acute care beds in the province, 1400, including the largest hospital, the Misericordia Hospital, ever. They also started a process when they were in government to examine the minimal standards of hospitals in the southern and other parts of Winnipeg because hospitals had been forced to put the H's on their sign.

The closure of Treherne hospital for two weeks is to allow staff to take a vacation, something that happened in Reston nearby. Contingency plans are in place. We are not following the course of direction of the previous government to holus-bolus close hospital bed after hospital bed. That is why we put in place action plans on various fronts which I will explain.

**Mr. Rocan:** Mr. Speaker, with a spirit of co-operation and with a proactive approach, I would ask this Minister of Health: If I were to set up a town hall meeting in the town of Treherne, would you join me, sir, in explaining to my residents what they are supposed to do when the hospital in Treherne closes?

\* (14:30)

**Mr. Chomiak:** I am happy to speak to residents. Last year, I do not know if there was a town hall meeting in Reston with respect to that, Mr. Speaker.

I have had conversations with the Member opposite. I have had conversations with people in the system to try to deal with the situation of a two-week closure for vacation. It is unfortunate that we have reached this state in this province, but fortunately we took action. We are taking action with respect to nursing recruitment. We are fast-tracking nurses who are foreign-trained who are living in this jurisdiction. We brought back a diploma program to train more nurses. We are putting \$3 million, first time ever, into nurse training and nurse upgrading. In addition, we are doing recruitment efforts. We have a comprehensive plan, for the first time in a decade, and planned approach to the health care system under the circumstances.

I think that over time we are going to see a significant improvement all across the province as we have seen in the hallway situation, as we have seen right across the province.

**Mr. Speaker:** Time for Oral Questions has expired.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Government Accountability

**Mr. Jim Penner (Steinbach):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring forward what I think is a very important issue for all members of this House. More and more, I am hearing from Manitobans the concerns they have that the current government, in its short time in office, is demonstrating a lack of openness and communication for the people of our province. Now it appears that this closed-door policy has spread to this Chamber, and even to the back benches of the current government.

Day after day I watch as members opposite, those without a Cabinet position, are forced to stand during Question Period to try to get answers from their very own colleagues. Despite the fact that they meet daily in caucus, despite the fact that they are members of the same party, it appears that the only way they can get answers

from their own closed-door ministers is to drag them into the public forum of Question Period.

As a new member, I was somewhat concerned that this was the way of government. So I took counsel with my own colleagues. I found unanimously that members on this side of the House, who were formerly ministers, always maintained an open door. When one of their colleagues had a constituency or a provincial concern, they would not turn their backs and force them to bring it to the House. They would sit down one-on-one and deal with the issue.

Mr. Speaker, I make this statement in defence of the Government backbenchers who it seems have been shut out of their own government and are filled with questions that they cannot get answers to in any other way but through Question Period. It is clear that the Government and ministers of the day have slammed the door on Manitobans. If they truly want to open the lines of communication with the people of Manitoba, I would suggest they do so first in their own caucus. Thank you.

#### **Fairlane Children's Centre**

**Mr. Jim Rondeau (Assiniboia):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to bring the entire House's attention to a wonderful celebration that I attended in Assiniboia on June 14. The Fairlane Children Centre celebrated their 25th anniversary with children, present staff, parents, former staff and many people of the public in attendance. It was a great celebration with lots of good food, interesting speakers and excellent company. It was a great celebration had by all.

This child care centre was incorporated February 4, 1975, as the St. Charles Tot Stop. The first location was in the annex of the St. Charles United Church on Isbister Street with only 24 children and limited resources. I would like to recognize Karen Kumka as the original founder and visionary for the centre.

On May 1, 1989, the centre moved to Hedges School and the name changed to Fairlane Children's Centre on December 18, 1989. Presently, the centre has 32 children aged from 2 to 6 combined with a preschool program and a very good special needs program that

meets the needs of some children who have disabilities.

I would like to congratulate the entire staff: Connie Mozdzen, Lois Pruden, Laureli Ellis, Robyn Slominsky, Chad Stevenson, Nichole Oryniak, Sheryl Taylor, Karen Todd, and Paul Janz, and all the children and the staff and their parents for the 25th anniversary. I was really, really pleased to see a well-run, well-organized centre that provides multiple services to the children of the area. Thank you.

#### **General Byng School**

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry):** Mr. Speaker, it was my pleasure to attend the unveiling of the millennium wall and skate park mural yesterday at General Byng School in Fort Garry. A new play area, an outdoor classroom area, new treed areas, a skate park and the millennium wall are all new additions to the grounds of General Byng School.

As part of the schoolyard improvement plan, parents had requested that General Byng consider creating an outdoor classroom that would greatly enhance science curriculum study and provide a space for students to sit in nature and do such activities as read and write poems and listen to stories. Mr. Danny Carroll, the elementary enrichment facilitator at the school, took on the project. After presenting the outdoor classroom idea to all Grade 6 students, five were chosen to work on the design. The students made a design drawing and created a model of their plan. I would like to congratulate Jenna Tessier, Tameka Blair, Twyla Breland, Glenys Smith and Kelsey Jensen on their award-winning design. I would also like to commend Mr. Carroll, Kim Mardero, the General Byng Advisory Council for School Leadership, the principal, Mr. Allan Geske, and the teaching staff, students and parents of General Byng School in Fort Garry. They worked so hard to make this vision a reality.

\* (14:40)

#### **Strini Ready**

**Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in recognition and



appreciation of Strini Ready who, through his leadership and achievements in education, social justice, peace and antiracism awareness, has demonstrated a unique commitment to both his local community and the larger global community.

As an educator for over 35 years, and in 5 different countries, Strini has been dedicated to the field of education. From 1985 until 1991, Strini served as superintendent for Frontier School Division. From 1992 until he retired in 1998, although he never actually really retired from work, he served as president of the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents. Since 1995, Strini has been involved as the provincial co-ordinator of Project Love, an initiative administered by the Canadian Organization for Development of Education that sees Canadian students purchase classroom materials and prepare resource kits for students in developing countries. Additionally, Strini has organized an annual fund-raising golf tournament to assist South African high school graduates in pursuing post-secondary education. Most recently, Strini has been nominated and awarded the Order of Manitoba, which recognizes those Manitobans who have demonstrated excellence and achievement leading to outstanding benefits to social, cultural or economic well-being of Manitoba and its residents.

Today, Strini continues his work in the community as a member of the Manitoba School Improvement Committee and the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg. Mr. Speaker, in a recent keynote address on public education, Strini remarked that "public schools don't choose the best, they bring the best out of students." Strini's commitment, dedication and passion for both the local and global community and his work as a public school educator stand as a testament of what the best are capable of achieving. I fervently hope that Strini may continue to inspire us for many more years to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### **National Aboriginal Day**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to say a few words to recognize that today is National Aboriginal Day. It is a day

which has been marked for the last number of years, and indeed, my colleague when I was in Ottawa Elijah Harper was quite instrumental in putting in place the National Aboriginal Day that we celebrate today. Aboriginal people play a very important part, have a very important position in Manitoba.

I rise to say that there is a need for partnerships. There is a need for working together as we look at developing together the future for our province. There is a need for co-operation. There is a need for tolerance. There is a need for all of us to recognize that at the present time unemployment rates among Aboriginal people are still far too high. There is a need for all of us to recognize that health problems among Aboriginal people are disproportionately high as well.

We need to work together to find solutions, and in seeking solutions, we need to recognize that there is traditional aboriginal knowledge which can be important sometimes in finding those effective solutions. As an example of the role that Aboriginal people have played and will continue to play in Manitoba the Government will be presenting, we are led to believe, by July 1 their full strategy on sustainable development, with all the component strategies that that entails. It is very important that that strategy presented recognizes the place of Aboriginal people, has the context of aboriginal understanding and traditional knowledge, and that as the Minister consults with his round table in developing and bringing forward this strategy, that it is a strategy which speaks to all of Manitoba and for all Manitobans.

#### **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Lemieux), that Mr. Speaker do now the leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

*Motion agreed to.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

**COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY  
(Concurrent Sections)**

**CULTURE, HERITAGE AND TOURISM**

\* (14:50)

**Mr. Chairperson (Harry Schellenberg):** Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This afternoon, this section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 254 will resume consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Culture, Heritage and Tourism.

At previous sittings of this committee, the following agreements were made. It was agreed to not pass lines 14.2.(b) Grants to Cultural Organizations and 14.2.(c) Manitoba Arts Council (1) Grant Assistance.

It was further agreed that once consideration of line 2.(k)(2) was complete, the Committee would skip ahead and consider Resolution 14.6 Capital Grants and then pass all lines and that resolution. Is that still the will of the Committee?

**Hon. Diane McGifford (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism):** Yes, Mr. Chair. I would like to request that, and perhaps that was in the information you read out, but I do remember that previously we did not pass Grants to Cultural Organizations 2.(b) and the Manitoba Arts Council 2.(c). Since all the staff concerned with these areas are present, it would be very helpful if we could pass those two lines and then we would have completed this particular section of work, after Capital. So, after Capital, if we could go back into those two lines, it would be helpful.

**Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Seine River):** Can I just get clarification? I am aware that we have not passed those two lines and have one subsequent question on the Arts Council, quick question, and the other one I have no further questions. Can you give me direction in the supplementary book where I was questioning on 2.(k) Manitoba Millennium Office and the project, and then you are wanting to move to 14.3, is that correct?

**Mr. Chairperson:** 14.6. Capital Grants

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Before we proceed to 14.3.(a)—is that correct? *[interjection]* 14.3.(a) Client Services back on page 47 in the supplementary book. Well, I am not sure how the staff wants to handle this, but I have 30 minutes in this section. I would like to get into Tourism because I have people coming, and I cannot be two places at once today. I am required to do the Multiculturalism and Immigration. I am critic for that as well in the Chamber this afternoon, so they can complete that section of the Committee of Supply.

Some of my colleagues have questions on tourism, so I may be moving along expeditiously. I just do not want anybody to infer that I am not interested. Had I had more time, I would have indeed been asking probably several questions. It is a difficult situation, so I would like to do that. My suggestion is we go back and quickly pass the outstanding items that were left unpassed first, but I am open to the will of the Chair.

**Ms. McGifford:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. If that suggestion meets with your satisfaction, it is fine with me.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Is that the will of the Committee to go back and pass 2.(b) and 2.(c)? *[Agreed]*

Line 2.(b) Grants to Cultural Organizations \$7,903,600—pass.

Line 2.(c) Manitoba Arts Council (1) Grant Assistance \$8,192,300. Shall the line pass?

**Mrs. Dacquay:** I have just been made aware, through the Minister's office with her press release, that the Council has now been changed. I think when we were on that topic, the information had not flowed to indicate who the new members of the Council were. I believe the Minister indicated changes were being made, and I had a question relative to the make-up of the Council. I understand, and I see from their qualifications, they have a very diverse background, which appears to be very relevant to the positions they hold on this board. My only question is: Has the number of members on the Council changed?

**Ms. McGifford:** No, Mr. Chair, the numbers have not changed. There is, I understand, a requirement to maintain a full complement of members, and I understand that is 15.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Thank you.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Line 2.(c) Manitoba Arts Council (1) Grant Assistance \$8,192,300—pass.

If it is the will of the Committee, we will move to 2.(k) Manitoba Millennium Office (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits—pass; (2) Other Expenditures. Shall the line pass?

**Mrs. Dacquay:** I believe that I had asked a question just prior to the Committee having to be adjourned, and I wonder if that information is available.

**Ms. McGifford:** I believe that the Member had asked for an update on the Manitoba trail or the Manitoba portion of the Trans Canada Trail, and I just wanted to indicate that 85 percent of the Manitoba portion of the Trans Canada Trail has been registered, although the physical development of the trail is far from complete. Obviously, the first step is registration of the trail. Major work is needed with respect to surface preparation, construction, upgrade of bridges and other physical support structures to ensure that the trail is both safe and can be used in all seasons. Consequently, this is the reason, of course, for the grant from the Government, in order to look after those expenditures. I am advised that the bulk of the Trans Canada Trail in Manitoba will be completed in the next three or four years, and after that the main work will, obviously, be maintaining the trail so that people can use it.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** I thank the Minister for that response, and I have just two quick additional questions. Has the intent of the original application changed considerably?

**Ms. McGifford:** No, it has not changed, or it has changed very little, other than the introduction of the non-Trans Canada Trail portion of trail development in the province of Manitoba, which, as I think I made clear in my comments to the Member yesterday, we believed, was important in order to link portions of Manitoba

that had no access to the trail, either to link those to the trail or to provide isolated communities, that is to say, communities that were truly isolated from the trail, with the opportunity of sharing in the Manitoba Millennium Trans Canada Trail funding.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Relative to any other millennium projects that are not now being recognized under this appropriation of the Manitoba Millennium Office, are there any other areas of potential grant funding that some of these groups that had made application for could apply to?

**Ms. McGifford:** Mr. Chair, what we have done is make referrals to our existing programs, and when we move on to the next section, we will be, of course, dealing with those existing programs. Community Places, for example.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Mr. Chair, one subsequent question: Has the issue of signage been resolved? I have read some articles relative to concerns expressed about not being able to adequately sign them.

**Ms. McGifford:** I think the issue of signage has been well resolved. We will have both trail markers and trail signs. We have set aside, for pavilions and trail markers, the sum of \$360,000, and for interpretative materials and trail signs, the sum of \$270,000. I think I mentioned yesterday that there is a project management so that this issue will be well addressed, Mr. Chair.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Mr. Chair, I have no further questions on this section.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Line 2.(k) Manitoba Millennium Office (2) Other Expenditures—pass.

Resolution 14.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$32,178,800 for Culture, Heritage and Tourism, Culture, Heritage and Recreation Programs, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2001.

*Resolution agreed to.*

**Mrs. Dacquay:** I thought we were now jumping to the Capital Grants?

**Mr. Chairperson:** I just want to inform the Member for Seine River that we are trying to pass a resolution for 14.2. Just to sum it up.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Oh, I am sorry.

**Mr. Chairperson:** It is just a final statement.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Okay. I apologize.

**Mr. Chairperson:** I will read the Resolution 14.2 for from A to K. It is a final statement.

Resolution 14.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$32,178,800 for Culture, Heritage and Tourism, Culture, Heritage and Recreation programs, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2001. Shall the resolution pass?

\* (15:00)

**Mrs. Dacquay:** This is the proceduralist coming out in me. Why is Tourism mentioned in the motion when we have not even dealt with Tourism? I hope that the amount for Tourism is not included in that final total.

**Mr. Chairperson:** I would like to inform the Member for Seine River we are just passing Culture, Heritage and Recreation programs, which is part of the overall department.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** I thought I heard Tourism. I am sure I did.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Shall the resolution pass? The resolution is accordingly passed.

It was agreed upon that we should skip ahead and consider Resolution 14.6 Capital Grants and then pass all lines in that resolution. Is that still the will of the Committee? *[Agreed]*

14.6. Capital Grants (a) Cultural Organizations \$1,880,900. Shall the line pass?

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Could the Minister please identify the organizations that are getting the majority of the capital funding? They probably have a very extensive list. I do not need to know 100-and-some organizations. I am just more

interested in knowing which organizations are getting the larger amount of capital.

**Ms. McGifford:** Mr. Chair, I do want to point out that the organizations may change from year to year because Grants to Cultural Organizations is the granting line that looks after repairs and maintenance of buildings. So it really depends on the state of the building.

This year, I could point out that the Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation is receiving just under three-quarters of a million dollars. That is for repairs to the cladding at the museum. The Winnipeg Art Gallery is receiving approximately \$140,000.

I am sorry. Did I say that the Centennial Centre was getting \$766,000. Oh, okay, I was accurate then. I just thought I caught myself up.

The Winnipeg Art Gallery, \$140,000, and this is basically for a chiller, which is really necessary to preserve the quality of the art in case there is a mechanical failure with the one chiller that is there. I believe the whole problem has been exacerbated by the fact that Freon is no longer used as a coolant, so this requires some modifications.

The Western Manitoba Centennial Auditorium in Brandon, which has in the past received monies under this program, this year is apparently not receiving money. Presumably it does not need money because its final year of a \$1.2-million capital project was 1999-2000.

Le Centre Culturel Franco-Manitobain is receiving \$71,000 for emergency roof repairs. The Manitoba Theatre Centre is receiving about \$829,000. This is the third year of a five-year, \$2-million commitment to upgrade the facility. This year's projects include the replacement of the seats of the warehouse—those of you who sat in them lately understand why—and the installation in the warehouse, as well, of a handicapped-accessible elevator. Then we have a small sum of money, \$75,000, that is maintained for critical repair or capital. So that would explain the grant for this year.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** If I interpret the Minister's comments correctly, certain ones are given

consideration, but do they do that vis-à-vis applying on a yearly basis for their capital grant?

**Ms. McGifford:** Capital Grants is part of the Estimates process and it is viewed and recommendations are made by the Department. Then these go forward to Treasury Board and Treasury Board makes decisions as well.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** How is it initiated by the actual organization? They actually submit a proposal or a need and then the decision is made based on the global amount which organizations will be the beneficiaries of some of the funding based on priorities?

**Ms. McGifford:** We ask our provincially funded organizations to submit multiyear plans and then they are reviewed on a yearly basis. I might also add that most of the organizations come to visit the Minister to remind the Minister that they need money.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Can I just ask for clarification? I know there is \$22.5 million difference between year over year and there was a recoverable from Capital Initiatives. Can the Minister explain that, please?

**Ms. McGifford:** The difference can be explained because last year there was \$1 million for the Betel museum in Gimli. There was half a million for the air training museum in Brandon, and the college federation, that is the Mennonite College, \$1 million. So those were the costs that the Member is referring to, and they are now completed. They were extraordinary or one-time funding.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** I thank the Minister for that. I want to move now to Heritage Buildings. I assume the awarding of the grants is done in much the same manner as it is for the cultural organizations. Is that correct?

**Mr. Chairperson:** I think we are ready to pass line 6.

6. Capital Grants (a) Cultural Organizations \$1,880,900—pass; (b) Heritage Buildings \$300,000. Shall the line pass?

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Does the Chair wish me to repeat my question?

**Ms. McGifford:** I am sorry. The Member was asking me a question about who can apply.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Is the awarding of the grants done on a comparable basis for Capital Grants as it is done for the Cultural Organizations based on need and prioritized, I guess, based on urgency?

**Ms. McGifford:** It is an application process once a year. The monies are available to owners and lessees of provincial and municipally designated heritage buildings. The monies are available to undertake work related to the preservation of the building.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** I have no further questions on that line.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Line 6.(b) Heritage Buildings \$300,000—pass; (c) Community Places Program \$2,525,000. Shall the line pass?

**Mrs. Dacquay:** I see the application forms have not changed from one year to another. My question is: Are there going to be two intakes this year, and when do you expect that the applicants will be notified if their application has been approved or not?

\* (15:10)

**Ms. McGifford:** There has only been one application deadline for several years now. The application deadline for this year was May 1. Staff are very busily working on applications. We will notify the applicants just as soon as possible. So, in due course.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Does the Minister have any idea of time lines? Are we talking the end of June, middle of July, end of July?

**Ms. McGifford:** As soon as the process has been completed. I cannot imagine it would be as late as the end of July, no.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Is the Minister able to indicate whether the quantity of applications is reason-

ably comparable to past years or whether there was an increase in applications?

**Ms. McGifford:** Staff indicate to me that the numbers of applicants are more or less constant with the numbers that we have been used to in the past years.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** The same criterion for approvals, are they being applied the same as in past years?

**Ms. McGifford:** The only possible difference is that this year we will give slightly more weight to those projects that are related to children and youth. This, of course, is in keeping with the Government's Healthy Child Initiative.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** As long as the project is going to be utilized by youth, is that the premise of the criterion? Is that what the Minister is implying?

**Ms. McGifford:** Yes. If it is for—and I give this only as an example—a play structure for children, for example, would be one example of an organization that I would consider. Well, we do have some adults on play structures, but they are usually parents.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** That was going to be my question. If that was the type of an application that would receive priority over. I guess I have one concern then relative to a change in the criterion. I know that a number of seniors groups make application for their facilities for upgrading. If it is involving primarily children and youth, what other source of funding would they have that they could access?

**Ms. McGifford:** I do not mean to imply that there was any change in any criteria. There was an extra criterion added, so there is no disallowing seniors nor will projects related to seniors be discredited in any way. In fact, I would like to assure the Member that as the Minister for Seniors I am very concerned with seniors. I think that from time to time we tend to forget the needs of seniors, so I would like to assure the Member that we will not forget them.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** I have no further questions.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Line 6.(c) Community Places Program \$2,525,000—pass; (d) Less: Recoverable from Capital Initiatives. Shall the line pass?

**Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain):** Can the Minister just advise us what that recovery was in last year's budget?

**Mrs. Dacquay:** I write so quickly that I did not write down the actual project. I have got the three amounts. There were two for 1 million and one for \$500,000. I think one was the Aviation Museum, if memory serves me correctly, but, for the benefit of my colleague, could you just identify what the actual projects were?

**Ms. McGifford:** Yes, I am pleased to identify the three. It is the Betel Heritage centre at Gimli, \$1 million; the Commonwealth Air Training Plan Museum at Brandon for \$500,000; and the Mennonite College Federation, and the cost to government was \$1 million.

**Mr. Tweed:** Then am I to understand that there are no recoverables in this year's budget?

**Ms. McGifford:** That is correct.

**Mr. Tweed:** Is that common? Was last year just a unusual circumstance, or is it something that has been carried forward?

**Ms. McGifford:** I understand that occurs when there is one-time funding in a fiscal year, as these three projects were one-time funding.

**Mr. Tweed:** So, then, the \$2.5 million amounts to what was recovered from those projects, that the money was put out in advance and then recovered after the fact.

**Ms. McGifford:** Mr. Chair, I am advised that the previous government established a Capital Initiatives pot of money which was in the Department of Finance, and then various departments delivered projects and recovered the money from the Capital Initiatives pot in Finance and that that particular way of administrating government, or managing, has been discontinued.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Line 14.6. Capital Grants (d) Less: Recoverable from Capital Initiatives—pass.

Resolution 14.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$4,705,900 for Culture, Heritage and Tourism, Capital Grants, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2001.

**Resolution agreed to.**

If it is the will of the Committee, we will turn to page 53 in our Main Estimates book, Resolution 14.3. Information Resources (a) Client Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,438,100. Shall the line pass?

**Mrs. Dacquay:** I understand communication services is the focus of this branch. Is that correct?

**Ms. McGifford:** Yes, Mr. Chair, that is quite correct.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Is it a correct assumption that the change year over year in the Salaries lines are attributable to either reclassifications or merit increases?

**Ms. McGifford:** Yes, Mr. Chair, that is accurate.

**Mr. Tweed:** Can I ask the Minister who the managers are of that department?

**Ms. McGifford:** Yes, Mr. Chair, and forgive my rudeness. I should have introduced Cindy Stevens, who is the Executive Director of this department. I am sorry that I did not. Also, sitting behind Dave Patton is Gordon Dodds, who is the Provincial Archivist.

\* (15:20)

**Mr. Tweed:** Mr. Chairman, it highlights that there are 46 full-time employees. Is that currently full, or are there any vacancies in that department?

**Ms. McGifford:** I understand that at the moment there is one vacancy.

**Mr. Tweed:** On October 5, when you became the Minister responsible for this, were there more vacancies or was there one vacancy at that time?

**Ms. McGifford:** I am advised that at that time there were three vacancies.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** I am just informing the Committee that I wish to be excused for approximately 20 to 30 minutes. My colleagues will continue the questioning on these lines. I have delegated passing authority to my colleagues for some of these until we get to Tourism. I will return.

**Mr. Chairperson:** We thank the Member for Seine River.

14.3.(a) Client Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,438,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$293,600. Shall the line pass?

**Mr. Tweed:** Under Supplies and Services, the increase, is that due to the amalgamation of the departments?

**Ms. McGifford:** No, Mr. Chair, it is not to do with the amalgamation of departments. It is to do with desktop management and changes from the provincial data network. The costs have increased by \$11,000 from last year.

**Mr. Chairperson:** 3.(a)(2) Other Expenditures \$293,600—pass; (3) Public Sector Advertising \$2,384,100.

**Mr. Tweed:** It may be in the detail somewhere, but can the Minister just advise us as to what that would include?

**Ms. McGifford:** The recoverable from departments, I am advised, includes the payment of all media advertising, including career advertising and advertising in newspapers. The Department pays that money and then recovers it from the appropriate department.

**Mr. Tweed:** I think we are on Public Sector Advertising for 2.3. Is that all the government advertising? Does that come through that office?

**Ms. McGifford:** Yes, we pay it under line 3.(a)(3), Public Sector Advertising. Then we recover it under line 4.

**Mr. Tweed:** Merely a question then: Does it act as a profitable organization in the sense that your recoverables are higher than your actual advertising costs?

**Ms. McGifford:** We charge a modest brokerage fee for our labours.

**Mr. Chairperson:** 3.(a) Client Services (3) Public Sector Advertising \$2,384,100—pass; (4) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations (\$2,859,500).

**Mr. Tweed:** Just one question. Is that a constant dollar? I see it is the same as last year. Is it something that is fixed at the start of every year?

**Ms. McGifford:** Yes, apparently it is fixed, and it has been constant for the past three years.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Line 3. Information Resources (b) Business Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits.

**Mr. Tweed:** I am just curious, Mr. Chairman, did you pass that last line?

**Mr. Chairperson:** "Less: Recoverables" just have to be read into the record and do not have to be passed.

Line 3.(b) Business Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$939,100. Shall the line pass?

**Mr. Tweed:** Can the Minister advise us who the manager is in that position?

**Ms. McGifford:** The managerial position is occupied by Mike Baudic, the business manager, who is not with us today, so I cannot introduce you to him.

**Mr. Tweed:** Can the Minister advise if there are any vacancies in the Department right now?

**Ms. McGifford:** No, there are not.

**Mr. Tweed:** Were there any as of October 5?

**Ms. McGifford:** No, there were not.

**Mr. Tweed:** I am just wondering if the Minister can perhaps explain to me the differences between the Business Services and the Client Services. I know we have passed Client Services. I guess maybe just give me a definition of what the Business Services do.

**Ms. McGifford:** The Business Services of this branch include that the staff are responsible for purchasing of government print and procurement; also for the accounting function. They are also responsible for the citizen's information line and statutory publications and, I understand, have now assumed a new responsibility and that is for the content of the government Web site.

**Mr. Tweed:** When we are looking at the comparisons of the 1999-2000 to the Estimates of this year, in the 1999-2000 Estimates, are they consistent with last year's Estimates, or with the combination of the departments has that number changed or varied?

**Ms. McGifford:** No, it has not changed from last year, regardless of the amalgamations.

**Mr. Tweed:** The only reason I ask that, Mr. Chair, I know in other departments when there have been amalgamations some of the numbers are not consistent with 1999-2000, and I was just asking for clarification.

Unless someone else has any questions on this line—

\* (15:30)

**Mr. Chairperson:** Line 3. Information Resources (b) Business Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$939,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$981,000.

**Mr. Tweed:** As much a comment as a question, I just noticed that Communications and Supplies and Services have adjusted themselves almost to the same dollar. Is there a reason for that, Communications and Supplies and Services, over last year?

**Ms. McGifford:** I have been advised that it is simply a coincidence that the Supplies and



Services increase is due to desktop, and that the Communications reduction is a reduction in expenditures for communications and advertising.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Line 14.3. Information Resources (b) Business Services (2) Other Expenditures \$981,000—pass; (3) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations (\$260,300).

**Mr. Tweed:** Just a similar question, is that a constant number over the years or will it vary from year to year?

**Ms. McGifford:** Apparently the sum has been generally constant over the years.

**Mr. Tweed:** That is fine.

**Mr. Chairperson:** 3.(b)(3) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations (\$260,300).

3.(c) Translation Services (1) Salaries and Employment Benefits \$1,236,700. Shall the line pass?

**Mr. Tweed:** Could the Minister advise who the manager of this department is?

**Ms. McGifford:** I am now joined at the table by Gordon Dodds, who is the Provincial Archivist; and the Manager of Translation Services is Michelle Freynet.

**Mr. Tweed:** It identifies the French-English, English-French translation. Do they do any other outside work other than in that area?

**Ms. McGifford:** I am advised that Translation Services used to broker translation into other languages, that is, other than French and English, but that beginning this year that work is no longer being done by Translation Services.

**Mr. Tweed:** Of the 23 full-time employees, are there any vacancies?

**Ms. McGifford:** I understand there are two or three vacancies in Translation Services at this time.

**Mr. Tweed:** I guess I would ask: Is it two or is it three?

**Ms. McGifford:** To be specific, we will have to get back to the Member and advise him as to whether it is two or three.

**Mr. Tweed:** Can the Minister advise us if there were any vacancies on October 5, when she became the Minister responsible?

**Ms. McGifford:** I am advised that on October 5 there were vacancies. The vacancies were also two or three again. We will have to get back to the Member with the exact number.

**Mr. Chairperson:** 3.(c) Translation Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,236,700—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$472,300. Shall the line pass?

**Mr. Tweed:** Can the Minister explain what Other Operating is and why it is up such a substantial amount?

**Ms. McGifford:** The increases are due to desktop management charges.

**Mr. Tweed:** Is each individual department charged out desktop management fees? I guess I am curious, as in the last line under Business Services, we talked about desktop management under Communications, Supplies and Services. Now we are talking about it under Other Operating?

**Ms. McGifford:** The answer is yes. Every branch of every department is charged for their workstations in that facility.

**Mr. Tweed:** I thank the Minister for the answer on the first part of the question. I just wonder why it would show up under Other Operating in one area and under Supplies and Services in another, and, I believe, it was under Communications in—no, it was under Supplies and Services in another. Now it is showing up as Other Operating.

**Ms. McGifford:** I understand that, generally speaking, government communication costs are charged—telecommunications costs are charged under Communications across government, and that per-seat costs for desktop management are charged usually under Supplies and Services.

**Mr. Tweed:** But in this case, it is being shown as Other Operating? I guess that is the explanation I am looking for.

**Ms. McGifford:** I am advised it was an accounting change and they were moved to Other Operating.

\* (15:40)

**Mr. Tweed:** Again, Mr. Chairman, I am not trying to be argumentative, but I do not understand why in one segment of a department you would change it to other services and yet keep it in Supplies and Services in other parts. There does not seem to be a consistency across the board.

**Ms. McGifford:** I am advised in Business Services, they were kept under Supplies and Services, and it might have been more appropriate for them to have been moved to Other Operating, so that perhaps we will take care of that next year, and this year they will be in Supplies and Services in that particular area.

**Mr. Tweed:** I thank the Minister for that answer. I think that, in fairness to the Minister and to the people that are looking at the numbers, when we see a number moved just from one department to another, it is very easy to explain it away as Desktop Management Services; but in each department, when it is a different line it becomes a little confusing. I would like to thank the Minister, if she moves forward and corrects that discrepancy, so that in future budgets it will be consistent.

**Ms. McGifford:** Just to respond briefly to the Member, we think that his comment is a fair comment and will certainly be looking after that in the future, so we thank the Member for his comment.

**Mr. Tweed:** I thank the Minister. Under the Activity Identification, English-French/French-English, do you provide any other languages such as Spanish? I know that with departments of the Province doing more and more business with Mexico in particular and the need for Spanish translation, is it done through your department?

**Ms. McGifford:** I think I explained a little while ago that we used to broker translations into other languages through Translation Services, but it was not considered to be very efficient since the staff in Translation Services generally do not have expertise in Spanish, so they were not really able to evaluate the quality of the translation services.

So I understand that practices now in the departments are that departments directly seek out and provide the translation services that the individual departments need. So it appears to be a way of working for the betterment of Spanish-English translation and English-Spanish translation. So that is the way we are working on that particular issue.

**Mr. Chairperson:** 3.(c) Translation Services (2) Other Expenditures \$472,300—pass; (3) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations (\$269,700).

**Mr. Tweed:** Again, just a question, is that charged out to departments? Is it a consistent number across a year?

**Ms. McGifford:** Well, as to the question about the consistency from year to year, I understand that this particular recoverable from departments line has only been with us for, this is the second year, and it has been, as the Member can see, constant. It is recoverable from Education and Training, from a single department only.

**Mr. Tweed:** Could I ask what that would be from Education and Training? What service is provided?

**Ms. McGifford:** Apparently these recoverables were approved by the previous government. The service is for school curriculum material. The work grows from the Chartier report.

**Mr. Tweed:** So then this amount, can we look forward to seeing it in future budgets or is it a one-time or a two-time or over a contract period of time?

**Ms. McGifford:** That might be a question more appropriately addressed to the Minister of Education, because I am sure that the Department of Education and Training will be

evaluating the work that is being done and making decisions as to whether they believe it is money well spent. Then the Minister will make his decision from there.

**Mr. Tweed:** Was the total amount of \$269,700 expended in last year's budget?

**Ms. McGifford:** Yes. That is correct; \$269,700 was expended last year.

**Mr. Chairperson:** 3.(c)(3) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations (\$269,700).

3.(d) Provincial Archives (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,112,100.

**Mr. Tweed:** Could the Minister advise who the manager is in this position?

**Ms. McGifford:** Yes, Mr. Chair, it is Gordon Dodds, the Provincial Archivist, who is with us today.

**Mr. Tweed:** I guess then for clarification, when I asked under Client Services who the three managing names were, I was given Gordon Dodds, Cindy Stevens. Is he showing up on two columns?

**Ms. McGifford:** No, it was Cindy Stevens, Mike Baudic, and then I introduced Mr. Dodds. I said the Manager for Translation Services was Michelle Freynet, and the Manager of Provincial Archives is Gordon Dodds.

**Mr. Tweed:** I see you have increased the number of employees by two. Can the Minister explain why?

**Ms. McGifford:** Yes, I am very pleased to explain these two new positions, and very pleased to announce that these are positions that are funded by the Hudson's Bay history foundation. These two positions were created and are funded by the Hudson's Bay Foundation in response to the public demand for archival materials.

**Mr. Tweed:** If they are funded by the Hudson's Bay Foundation, is there a credit line that shows up where the money from the Foundation for those salaries comes in?

**Ms. McGifford:** In the Government's revenue sources, under Culture, Heritage and Tourism, Hudson's Bay history foundation, item (a), there is an amount of \$733,000, and those two positions are part of that money from the Hudson's Bay history foundation.

**Mr. Tweed:** I am wondering if the Minister can just advise me as to what page in the small book that shows up on.

\* (15:50)

**Ms. McGifford:** I understand that it does not show up. It shows up in the Government revenues, and in the book that the Member is using entitled Departmental Expenditure Estimates, government revenues are not indicated, listed. There is a separate supplement for revenues, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Tweed:** I just want to comment that we see on other line items where there is a recoverable from departments and recoverables. I would just offer a suggestion that it might be more transparent to have that show up there. In this particular case, it looks like the Government is increasing by two employees when in essence they are not. I guess, the question would be: Do the pay stubs come from the Province of Manitoba on a biweekly basis, or do they come from the Hudson's Bay Company?

**Ms. McGifford:** There are several questions there, and, first of all, I think that we need to distinguish between recoverables and revenues. The Hudson's Bay history foundation provides government with money, and so it is—I am not a financial expert—considered in a different part of the Government's books. In the revenues, which, I understand, are tabled by the Minister of Finance and not by the individual department that may benefit from that revenue ultimately. I would further understand that this has been a time-honoured practice. It is not an innovation that has suddenly started.

Now, the third question, I believe, that the Member put forth was whether the pay stubs of the two individuals that we are speaking about, cited here, whether that pay stub comes from the Hudson's Bay history foundation or whether it comes from government. The answer is that it

comes from government, because the Hudson's Bay history foundation gives a sum of money to government to cover a number of items, and included amongst those items are the salaries of these two individuals. So the money comes from government. Pardon me, the paycheque comes from government, but the money begins with the Hudson's Bay history foundation. It is given to government as a recoverable.

**Mr. Tweed:** Again, recognizing that this is a historical donation of money, the two people that are actually showing up on the Estimates are specifically for that, so I would understand that these are new positions created to access some of that money. Again, I would suggest for simplification and understanding of a budget document, where the money is spent and whom it is spent by should show up in the departments. For the Minister or any minister to merely suggest that it comes from revenues to the Finance Minister, I think it just continues to cloud the issue as to we are asking why we have two jobs increased, and we get an explanation that, well, it is a job increase, but it is not really government money because we are getting a grant.

I guess, *again*, I would ask the Minister to go back to her department and perhaps ask them to clarify it in next year's budget so that we can see the line costs of these people and where this money is coming from because, on first blush as a critic, I am seeing that the Department is increased by two positions.

**Ms. McGifford:** Mr. Chair, I understand that my department has been very fortunate in receiving money from the Hudson's Bay history foundation for approximately six years. It is too bad that the Member opposite did not have this good idea six years ago when his government was in power and his party was in power, and then he could have asked them to do it, but having said that, I do not think that what he is suggesting is a bad idea at all, and we might consider next year footnoting our Estimates supplement so that the revenue received would be more apparent to critics who are coming to terms with the Department and the way the Department works. So we thank him for his advice.

**Mr. Tweed:** Again, Mr. Chair, it is not my government in the past that is adding the two people on the employment roll; it is your department. All I am saying is, if it has been done in the past, I would suggest that you in the Opposition should have recommended it. I am seeing it as an increase in your department line expense and no recoverable for the cost. I am just merely pointing that out to the Minister. I would like to ask if the Minister—*[interjection]*

**Ms. McGifford:** Just to further elucidate the Member, last year, in 1999-2000, there were revenues from the Hudson's Bay history foundation of \$623,600 that were last year also listed in the estimates of revenues, which were tabled by the Minister of Finance. Last year, the Hudson's Bay history foundation paid for 10 positions, and because the demand for the materials in the archives has been so considerable—I should point out to the Member that, I think it was two weeks ago, we had the Polar Libraries conference, and I was very pleased to go to the archives and meet with people from all over the world, essentially, who had come to look at the archival material. So the point is that this archival material, donated by Hudson's Bay—and now Hudson's Bay are continuing to support, not only their archives, but access to this archival material, by people from all over the world, and especially Manitobans—has made Manitoba a kind of hub of polar study, polar research. So it is not costing the Government of Manitoba one cent. In fact, it is a gift that is benefiting, as a city, as a province, as a community, as scholars. I just wanted to put that on the record so that all members can appreciate how fortunate we are and what a great debt we owe the Hudson's Bay history foundation.

**Mr. Tweed:** I certainly would not want to argue with that wonderful donation. I am just talking about the dynamics of how it is presented to the public, and it creates the questions. I guess the next question based on the fact that the Minister stated that it employed 10 positions: Of that 31, then, are we saying now that 12 of them are paid for by the Hudson's Bay Mining Company?

**Ms. McGifford:** First of all, it is not the Hudson's Bay Mining Company; it is the Hudson's Bay history foundation. Yes, Mr. Chair, as of

this year, 12 of those 31 positions are paid for by the Hudson's Bay history foundation.

**Mr. Tweed:** Again, I am not trying to be argumentative, but I think, for the practical sake of looking at Estimates, whether it was done in the past or done in the future, it is a little misleading to suggest that the Department is paying for 31 positions when 12 of them are being paid for by an outside source. But the Department is not getting the credit for that money; obviously, it is going to general revenue. Whether it has been done in the past or not, I would just say, for clarification, it might be a thought that they would highlight that as a recoverable at the bottom of the statement.

**Ms. McGifford:** Well, we thank the Member for his advice, and I did want to point out that when it comes to the Estimates process for determining budgets, the sources of revenue are apparent to one and sundry when decisions are being made, so the Department is credited, at that point, with this grant from the Hudson's Bay history foundation. So the Department is not penalized in any way in that process, but if the Member's point is that it would make better information for those who are studying the Departmental Expenditure Estimates and trying to come to terms with what is a revenue and what is an expense and to a clearer understanding, then we thank him for his advice.

\* (16:00)

**Mr. Tweed:** Again, I would just comment that I think it does make for better accounting practices. Nowhere in the, at least I am informed by the Minister, Departmental Expenditure does that credit show up. It shows up, actually, in the Minister of Finance's department. So the Department is not actually receiving a credit for it.

**Ms. McGifford:** No, my point to the Member was, when we go to Treasury Board, and we are determining our budget, Culture Heritage and Tourism presents a whole stream of revenues, and those are acknowledged, at that point, in determining the Budget.

**Mr. Tweed:** Could the Minister tell me if there are any vacancies in that department at this point in time?

**Ms. McGifford:** By the Department, I am assuming that the Member means the Provincial Archives.

**Mr. Tweed:** That is correct.

**Ms. McGifford:** Mr. Chair, the only vacancies are the two new Hudson's Bay positions, which we are waiting to fill until the Estimates process is completed.

**Mr. Tweed:** Is the Minister suggesting that it may not happen if something in the Estimates changes?

**Ms. McGifford:** Well, we do not expect that there would be a change in that decision, especially since, I am assuming, if we did not fill the positions, we would not get the money from the Hudson's Bay Foundation, so we would be looking, so to speak, a gift horse in the mouth, not a wise idea.

**Mr. Tweed:** Can the Minister tell me if there were any vacancies on October 5 when she took the responsibility of the department?

**Ms. McGifford:** No, there were no vacancies on October 5.

**Mr. Tweed:** Pass.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Line 3. Information Resources (d) Provincial Archives (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,112,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$1,639,800. Shall the line pass?

**Mr. Tweed:** One question again, the increase in Supplies and Services, are we seeing the desktop being charged out to that, or is it under Other Operating this time?

**Ms. McGifford:** I am advised that the increase in Supplies and Services is due to accommodation cost for the Hudson's Bay Archives, generally for the archives, and that the desktop management charges have been absorbed in Other Operating.

**Mr. Tweed:** Does the grant that the Hudson's Bay Company makes pay for the increased needs of space and location, or is that a government cost?

**Ms. McGifford:** Mr. Chair, apparently, the Government provides all space costs.

**Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale):** Just one question, in this area, is there any indication or any line where it is indicated that the costs in regard to the change of government and the additional archives expenses in regard to all the paperwork that had to be archived, was there a dollar figure ever put to that amount?

**Ms. McGifford:** Apparently, there is not a dollar figure put to that, and that is standard practice not to assign a dollar figure to that. I understand that people in the archives just see that as part of the game.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Line 3. Information Resources (d) Provincial Archives (2) Other Expenditures \$1,639,800—pass; (e) Legislative Library (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$735,700. Shall the line pass?

**Mr. Tweed:** Can the Minister advise who the manager of that department is and why she took the reduction of pay?

**Ms. McGifford:** Mr. Chair, the manager of that department is Sue Bishop, who is not with us. I understand that the reduction in pay is due to two less working days in 2000-2001. So, in fact, there is no reduction in pay.

**Mr. Tweed:** Are there any vacancies in that area right now?

**Ms. McGifford:** No, Mr. Chair, there are not.

**Mr. Tweed:** As of October 5, were there any vacancies?

**Ms. McGifford:** No, Mr. Chair. On October 5 there were no vacancies and there are no vacancies in the Legislative Library today.

**Mr. Chairperson:** 14.3.(e) Legislative Library (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$735,700—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$672,800—pass.

Resolution 14.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$10,515,800 for Culture, Heritage and Tourism,

Information Resources, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2001.

*Resolution agreed to.*

**Mr. Tweed:** I know that there may be a willingness to take a five-minute break. I am wondering if we could ask the Minister if her staff is available. My colleague would like to just move to Seniors Directorate and then back to Tourism if that is possible.

**Ms. McGifford:** Yes. That would be fine with us.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Is there leave to skip ahead to 14.5, as had been indicated? *[Agreed]*

**Mr. Tweed:** If you peruse the Committee, you will find that there is a request for a five-minute recess.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Is it the will of the Committee to have a five-minute recess? *[Agreed]*

*The Committee recessed at 4:12 p.m.*

*The Committee resumed at 4:17 p.m.*

**Mr. Chairperson:** Will the Committee please come to order. We will begin with 14.5 Seniors Directorate (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$466,400. Shall the item pass?

**Mr. Reimer:** I will not stay long on this section of Seniors Directorate because, as former Minister responsible for Seniors in the previous government, I had dealings with the staff that are here now and the staff that were listed in the appropriation book.

I must say right off the top that I think that the Minister is very, very fortunate that she has this staff available to her because, through my experience with the Seniors Directorate, their capabilities, their ability to respond, their knowledge of seniors and their dedication to government go beyond reproach. I have very, very high respect for her staff that she has kept on and their capabilities of dealing with the seniors of Manitoba.

The one thing that I will comment on, though, is the fact I am a bit disappointed. I am not criticizing the Minister in any way. I am criticizing government and the policy that this government has taken in regard to its handling of the Seniors Directorate and its—I guess for the lack of a better word, and it may not be the right word, but the downgrading of the importance of Seniors by putting it in with the Department and not as a stand-alone as it was before.

\* (16:20)

I know that I have had numerous calls from the various seniors groups throughout Winnipeg and Manitoba after it was announced. In my official duty as critic who is responsible for Seniors, I think that that is not an appropriate title. I think I am more of a proponent for Seniors than a critic for Seniors, but I feel that what has happened with the Government and the direction they have taken and the fact that they have put Seniors into a different perspective within this government, there is a feeling in the community that this government does not have a commitment to Seniors and that they are feeling that with the importance of seniors in our community, the growing population of seniors in our community, the fact that seniors in the next few years will have over 20 percent of the population here in Winnipeg, the Government is not putting a focus in the proper manner in the way that they have handled Seniors with the restructuring of the present government.

I know the Premier has said that he is looking at a leaner, meaner, more efficient type of government with the downgrading of departments and everything, but the seniors of Manitoba felt or are feeling that they are not getting the adequate recognition or the spotlight that they had before.

I just wanted to mention that. As I say, this is not a criticism of the Minister, and it certainly is not a criticism of the staff, because I have the highest regard for the Seniors Directorate and the staff that are there because of, like I said earlier, their tremendous capabilities and dedication to Manitoba.

I can only hope, and I think one of the things I would be watching for is for the Minister to be

very conscious of the seniors—I believe that she is—and her dedication to be aware of the concerns and the directions that some of the seniors groups are advocating and that she does become a champion for the seniors in her portfolio. The recognition they have earned is deserving through this government.

With those short words, Mr. Chairperson, maybe we can move into the appropriation itself.

**Ms. McGifford:** I thank the Member opposite for his confidence. I do appreciate it.

I just want to respond to him briefly too and begin by saying I certainly share his sense of the staff and the contribution that staff make to this department as well as the contribution clearly that staff make to the community and make to seniors. It has been my pleasure to work with staff on several occasions. I have certainly always felt supported and have sensed the concern that staff have for community and their dedication to seniors. So the Member and I are certainly on the same page.

I do want to point out, in relation to his talking about his preference being that the Seniors Directorate remain a free-standing entity, that Manitoba was the only province in Canada which did have a free-standing seniors directorate. In most jurisdictions, I understand the Seniors Directorate is housed in Health or Family Services. I believe at one point that was the case in this province. No, I am mistaken. It was not the case in this province, but it is the case in every other jurisdiction. So it is something that is quite common. In fact, we were the anomaly.

I also want to point out that there are many advantages to having Seniors within the Department of Culture, Heritage and Tourism. One of the things I do want to indicate is that previously the former minister was the Minister for Urban Affairs and Housing and also Seniors. I am the Minister for Culture, Heritage and Tourism, for Women, for Seniors, for Lotteries, for Liquor. I value greatly having Seniors in the Department of Culture, Heritage and Tourism where I can benefit from my deputy minister who, as the Member opposite probably knows, has a special interest in wellness, health and well-being. So I

think he is certainly a wonderful deputy minister to have when the Department also includes Seniors.

As well, the Department is the Department that houses Recreation Programs. I certainly was speaking one day to Jim Hamilton, from Recreation, who was very interested in some of the concerns I was speaking about with regard to Seniors. He is a person who takes initiative, so I did want to pass that along to the Minister as well.

I want to also say that I think it is interesting to have Seniors in the same department as Culture. I know seniors are very interested in cultural activities and heritage activities. It is a kind of nice mix, and, as I said, all under the auspices of our deputy minister, who is so very concerned about health and well-being.

As far as our commitment to seniors, the Member wondered about the commitment to seniors. I think it has been clear in, for example, the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) introducing the persons in care bill, which certainly has been a long time coming. I am very pleased that it is before the House. I am sure that all members will be supporting that bill.

I want to assure the Member that I have not had one phone call complaining about Seniors joining with Culture, Heritage and Tourism. The Executive Director of the Seniors Directorate, who, again, I am very sorry, I did not introduce, Cathy Yurkowski, tells me that they have not received complaints either. So maybe they all went to the Member opposite, all four in the province.

As well, I do want to assure the Member that I have been meeting with seniors groups, several of them. Earlier this month I was happy to proclaim June Seniors and Elders Month. I was very pleased to include the word "elders" for the first time, I believe, in declaring this month, consequently recognizing the presence of Aboriginal people in Manitoba and the term that has meaning to Aboriginal people.

Tomorrow I would like very much to be present at The Forks, but I think that I will have to get the Member opposite to agree to pair,

which his side of the House does not seem to be eager to do, so I might have to miss that, but maybe we can strike a deal.

**Mr. Reimer:** The Member mentioned a few things. I couched my remarks at the very beginning by saying that it was certainly not a criticism of the Department or the Minister or the Deputy Minister, because I think there is a strength there with the Deputy and the Seniors Directorate that the seniors programs will be looked at. I just wanted to mention that there was a disappointment. I have heard the disappointment by groups in my contact still with seniors. I would say that we will be watching to make sure that seniors are still put into a very high profile with the Government and a lot of their programs, and so we can move along with the lines.

**Ms. McGifford:** Just before we move on, I do thank the Member once again for his comments. I assure him I will work very hard to win the hearts of those seniors who feel they have been compromised. I know that staff will, too.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Line 14.5. Seniors Directorate (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$466,400—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$295,300. Shall the line pass?

\* (16:30)

**Mr. Reimer:** I am right in assuming that the bulk of the amounts that are shown here being in a decrease over the year before are more or less all related to the International Year of Older Persons.

**Ms. McGifford:** Yes, Mr. Chair, they are related to the International Year of Older Persons.

**Mr. Reimer:** Am I right in assuming that all obligations in regard to the International Year of Older Persons are completed in regard to the salaries and the grants and everything?

**Ms. McGifford:** Yes, all our responsibilities in regard to the International Year of Older Persons—grants, salaries, everything that the Member has mentioned—have been concluded.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Line 14.5.(b) Other Expenditures \$295,300—pass.



Resolution 14.5.: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$761,700 for Culture, Heritage and Tourism, Seniors Directorate, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2001.

**Resolution agreed to.**

We will resume with Resolution 14.4. Tourism (a) Tourism Services and Special Projects (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$877,800. Shall the line pass?

**Mrs. Dacquay:** I assume that the increase in the Managerial is benefits. I do not assume there is reclassification there, because it is not a substantial figure.

**Ms. McGifford:** Thank you for the question. I understand the increase is due to merit increments.

Mr. Chair, while I have the mike, could I take this opportunity to introduce Hubert Mesman, who is the ADM of Culture, Heritage and Tourism and, of course, is here especially with Tourism?

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Could I ask who the two individuals are under the Managerial section?

**Ms. McGifford:** Yes, I am advised that the two individuals are Ken Hildebrand and Rick Gaunt.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Can I please have an explanation why, under Administrative Support, there is about \$60,000 decrease year over year?

**Ms. McGifford:** The difference is the Pan Am Games, non-recurring funding.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** I thank the Minister for that explanation, and I am prepared to pass that line.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Line 4.(a) Tourism Services and Special Projects (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$877,800—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$1,076,300. Shall the line pass?

**Mrs. Dacquay:** I would like an explanation as to the increase year over year for the Personnel Services line, please.

**Ms. McGifford:** I understand that the explanation is that this is for hiring students into the STEP program who provide travel counselling during the peak season.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Is there an increase in the number of students that are being hired? because that is an ongoing program, as I understand it.

**Ms. McGifford:** Mr. Chair, there is a combination of reasons for the increase. One of them is an increase in numbers; a second one is a salary adjustment; and the third one is that the actual cost of the program was not reflected in the previous year's budget so that this year's budget more accurately reflects the cost of this program.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Can I ask how the increase in the number of students translates into actual change year over year?

**Ms. McGifford:** There are two new positions. One of them is in Explore Manitoba and the other one is an area where we were understaffed. But was the Member asking what the cost increase in the students' salaries was?

**Mrs. Dacquay:** No, I just wanted to know the number of actual student increase year over year, and the Minister has answered that.

In the next line under Communications—I am not sure if I know this answer; I probably do, but Communications and Supplies and Services, it looks like it is an almost direct change from one section to another.

**Ms. McGifford:** Mr. Chair, it is a Pan Am reduction.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Then can the Minister please explain the increase in Supplies and Services?

**Ms. McGifford:** Again, it is a budget adjustment to reflect actual costs. The Tourism Information Centres were underbudgeted last year in relation to their actual cost, and the adjustment this year reflects that actual cost.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Line 4 Tourism (a) Tourism Services and Special Projects (2) Other Expenditures \$1,076,300—pass.

14.4.(b) Tourism Marketing and Promotions  
(1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$569,000.  
Shall the line pass?

\* (16:40)

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Could I please have the individual identified under the Managerial line?

**Ms. McGifford:** Mr. Chair, the person for whose name the Member is asking is Statia Elliot.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Line 4.(b) Tourism Marketing and Promotions (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$569,000—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$3,650,600. Shall the line pass?

**Mrs. Dacquay:** I have some general questions, as does my colleague. I am seeking leave, I guess, to ask if I can just ask them under this section, and then we will move to the line-by-line consideration, or does that present problems?

**Ms. McGifford:** We believe that would be fine.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** One of the questions I have is with regard to the Web site. When I looked through the Tourism Web site, there are a couple of pages that I had some questions on. One was the accommodations page. I am concerned about the size of the map and for tourists from out of province not knowing where those locations are. I find it difficult to read—it just might be me—and to get my bearings as to which region it is referring to. When you then key down, I found that—and I am just wondering if there have been any concerns raised by tourists or if the Minister herself is familiar with this page and shares the same concerns.

**Ms. McGifford:** Well, I would like to thank the Member for drawing the map to my attention. I have not seen this particular page, but my eyesight is certainly failing and I probably could not read the map either. I am advised that the Department is constantly seeking advice and is very happy to revise the Web site. I am very happy to hear from the Member and her input will be taken very seriously.

I would also like to say that we are very proud of this Web site. I am told by the ADM here that the Web site receives approximately 100 000 contacts per month. *[interjection]* Yes, a month. I did not want to use the word "hit"—*[interjection]* I just wanted to point out that the word "hit" really bothers me in this context, so that is why I used the word "contact." Yes, I would like to indicate to the Member, it is 100 000 contacts per month, which I guess would translate into over a million, 1.2 million in a year, so it is wonderful that this is being done and a great way of marketing Manitoba to the world.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Yes, and I think it does certainly have its merits, and having a husband who is much more computer literate and definitely has more time than I, he uses it consistently to do vacation planning. We found that it is amazing what information can be acquired through the Web site right down to making actual reservations. Even the airlines now will let you make an electronic reservation, as opposed to having to have that silly ticket to carry around with you with the potential of another item to lose, and you are just provided with an itinerary. So I was pleased when I pulled this up and saw the information that was contained on here.

I have another concern relative to the section that is entitled Beaches Summary and then the—well, I will deal with that first.

**Ms. McGifford:** I was looking for a line in the book called "Beaches" and then I was reminded that the Member was asking questions about the Web site. I did not mean to interrupt her. She has a concern about the beaches.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** My question is: I was wondering what the rationale was that was used to identify the beaches on here because in my opinion there are a couple of beaches that were not identified. If I compare it with this document *Manitoba Provincial Parks*, they are not identically the same. There is a much more comprehensive listing in this hard copy than there appears to be on the Web page, unless changes have been made since I pulled it up. So I am just wondering what the rationale was.

**Ms. McGifford:** Apparently, there is an industry advisory committee that works both on the publication and the Web site. The Member is indicating that the Web site is slightly lagging behind the publication, and we will certainly take that under advisement. We appreciate your advice.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** In particular under the eastern section—I believe that is where it would go—Patricia Beach which is a relatively, in my opinion, well-known beach. I do not see it listed there. Then when we get into the provincial parks, that is where there is a larger discrepancy in terms of, in my opinion, some very nice provincial parks not being identified.

**Ms. McGifford:** Again, we thank the Member for her advice. I was just wondering if Beaconia was there, but apparently the cottage owners do not want it advertised.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Just a general question also on the Web site. I appreciate the fact that my criticism is being well received. I am just wanting to improve the overall quality of the information on this Web site. I guess my general question is: Does that committee that was referenced meet regularly? Do they make ongoing updates on a regular basis?

**Ms. McGifford:** The industry advisory committee, I am told, meets twice a year, and they make—because the publication only appears once a year—yearly recommendations with regard to the publication. But they do make more frequent recommendations with regard to the Web site obviously because it is more fluent.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** I wonder if now the Minister can identify the new initiatives that were part and parcel of her party's platform in the last provincial election.

\* (16:50)

**Ms. McGifford:** I would be very pleased to provide the Member opposite with some information. Let me talk, first of all, about our work in concentrating on promoting Winnipeg as a main tourist destination. As the Member may know, the Tourism Division works in partnership with Tourism Winnipeg to promote Winni-

peg as a destination. Winnipeg is promoted as a main tourism destination in Manitoba in all of the Tourism Division's publications and marketing initiatives. The Tourism Division promotes the eight tourism regions of Manitoba: Winnipeg, Interlake, Pembina Valley, Central Plains, Parklands, Western, Eastern and Northern.

Perhaps the Member would just like me to go through the initiatives as opposed to providing detail, although I could provide detail if she so wished.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** If the Minister wished to provide me with a copy of that, that also would be satisfactory. I will have questions relative to the grants.

**Ms. McGifford:** I will just run through the major initiatives I meant. Secondly, trail development, which we have already spoken about, the Manitoba portion of the Trans Canada Trail. I think we pointed that much of this work is underway through the local initiatives. We hope that the development of the trail in Manitoba will see hundreds of miles, or I think altogether it is 900 kilometres of abandoned lines turned to trails for snowmobiling, hiking, skiing, mountain biking, all that sort of thing. I think I mentioned that, when we were talking about the Trans Canada Trail, there is a trails co-ordinator who has been hired. This person is on secondment from the Department of Conservation, so this person is very familiar with Manitoba. Work is on underway to develop a trails policy which will address matters related to trail development, including acquisition, maintenance, and liability legislation.

One of the other things that the Premier promoted during the election was snowmobiling. He promised to initiate new ventures in snowmobiling tourism, especially as related to the Rails to Trails initiative, and the Tourism Division works with Snoman, which is the provincial co-ordinating organization for development, maintenance, and marketing of the snowmobiling experience in Manitoba. I know that myself, the Minister of Corporate and Consumer Affairs, I think the Minister of Highways, and the Premier met with Snoman, and I think we had a productive meeting. So I

was very interested in hearing from them, and hearing about the people who come to Manitoba to snowmobile since it is not something that I knew a lot about, not being a snowmobiler myself.

As well, eco-tourism, we wish to initiate new ventures in eco-tourism, the heavy promotion of eco-friendly tour packages through our natural and historic corridors. I think the Member is probably familiar with the conference that was held last week in Manitoba, and that conference was attended by the ADM of Tourism, and as well by Donna Dul, one of the members of my department from Historic Resources. The Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs attended, and since the Premier was down east addressing the Shilo issue, so that minister attended on behalf of the Premier. I also met with Mayor Murray and Wayne Arseny from Emerson on this particular initial, so it is something that we support.

We also support wildlife tourism, new initiatives in wildlife tourism, and this, of course, is a very thriving industry in the U.S., a \$5-billion industry, and demand for this kind of experience is certainly great. I suppose that Churchill with its polar bears is our flagship in this particular kind of tourism. I do not know whether the Member has had the experience of going to Churchill. I know that last year during the Tourism Industry Association of Canada meeting in Winnipeg, I had the pleasure of going up to Churchill with a group of people who were attending the conference, and going out in the tundra buggies. I think we saw about 20 bears, and it was just an absolutely fabulous experience. Certainly, the people who were on that tour, who were, again, from all over Canada, and people from the U.S. too. In fact included in that particular tour was a senator from Wisconsin, who apparently had done this before and loved it, and he was going home to encourage all kinds of people to come up. There was also a man who wrote a column for one of the Minneapolis papers, and he was there to document what he saw and would go home and write in his paper about this experience.

Aboriginal tourism is certainly growing. Our government is more than happy—we are going to support the Manitoba Aboriginal Tourism

Association with their work. I am sure members opposite are aware that Aboriginal tourism and the Aboriginal tourism experience are extremely popular internationally, very popular in Japan, in Germany, in Britain, as well as in our own country. In fact, I have a meeting tomorrow morning with the Manitoba Aboriginal Tourism Association. So, basically, the initiatives that the Premier was referring to are promoting Winnipeg as a destination, trail development, snowmobiling, ecotourism, wildlife tourism, Aboriginal tourism, and, of course, we are always interested in promoting our province and our city as a centre for conferences. We will continue with those initiatives.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Yes, I thank the Minister, and I have further questions. My first question is relative to promoting Winnipeg as the main tourist destination. I was of the understanding that that has always been one of the main objectives of the Tourism department, and that there was co-opting with Tourism Winnipeg in promoting. I am wondering if that is being very familiar with Tourism Winnipeg, given I chaired the committee for the actual start of that initiative, and then had the luxury of serving as the first president of Tourism Winnipeg.

I am wondering, first of all, what new or change there has been made or increase in promotion as Winnipeg being identified as a main tourist destination, and, secondly, what joint initiatives are ongoing between Manitoba Tourism Education Council and Tourism Winnipeg?

\* (17:00)

**Ms. McGifford:** I hope I did not say that our intention was to promote Winnipeg as "the main tourism attraction." I meant to say "a main tourism attraction," because, of course, we want to promote all tourism destinations in Manitoba. I am advised by staff that we do continue to provide 50 percent of the funding for Tourism Winnipeg, to sit on the board of Tourism Winnipeg, and to enter into joint marketing initiatives with Tourism Winnipeg. The initiative that we have taken is the creation of a Team Winnipeg and Travel Manitoba committee, whose particular mandate is to promote Winnipeg as a tourism destination.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** I am aware of that. But, as the Minister indicated that this was one of the initiatives was, and I know that it has been an ongoing initiative, I wondered if she could indicate how this initiative has been enhanced or what changes to the former programs that there have been.

**Ms. McGifford:** I am advised that some years ago there was a Team Winnipeg. This was the initiative, the new initiative that I spoke to the Member about, but that it was gone to ground or inactive for a number of years. There has been a lot of work on reviving Team Winnipeg, on recreating Team Winnipeg, on giving Team Winnipeg a new burst of energy and a new life in order to promote Winnipeg as a tourism destination. So that is a major initiative in promoting Winnipeg.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** The Minister referenced that 50 percent of the funding for Tourism Winnipeg is a grant through the Province and specifically this department. Is it an annual fixed grant, or is there a different funding formula?

**Ms. McGifford:** It is an annual grant in the overall support to the City of Winnipeg and it is through Intergovernmental Affairs, not through Culture, Heritage and Tourism.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** We discussed the trail development before, and that is funded through the millennium grant, the initiative. Is there other funding available through the Tourism department for this project?

**Ms. McGifford:** As I said previously, the monies for the Manitoba portion of the Trans Canada Trail association is being administered and looked after by the Manitoba Recreational Trail Association. No, there is no additional funding from government. In fact, I think we have talked about it. I did point out that \$2.125 million was the figure, is the funding for the development of the trail in Manitoba. It is our signature millennium project.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** I will rephrase the question. Are there marketing dollars allocated to assist in the promotion of that millennium project?

**Ms. McGifford:** The marketing dollars for the development of the trail are part and parcel of the \$2.125 million from the Province.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** So they are responsible for the marketing as well as the actual capital costs involved in the development of the trail. In any of the information that is published by Tourism Manitoba, have they now included that development project in any of their materials to highlight it as a destination site?

**Ms. McGifford:** Certainly we are promoting it through our publications in our Explore centre and indeed at every opportunity and through our Web site. I am sorry that I misunderstood the Member's question, but, yes, we are promoting it. It is so valuable to us.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Now something near and dear to my heart, snowmobiling. I do snowmobile. I do know, I am very familiar with a lot of the trails. The Rails to Trails project is a different initiative. It is converting old railway tracks into having accessibility for snowmobiling. I am wondering if in the mention made here and the Snoman initiative if there are marketing dollars to promote the existing trails such as the Can-Am trail, the trails through Falcon and West Hawk Lake, et cetera?

**Ms. McGifford:** The Member is talking about marketing. I did want to indicate that the Rails to Trails work is also part and parcel of the ministries of Highways and Conservation.

Having said that, we do have a publication called *Snow Wonder*, which promotes Manitoba as a winter tourist destination and promotes snowmobiling. We also have the possibility of a marketing program with Snoman. Whether that becomes an initiative or not would depend on what Snoman might like as well as what we might like.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** That is a new initiative then, because Snoman puts out its own snowmobiling publication, but it does not really promote it. In my opinion, it does not promote the different locations and sites. There is the odd article on a specific site, but it does not promote all of the trails that are available and the accessibility of same.

**Ms. McGifford:** *Snow Wonder*, the publication that I mentioned to the Member, is a generic publication which promotes winter vacationing and winter experience in Manitoba. It is not, by any means, devoted particularly or solely to snowmobiling. But using that publication to promote snowmobiling, to provide more trail information so that both Manitobans and people who come to the province, because we know that Manitobans spend a lot of tourism dollars in our province, is certainly a possibility. We will take it seriously.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Well, the Minister alluded to the fact there is the possibility of working cooperatively with Snoman. Would that then be an enhancement of the existing whatever it is called? What is it called, the winter publication? Or is there the intent that there would be an additional publication if they worked cooperatively with Snoman?

**Ms. McGifford:** What I was suggesting is that we do have a marketing program, and if Snoman wished to approach us, it would be a possibility that we could promote snowmobile trails in conjunction with them through this particular marketing program.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Further then to the other initiatives, the ecotourism initiative, the wildlife tourism initiative, she mentioned Churchill and Aboriginal tourism, are the programs changing and have there been in terms of what was in existence previously? I guess I can ask when I get into grant assistance what the funding is for each of those initiatives.

**Ms. McGifford:** Mr. Chair, I wanted to advise the Member that currently with the ecotourism and the Aboriginal tourism, we are working with the industry in developing strategies and that we are at a strategy stage in the development. We will soon be moving to the implementation stage.

\* (17:10)

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Does that also apply to the Wildlife Tourism Initiative and Churchill? While I am on the topic of Churchill, no, I have not been to Churchill, but I would be very willing to

accompany the Minister the next time she travels to Churchill.

**Ms. McGifford:** Flies to the wildlife industry, too, the Member mentioned Churchill, the ADM here pointed out to me that Churchill is an interesting case in point because Churchill is a destination for wildlife experience as well as for eco-tourism and as well a site for Aboriginal tourism, so it is a real drawing card in the province and has many possibilities.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** I have some questions line by line under Other Expenditures, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Line 4. Tourism (b) Tourism Marketing and Promotions (2) Other Expenditures \$3,650,600—pass; (3) Grant Assistance \$75,000. Shall the line pass?

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Under the Grant Assistance, can the Minister provide me with a breakdown as to the primary initiatives that are funded under Grant Assistance?

**Ms. McGifford:** I understand that this particular granting line provides hospitality and promotional support to various organizations. Particularly, it is used to attract conventions to the province, and it is also used to promote industry events in the province. For example, I just have an example of some of the promotional grants: to the Yellowhead Highway in support for their annual awards banquet; to the chefs du cuisine participation in the 200 Culinary Olympics which I was pleased to attend and eat at; to the Brandon Chefs and Cooks 12th annual association dinner which I was not able to attend and eat at; the Canadian Federation of Chefs Team Canada support. So that would give the Member an indication of some of the different groups that we support through these grants.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** I assume this is by application, and it varies from one year to the next in terms of the recipients of these grants.

**Ms. McGifford:** Yes, the Member is quite accurate. People apply for the grant. Our staff study it, provide advice; decisions are made.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Just before we pass this section, I have one question, and that was related to the Pan Am Games. Because I know Tourism Manitoba was involved in the promotion and development of the Pan Am Games, I just wondered if she could indicate which lines the change year over year is shown in.

**Ms. McGifford:** As I am sure the Member has deduced because it is kind of obvious under Communications, Communications, Supplies and Services are the predominant line.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** I know I am reverting back, but I was engaged in a conversation with my colleague asking him where he wanted to ask his questions when he passed that section. That is why I did not ask specific questions. Is that the same reasoning under the next line, Supplies and Services?

**Ms. McGifford:** Yes.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Other Operating, there is a substantive increase there. I wonder if I could have an explanation.

**Ms. McGifford:** I understand this is an adjustment again to the Budget reflecting the actual operating costs post-Pan Am. I think that we talked before, perhaps it was with the Member for Turtle Mountain, about the fact that in a couple of areas the costs were underbudgeted for the previous year. So this is reflecting those cost adjustments.

**Mr. Chairperson:** 4.(b)(3) Grant Assistance \$75,000—pass.

4.(c) Tourism Development (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$400,500. Shall the line pass?

\* (17:20)

**Mr. Reimer:** Mr. Chairperson, I just have some questions I wanted to ask the Minister in regard to Tourism and Tourism numbers. Can the Minister give us an indication as to the number of tourists, some of the history of the numbers of tourists in Manitoba that have visited Manitoba from outside the province and people that have come from within the province? Are we looking

at an increase or decrease over the last year, some of the history on that?

**Ms. McGifford:** I think we have some very good news. I know that will delight the Member. Unfortunately, my ADM, maybe he did not bring all his notes, but he has a very good memory. I am amazed at his recall.

**Mr. Reimer:** He has been around a long time, that is why.

**Ms. McGifford:** That happens to all of us as we get older. We have a lot to forget. We will of course always provide the Member with specific detail. I did want to tell the Member that we divide the statistics, as he probably knows, into person-visits from within Manitoba and then person-visits from outside Manitoba.

The number of person-visits from within the province is five million. The expenditures are over \$500 million, which is half a billion, lots of money.

From outside Manitoba, our primary markets I believe in descending order, that is, starting with the most productive market and moving down, are the U.S., Britain, Germany, Japan, our international friends and visitors. Apparently we attract about 200 million—no, pardon me, 2 million; 200 million would be great but we probably would not have enough places to put them up for the night—2 million person-visits internationally. This generates export income of over \$400 million. Sounds great. We could provide the Member with detail if he would so wish.

**Mr. Reimer:** Mr. Chairperson, the numbers are impressive. Could the Minister give us any indication of the percentage increases—or maybe the figures are not available—but are we looking at an upward climb of our numbers say over the last two or three years, and is the projection for an increase?

**Ms. McGifford:** Mr. Chair, I am informed that during the last couple of years our tourism revenues have increased 2 to 3 percent and that there has been a 3% increase in tourism over that same period. I am also advised that that compares very favourably with national

increases. One very good piece of information is for the first quarter of this year, that is the first of January to the 31st of March—and probably not normally considered our peak of the market—we have had an increase of 10% person-visits. *[interjection]* Oh, pardon me, 10% increase in the number of people visiting us from the U.S.

**Mr. Reimer:** I noticed that the Minister mentioned the increase. I guess that is factoring out—I know that we had a tremendous year last year in regard to the Pan Am Games and that. Would that be factored in or out of the increases over the last couple of years? Would the Pan Am Games be factored in?

**Ms. McGifford:** The Pan Am Games increased substantially the numbers of international visits last year. We would expect that there might be some slight decline in international visits this year, because of course we do not have the Pan Am Games. But we do have that very interesting figure of a 10% increase in the first quarter from U.S. visits, so I think that this augers very well. *[interjection]* My department advises me that the Folk Arts Council apparently lost some visitors during the Pan Am Games, but their previous—let me just check. Thank you, Mr. Chair, for giving me that moment to clarify.

The point that I was making is that last year Folklorama, according to the Folk Arts Council, lost some visits so that the numbers of bus tours declined down to about 60. Of course, Folklorama last year was only on for eight days and not fourteen days. It was an anomalous summer. But the good news is that the Folk Arts Council reports that they now have 90 buses booked. They are pleasantly surprised to see the level rising so steadily and very pleasantly surprised to see that they are bringing the level of bus tours back to what they traditionally are which is about a high of 100. So 90 is well on the way to 100.

**Mr. Reimer:** I wonder whether there is any indication from Tourism Manitoba as to the increase in U.S. visitors of approximately 10 percent. That is a fairly significant number. Has there been any specific reason or destination that is attributed to that particular jump, or is it just the great Canadian dollar?

**Ms. McGifford:** Mr. Chair, we are increasing our marketing in the U.S., and we think that may be a very important factor. We also believe that there may be a growing appreciation for the differentiation in the currency between the U.S. and Canada. I would speculate it might have a lot to do with an NDP government.

**Mr. Reimer:** Oh, we will not go down that road.

The Member mentioned Folk Arts looking at approximately 90 or 100 buses in regard to the festival that is coming up. There is also the two casinos in Winnipeg. Is there any indication of the number of buses that have been coming into the casinos in the last while?

\* (17:30)

**Ms. McGifford:** Mr. Chair, we are looking for the number of buses. I know the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) predicted 1000 buses, and whether his predictions have materialized or not, we cannot really say. This is, of course, information from the Manitoba Lotteries Commission, and I do not have staff from Lotteries here, but we will endeavour to find the information. Mr. Chair, we may have to come back with that information. As I said, it is really from Lotteries.

**Mr. Reimer:** Yes, because I noticed that, as the casinos are a bit of a tourist draw also within Winnipeg, whether there is an attributable amount that could be directed towards the increase in the U.S. visitors—

**Ms. McGifford:** I cannot hear you. Could you speak up?

**Mr. Reimer:** I was just going to say that the numbers that the Minister mentioned in regard to the increase in U.S. tourists and the number of buses that were coming into Manitoba, there could be a direct correlation and whether there was any indication that, when the Government is looking at the expansion of gaming in Manitoba, whether there would be any type of adverse effect on the gaming destination points of the two casinos here in Winnipeg, whether there has been any study done through her department on that particular aspect.



**Ms. McGifford:** I am advised by staff that the line of questioning does not really pertain to Tourism. This is information that could be obtained more properly obtained from people at Lotteries.

**Mr. Reimer:** I guess there is that implication that tourism and the amount of people who come into Winnipeg as a destination point, some are headed towards the casino operations, and I would think that, as a point of tourism, there would be an awareness as to the impact of the economy for tourism here in Winnipeg and indeed in all of Manitoba and, if there is a further expansion of gaming with casinos in other areas of Manitoba, whether there is the ability to somehow forecast how much money could be lost from the casinos here in Winnipeg as an impact for tourism. As the Member mentioned, tourism is a very, very important part; the numbers she mentioned is almost a billion dollars in the last year in regard to tourism coming into Manitoba. A portion of it can be attributed to destination gaming, gambling, and I was just wondering what type of impact it might have with the expansion of gaming here in Manitoba.

**Ms. McGifford:** Mr. Chair, I wanted to advise the Member that the Tourism department does work with the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation in terms of joint marketing and advertising outside the province of Manitoba. We, of course, do not advertise Lotteries within the province of Manitoba, but I want to bring to the Member's attention once more that these are the Estimates of Culture, Heritage and Tourism, and the information that he is requesting is information that would be housed in Lotteries.

However, since I am the Minister responsible for Lotteries, I do assure the Member that, if he wishes to write to my office, I can ask people from Lotteries to provide him with information, and I would undertake to assist the Member if he wishes to write and make a request, but I do want to make the point, let me make the point once more, that these are the Estimates of Culture, Heritage and Tourism. While staff from Tourism do joint marketing with Lotteries, they are not in charge of the kind of information that the Member is requesting.

**Mr. Reimer:** I guess maybe the Minister could give me some direction. Was there any meeting, as Minister of Tourism, with officials of the Manitoba Lotteries in regard to doing any type of precautionary study as to the impact of the additional casinos in Manitoba?

**Ms. McGifford:** Mr. Chair, I would like to bring to the attention of the Member that Manitoba Lotteries has been quite hobbled as of late for obvious reasons that, on January 7, we appointed a new board to the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation and, as the new member knows, it was only shortly after that board was appointed that all kinds of anomalies and irregular practices came to light. It was at that point, of course, that an audit into the workings of Lotteries began. The implications of that audit and the implications of a second audit, the human resources audit, are still with us.

Very recently, we have appointed an acting CEO of Lotteries. That individual is trying to pick up the pieces and recreate a working corporation. That individual, Mr. Winston Hodgins, with whom I know that the members opposite are very familiar, a man of great integrity, has got a big job on his hands. So, in answer to the Member's particular question, I have had several meetings with Mr. Hodgins. But they have not been in relation to tourism. They have been in relation to other considerations.

I do want to remind the Member once again that, although I am the Minister responsible for Lotteries, I, of course, am not the CEO, and I am not the Chair of the Board, and I do not have the staff with me to answer his questions. I, again, undertake that if the Member wishes to write to me and direct specific questions to me then I will endeavour to provide information from the CEO of Lotteries and hope that will provide clarification. But, no, the ADM of Tourism is not part of the day to day workings of Lotteries, and I do not think he knows how many buses came last night, or the night before.

\* (17:40)

**Mr. Reimer:** I realize that the Minister wears two hats, in a sense, the Minister of Tourism and also the Minister responsible for Lotteries. I

guess my line of questioning is, as Minister of Tourism, her concern for anything that is of a betterment to Manitoba in regard to increasing and enhancing tourism for Manitoba is one of the directives that the Minister of Tourism would have. On the other hand, there is the Minister responsible for Lotteries, in which tourism plays a very, very significant part. I guess my question is, when the question of casinos came up, did the Minister of Tourism approach Manitoba Lotteries or the former CEO of Lotteries and ask him whether there was any type of indication as to what the economic impact on the additional casinos might be?

**Ms. McGifford:** Mr. Chair, I am really not sure that this is the appropriate place to be asking these questions, but I will endeavour to answer the question. Now I am going from memory. I do not have staff with me. I do remember a briefing with the former CEO of Lotteries. I do not have the briefing material with me, so I do not recall the details of that briefing, but I do think that the former CEO probably did talk to me about tourism. I know he talked about buses. I do not recall the number that he might have used. I know that he talked about the new hotel associated with Regent Street as a drawing card for tourism, although the hotel, I know the Member knows, has not been built yet.

So I think that, as the Minister of Tourism, I can certainly regard the casinos as a potential tourism destination. On the other hand—I am sure the Member will agree with this—the casinos do not exist for the tourism industry, because a lot of people who attend the casinos, of course, are from Winnipeg.

I do know that the former CEO of Lotteries did tell me that within a day's drive of Winnipeg there were 26 casinos. If we see casinos as tourist destinations, there are many very close to the city of Winnipeg, including the two in Winnipeg. Certainly we see them as tourist attractions, but I do not know how many people come to a city purely to attend a casino. That may be an added attraction. I think we have spoken about this in the House that somebody may come for—well, in fact, I know this happens because I spoke to our visitors from North Dakota who came up for one specific purpose, which was, of course, to attend this Legislature

but, also, in the course of their stay here, attended a casino.

**Mr. Reimer:** I thank the Member for that question. I guess it was just a matter of wanting to know whether there was a concern on her part in regard to—I know that it would be government policy that would dictate the direction of whether there are casinos or no casinos, but as Minister of Tourism the fact of the addition of additional casinos in Manitoba, whether there had been any type of economic impact or any type of indication as to what the benefits were and what that might amount to in the dollar amount for tourism in Manitoba in general.

**Ms. McGifford:** The Department of Tourism regards the additional proposed casinos, because we do not know whether there will in fact be any additional casinos or not, as a possible tourist attraction. I do believe that all of the proponents were required to include a tourism element within their proposals, so that would be part of it. I know that perhaps one interesting idea might be that the casino itself could build on a number of other endeavours that might come with the casinos, so it would kind of be a link to something else in that community in developing the tourist industry.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** I would like, if I may, to ask you a question which relates to the film tax credits which have been quite important in facilitating the development of the movie and the film industry in Manitoba?

Those tax credits, at least in some jurisdictions, are considered as it were tax expenditures in the sense that the amount that is not—a revenue that is not gathered is equivalent to money that could have been gathered and then spent. Could the Minister give me some information as to the size of the tax expenditure as it were, the revenue which is not captured as a result of the tax credit?

**Ms. McGifford:** I thank the Member for River Heights for his question, but I would like to tell him that program is run through the Ministry of Finance, and so those questions really do need to be directed to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger). As well, I do remind the Member that we are talking about tourism; however—

**Mr. Gerrard:** If I may have leave to continue. You are doing, I believe, some consultations related to the tax credit and how it would be applied. Could you elaborate a little bit more on the direction that you are taking?

**Ms. McGifford:** I will endeavour to answer the question. Unfortunately, we do not have the staff here because, as I did indicate, we are working with tourism. I think the Member might be referring to a proposal to review the tax credit, a possible consideration of increasing the tax credit by 5 percent for productions that occur outside of the city, in rural Manitoba.

I know as well that the industry is interested in extending the period covered by production, so extending the post-production period so that the period is longer for claiming this tax credit. I know there is also some interest in extending the tax credit to a new media, and that work is underway.

**Mr. Gerrard:** It is not totally separate from tourism because the movie industry does draw people to Manitoba of course, but I would like to explore your comment just a step further in terms of the potential for extending it to a new media. What might be included in "new media" and what is being looked at there?

**Ms. McGifford:** As I indicated to the Member for River Heights, the staff who would be able to assist in answering his questions are not here. I understand that "new media" might refer to aspects of animation, computer generated materials, Internet applications. That would be the answer that I could give the Member right now. If the Member wants more detailed information, again, as I suggested to the Member for Southdale (Mr. Reimer) when he was asking me questions, I am certainly open to a written inquiry, and I could refer the Member's questions to the relevant staff. I am sure they would be more than willing to supply an answer.

\* (17:50)

**Mr. Gerrard:** One last question, and then I will pass it back. It has to do with whether the Minister is aware to what extent New Media might be used in promoting tourism in Manitoba.

**Ms. McGifford:** Of course, I would like to bring to the attention of the Member our new Web site and the fact that we are working to make this Web site more interactive. I think we mentioned that there are 100 000 contacts with this Web site per month. We are also working with New Media to promote Manitoba as a tourist destination, and any suggestions that the Member might have would be greatly appreciated by staff in Tourism. In the letter he is going to write asking me for information he could also give me advice and kill two birds with one stone.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Thank you. I turn it back to the Member for Seine River.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** I am prepared to move to the next appropriation.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Line 14.4.(c) Tourism Development (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$400,500. Shall the line pass?

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Under this section, I just wanted to know who is in the managerial position?

**Ms. McGifford:** Mr. Chair, the manager of this division is Neil McInnis.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Line 14.4.(c) Tourism Development (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$400,500—Pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$204,100. Shall the line pass?

**Mrs. Dacquay:** I have some questions here and some general questions I will probably pose under this section as well. First of all, the first line, the Transportation line, there is a substantive increase year over year and I wondered if I could please have an explanation for that?

**Ms. McGifford:** Mr. Chair, I am advised that once again the difference in the transportation costs is a reflection of what the costs actually are as opposed to last year's budget which did not fully account for the costs.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** I appreciate that that might be a plausible explanation, but I am having difficulty with this because in the other lines there was not as much differential. This is a substantive differential. I mean, does this happen often that the projected costs are not in line with the actual

costs? That is, in percentage, about a 70% increase.

**Ms. McGifford:** I am advised that in the move from one government ministry to the other some of the ways in which items are identified have changed, so there is much more change in Tourism. For example, the Member might remember when we were looking at the Arts Branch there was not this kind of change. But here, there is a different kind of terminology, et cetera, that is used to name things. That is also part of the explanation for the differentials between one year and the other.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Under the Communications line also it is almost double. Could I please have an explanation for this change?

**Ms. McGifford:** The reason for the change in Communications is desktop management charges.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Is the reduction in Supplies and Services and Other Operating attributable to Pan Am?

**Ms. McGifford:** I understand it is the completion of the tourism standards consortium agreement with tourism education and it is \$50,000 a year.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Is this the section that has the primary responsibility for tracking and providing these statistics in terms of numbers of person-visits and other such materials?

**Ms. McGifford:** I am advised that the information the Member is seeking is under the marketing area. We have already passed those lines.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Then could I get an explanation of some of the activities that are listed on the opposite page under the Activity Identification? I understand the Manitoba Aboriginal Tourism Association, but I guess I am wondering, as an example, the first activity identified.

**Ms. McGifford:** Mr. Chair, we have four consultants in the Department who work with the industry in helping them develop marketing

strategies and also in helping them with their product development work.

If I might just add, those four consultants also help industry people with their business plans.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Are these potential tourism—

**Mr. Chairperson:** The hour being 6 p.m., the Committee shall rise.

## LABOUR

\* (14:50)

**Madam Chairperson (Bonnie Korzeniowski):** Good afternoon. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This afternoon this section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 255 will resume consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Labour.

Consideration of these Estimates left off on page 129 of the Estimates book, Resolution 11.1. Labour Executive (b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$500,100. The floor is now open for questions.

**Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield):** I would like to go back to the Office of the Fire Commissioner and ask some questions in regard to the storage site, the Esso storage facility in the Rural Municipality of East St. Paul. The Minister had said she would look into some information. I was wondering if she had any of that information that she said she was going to table yesterday.

**Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister of Labour):** I am pleased to state that the Office of the Fire Commissioner has been very busy since last we met, and I have some background information which I am delighted to put on the record for the Member regarding the issue of the East St. Paul municipality and the Esso situation, and the City of Winnipeg, on Henderson Highway that the critic has raised over the past several days in Estimates.

The situation is that this facility is not a refinery anymore. It is a tank farm which is far less dangerous than a refinery. There are state-

of-the-art systems and safeguards in this tank farm. The fill station for trucks is remote from the storage component. I would venture to guess—and I will ask staff if I am accurate in this—that if you have the storage facilities separate and remote from the filling facilities, that you have far less danger of combustion or an incident occurring.

There might even be more danger at a gas station because the tanks are right under the pumps. I mean, there is concrete, et cetera, but we all know of situations, we have all seen them in movies, I am sure, where a car runs into a gas station careening out of control, usually driven by a bad guy—but I digress—who hits the pump and the place goes up in a wonderful conflagration.

Well, the way the situation is set up at the Esso tank farm is that this is far less likely if not completely unlikely to happen because the filling station for the trucks that come through Henderson Highway are discreet and quite a distance from the storage tanks that are there. So I would think that that would not render completely unable to happen, but far less likely to have a conflagration that the Member was speaking about.

Also, there are industrial-strength diesel-powered pumps that can pull water from the river in case an incident does occur. So there is actually, I suppose one could say, a first responder on-site already in the sense that there are pumps on-site. The river is virtually on-site, as the Member spoke of yesterday. So that is kind of the background for that situation.

We have discussed yesterday the training and the concern about the training and experience and knowledge base of the firefighters in East St. Paul. I would just like to put on the record a couple of issues in regard to that: 50 percent of the East St. Paul firefighter members work for the City of Winnipeg Fire Department. So fully half of the people who would be available or on a roster to be available already are fully functioning firefighters.

All of the East St. Paul Fire Department personnel have had hazardous material operations level of training so that they all

recognize, they all are aware of what is there, what you do, how you identify. I think this is important: that you have 100 percent of those firefighters trained in this, because you cannot guarantee who is going to be on call when a situation might arise. So while half of the firefighters might be City of Winnipeg firefighters, you cannot guarantee that there would be a City of Winnipeg firefighter fighting, you know, being on first call for this kind of a situation. So all of the firefighters in East St. Paul, whether they are City of Winnipeg firefighters or not, have this training.

We spoke yesterday about the chief, that this is a very hierarchical organization. Parenthetically, I am not usually in favour of a lot of hierarchy in organizations, but I think in this kind of a situation it is essential that you have somebody who is in charge at all times. The East St. Paul fire chief is on the City of Winnipeg HAZMAT team. So the chief of the firefighters, who will be there, who will be in charge if there is an incident, is on the City of Winnipeg Hazardous Materials Team, so he is very well aware of all of the issues that could come up.

The Member raised a concern yesterday, as well, about what is on-site, who knows what is on-site, should the Office of the Fire Commission not know what is on-site. I responded that it is up to the municipality to ensure that they know what is there, in answer to that concern, a legitimate concern, by the way. All of these are very legitimate concerns, and I thank the Member for his having asked these questions.

East St. Paul firefighters have participated in tours of the site to build up their knowledge of the site, and the last tour was last November. So November of '99, members of the Fire Department toured the site. I would assume again that those members that toured the site are members at least one or more of whom would be on call at any one time. So not only a fire chief, but at least some members of the Fire Department would have that first-hand experience and knowledge of what is going on.

Again, if I may just parenthetically respond, this sounds like East St. Paul has done a good job in at least a couple of those five items that

we were talking about yesterday, which is having a plan for potentially hazardous, potentially dangerous situations. It sounds to me like what they have done is an excellent job of recognizing, No. 1, that this is a potentially dangerous, deadly situation, particularly since there is housing in that area, and they have taken as many steps as is feasible right now to do this.

Another issue that was raised by the Member yesterday was the whole issue of backup. What happens if this is a large incident? We all hope that that is absolutely not the case, but you must be prepared for the worst eventuality.

What kind of backup is there available? Where there is backup, as I have spoken of in the sense that the Fire Department is well trained, the Fire Department knows the site; the Fire Department has people who know hazardous materials. But the City of Winnipeg—and remember we spoke yesterday about the City of Winnipeg being a backup and being available particularly in a massive emergency—has always been able to call on the Winnipeg Airport Authority foam trucks, as well as those trucks and firefighting equipment available through the military.

If we are talking about a major, major incident that is going to be involved for a number of hours, which could happen in a situation like this, there would be access to foam trucks from the Airport Authority. I am sure the Member may know more than I do how quickly going the perimeter route could get there, but it seems to me it would not take very long comparatively speaking to get those foam trucks from the airport to Henderson Highway.

The Office of the Fire Commissioner has a foam truck, but it is located in Brandon. So it would take slightly longer to get to the East St. Paul area, approximately 2.5 hours. There is the backup there of the trucks from the Winnipeg Airport Authority.

Again, issue was raised about dialogue between East St. Paul and the City and Esso. East St. Paul is meeting with Esso. They are continuing to meet with Esso. While I do not think it is possible to give 100% assurance to the

Member or people who reside or work in that area that an incident like this, what we are concerned about, could not happen. It appears to me from the information that has been gathered by the Office of the Fire Commissioner that East St. Paul is well aware of the problems, well aware of the potential hazards, and doing whatever they can to ensure that they have quick, efficient, effective, knowledgeable staff on call. Should an incident happen, they would be able to have good first response, and then the extra second, third, fourth levels of response could come in very quickly upon alert by the East St. Paul Fire Department.

**Mr. Schuler:** First of all, I would like to thank the Minister for her comments. I think she realizes, as I do, this is not a political issue. Not at all. I think what you have to do when you look at a situation like this—and the Minister is absolutely right—it is called the tank farm. We found that out this morning. It is actually a fuel storage depot basically.

What I believe the role is as an MLA, as a critic or as the Minister, is to make sure that in a situation like this the worst case scenario was looked at and how would one deal with a worst case scenario. Then you work your way backwards.

We discovered this morning that there are some 35 large storage tanks. In those are diesel and gasoline fuel. The Minister is right: they are set apart and they have a berm around them. There is a pump house at the river. I guess one of the questions would be how often is that inspected to ensure that the pump is functional. I was assured that that particular pump would pull water winter or summer. I assume the pump then goes right down to the riverbed.

The contract between Esso and the City of Winnipeg actually expires June 30, 2000. The contract as far as I know was for a \$50,000 flat fee. The information that was given to me was not once in the recollection certainly of the people that I have spoke to was an alarm ever sent out to the Winnipeg Fire Department.

I think, first of all, we can dispense with the nonsense argument that has been put forth by the City of Winnipeg that this was a cost-saving

measure. In fact, every 10 years they make a half-million dollars off of this, and I see it as absolute nonsense. I think this is probably petty politics that was played when that contract was cut off, because it was basically a moneymaker for the City.

I think we as legislators should be upset about that. I think there is something there that should be said. It must be said publicly that that was false. According to the information I have it was not true, and that does concern me.

The Minister did make comment of the fact that there is a fire system in place. They pump the water out of the Red River, it comes across Henderson Highway, and it goes into the. I do not know if the term is right, spigots that are set up around the site, and they can put water on. The only thing is, again if you look at a scenario where something very serious could happen, that the individuals that would be the first ones to man those whatever they would be called, hoses, but it is more than a hose, it is more like a shooting device that does propel water fairly far.

\* (15:00)

Some of the individuals could actually be incapacitated and not be able to be the front line, Minister. Again it comes down to speed. Again, to the Minister on this, we did spend some time looking out. The property lines between residences and the property line of the storage facility or the tank farm are now butting up against each other. That means that the fence that goes around on the south side now butts into the properties of several of the houses along that whole stretch, part of it being one of the Mulder homes. It would be Burr Oak Bay and then Pritchard farm properties runs along there.

My concern to the Minister again is that I believe essence, the speed of which you would get a response would be a concern. The Minister also mentioned that 50 percent of the volunteers of East St. Paul Fire Department do actually participate in the Winnipeg Fire Department. The thing is that East St. Paul may not have the same equipment, which they do not. Also, with shift work and the like, you have no idea if those 50 would even be around. I suspect they are on some kind of a shift system, that they, in fact, may not be on shift. You may not have half of

the volunteers coming out even having participated that do actually work for the City of Winnipeg.

For the record, Madam Minister, if there is anything that happens at the tank farm, the alarm automatically rings in the City of Winnipeg. The station is the McIvor Avenue, it is McIvor and Rothesay, approximately that corner. It is actually on Rothesay, but it is that corner. They are the ones that would first respond. I would suggest to the Minister that that system, should is not strong enough, must stay in place, Minister, because you need that heavy equipment. You need that expertise.

The Minister mentioned that the fire chief is trained in all these situations and how to deal with these. But, Minister, what if the fire chief is not available at that time. I posed the question during my discussions this morning: Who then triggers that the City would be called in?

Again, Minister, we have seen events happen and we have seen them happening throughout society. It is so easy to be Monday's quarterback. It is so easy to say what we should have done. You know, oh, if we would have only called five minutes earlier, we could have averted this, that and the other.

Minister, I would say that for the citizens of East St. Paul, I would comment to the Minister also, we do not know actually what is stored. I have asked if I can get a copy of everything that is stored there. In fact, I would ask the Minister if that is something she would do through her department. That should actually be made public, what is stored there because, Minister, should you have a strong fire at that site and you have a north wind, Minister, that residue will land on North Kildonan, and depending on the way the wind goes, it could head towards Transcona, it could head into North Kildonan or it could go towards the north end. It goes up and then at some point in time it would come down, and what concerns me, Minister, is what is on-site, and I think the residents, I think all concerned would be a lot more comfortable if we did have the first responders.

The alarm goes off, and the alarm should go off at East St. Paul, I have no problem with that,

but it should go off at the McIvor and Rothesay Fire Department, Minister, because, you know, my fear is the worst case scenario, and I think you have to plan for the worst case scenario. This could become a catastrophe, because, Minister, it does not just involve East St. Paul. It is far too close to the city.

If you get toxic clouds drifting, they could be blown right into the heart of the city. It is not that far away, and I would ask the Minister, seeing as this information has been tabled and she has now been part of this discussion, would she be willing to instruct her department to take an activist role in dealing with this particular issue?

It is an anomaly, Minister. We do not have 15 or 16 of them around the city. This is a one-case scenario. It really does not matter who you speak to, when you start to go through the various steps of what all is actually involved, the concern level goes up, Minister, and I think we do have reason for concern. I am asking the Minister would she be willing to instruct her department, even if it is just in a facilitating role, to take an activist role in this to ensure that the proper things are done?

I would comment to the Minister it is my understanding, and, again, I have no proof on any of this, it is just my understanding from discussions I have had today, that Esso and the City of Winnipeg are currently in discussion again, and perhaps with the encouragement of the Minister and her department—and the Minister certainly does have a degree of clout, frankly. I mean, she has lots more clout than, quite frankly, I do, so for her to indicate that there is some concern.

It does have a concern for the City of Winnipeg. It is a concern of the residents around the site that, Minister, if it has not happened in 15, 20 years—I do not know how long this contract was for. I mean, I guess we could probably say there is a chance it will never happen. But what if it does, that one time? What does it take to just have that bell go off at McIvor and Rothesay and have those individuals come out and assess the situation, because they would come out with the human power, they would come out with equipment, and you know

what? I think in the end it would be the right decision to have made.

My question has been posed to the Minister.

**Ms. Barrett:** Well, it is a series of issues, and I will try and address them. I may not address them exactly in the order in which they were raised, but the first issue, as I recall, was the issue dealing with the City choosing to not renew the contract or getting out of it in whatever way they get out of the agreement with East St. Paul.

This is an issue that is between, as is several of the other areas, the City and the Municipality of East St. Paul. If there was a flat fee of \$50,000 a year for 10 years and the bell never rang and the City never had to fulfil its part of the bargain, then if the Member is accurate in this, and I have no reason to disbelieve him, then the rationale for not renewing the contract, of cost cutting on the surface would appear to be an interesting rationale. I do not know the situation, so I am not going to—I do not want to make any judgments and cast aspersions on the City of Winnipeg.

It is a very challenging issue, not only for East St. Paul, but the City has been making comments about support for fire services in several other of the outlying municipalities in the Capital Region. So that one is, again, a situation that I think needs to be addressed between the municipality of East St. Paul and the City of Winnipeg. The Member may think that that is a cop-out on my part—he may not—but really there are jurisdictional issues here that you do need to go through. There are good reasons for there to be the jurisdictional boundaries that exist. They may not appear so on the surface, but I would suggest again that the Member might contact the municipality of East St. Paul and find out what, if any, negotiations are underway, what the real situation is with discussions with the City.

We have no power in the Office of the Fire Commissioner; we have no power in the Department of Labour. I do not believe we have any authority in any other piece of legislation in government, although, again, I cannot comment with any degree of certainty because I do not know what the implications for The City of



Winnipeg Act or The Municipal Act would be in this regard to override that kind of negotiations. I would think that neither act probably has the authority to have the Province come in, in that kind of legalistic way.

\* (15:10)

The issue of the housing, which was another issue that the Member raised, and that the property lines are butting up against the tank farm, I must let the Member know that the tank farm, the facility was there before a single house was built. I am not in any way suggesting that people who live in that area do not need and do not require as much protection from occurrences such as we are talking about, the worst case scenario, as anybody else. I am not for a moment suggesting that. But the municipality of East St. Paul knew what was happening. They knew that farm was there. They knew that facility was there when those houses were allowed to be built. I do not know how old those houses are, but I do know that the farm preceded those houses.

So, again, jurisdictionally—and I am sounding technical here, but that is what we need to be ultimately—an argument could be made that there should not have been houses within a certain distance of that facility because of the potential, small though it may be, for a catastrophe happening, just as the Member has spoken about in the Estimates here. So, again, that says to me that the Municipality of East St. Paul had to have known what the situation was when the houses were beginning to be built because the farm was there before the houses. Had it been otherwise, then the situation would have been very different but then the ultimate result would not have necessarily been different.

So I think we have—and I am going off on a little tangent here—another issue, a planning issue. Again, this is an issue that Intergovernmental Affairs has a stake in, the East St. Paul municipality has a stake in, the City has a stake in, we all have a stake in. This is a situation that is not good from a fire prevention point of view. I am sure that the Fire Department, when they look at the proximity of those houses to the tank farm, shudder to think what could happen.

As I stated in my earlier answer, I believe that the Fire Department in East St. Paul has done a very good job of planning for, training for and having knowledge of the elements that they need to deal with a catastrophe, should it happen.

Firefighters always plan for the worst and hope for the best. Actually, that is kind of what legislation, in my view, should do, too, is take a look at what the worst possible scenario is, cover that, and then hope you never have to use it. So that is that kind of a situation.

Into the area of what actually happens, the Member, I believe, was talking about—he did not know what the name of the equipment was, but my understanding is it is called the deluge pump. I would suspect that anyone who is a volunteer firefighter would know how to handle a pump such as that. I could not do it. I could not even begin to do it ever, ever in my life, and I admire greatly those who do have the skill and the stamina to be able to do this. They deserve an enormous amount of respect and admiration from all of us. But, anyway, that is a bit of information. It is called a deluge pump.

The Member was concerned about the training and the 50 percent that were not members of the City of Winnipeg Fire Department. We have, in our Office of the Fire Commissioner and the Manitoba Emergency Services College in Brandon an organization, an education facility, that is second to none in the country if not North America. We have people from across the country coming to be trained at MESC. We have fire departments across the country that will not take anybody who is not trained by our facility in Brandon. So we have a great resource here that we should all be very proud of.

The firefighters of East St. Paul are either City of Winnipeg firefighters, and those who are City of Winnipeg firefighters are obviously accredited to the highest levels. The firefighters with the East St. Paul Fire Department who are not firefighters with the City of Winnipeg have virtually all either become accredited through training at the Brandon facility and actually have the piece of paper, or they have taken the courses and just not gone the last step to become

accredited. So I think the Member can rest easy that this is a very well-trained, very experienced, very effective firefighting force.

The question about what happens if the fire chief is not there, again, because this is a hierarchical, kind of a militarily organized organization, if the fire chief is not there, then there would be an incident commander on each shift. So if a call came in to deal with an incident at this facility, there would be an incident commander identified who would then take the place of the fire chief. Everything would go through that incident commander. So, again, there is a hierarchy, the chain of command. There would always be someone at the top, whether it was the fire chief or someone else.

The shift work situation, yes, well. I would assume that, if the Fire Department in East St. Paul is doing its job, which I have no reason to believe they are not and would suggest that they probably are because they have the training and they have the knowledge and expertise, they would recognize the roster of their volunteers. Okay, half of you guys are City of Winnipeg firefighters; half of you are not. Of the half that are not, some of you have jobs. Your jobs, whether you are a firefighter or not, your volunteer firefighting job would require some time. So you would need to be slotted in.

So I imagine there is a fairly comprehensive and quite complex shift situation happening here. If I were the shift commander or the person who was putting this together, I would ensure that every single shift that occurred in the East St. Paul volunteer Fire Department had representatives from that half of the force that is actually trained City of Winnipeg firefighters so that you would have an incident commander for each shift that would be identified, and you would also have trained City of Winnipeg firefighters on each shift.

So I think that is something you might want to check with them, but that would be my suggestion, would be how they would operate.

The Member talked about my having more clout than he in this situation, and frankly, I would suggest that, given the fact that we do not have any legislative authority in this matter,

actually the Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler) probably has more clout. Am I correct that this is part of your constituency? Okay, so you are the MLA for that area. You have actually more influence, in a sense, than I would have, because I do not have any legislated authority. You can go in and talk to the Fire Department. You can talk to the municipal officials in your role as MLA. Check out what I have suggested is the situation. Find out if it is true and find out what the issues are. You really do have, in this situation, an enormous amount of power and ability to go in and, at the very least, get information and identify what the needs are. Again, as I said, we do not have any official authority in this situation.

\* (15:20)

The Office of the Fire Commissioner is always ready to go in and work with fire departments on the five-point action plan which we spoke about yesterday: public education program, fire prevention program, incident management system, and I would suggest the incident management system is probably working very well in this situation, but this would be one that I would make sure is operating. Standard operating guidelines, this would be the sort of thing I would imagine would make sure each shift does have a representative group from the City of Winnipeg. You have got 50 percent. Many volunteer fire departments would be thrilled to have probably even a quarter trained firefighters who actually do this for their job, too. There is a rich resource there. You could check that to make sure those people are put in appropriate spots. Developing a training plan: Again, I would say that East St. Paul has done a remarkable job in that regard because virtually all of their firefighters are fully trained or virtually all fully trained.

My suggestion to the Member would be to go speak—he may have done this, I do not know—but to find out, share all of his concerns with the Fire Department and/or the municipal government and, as I have stated, we are more than willing to help in any way we can, but we do not have any legislative authority to require something like this to happen.

I will just very briefly mention that I have a situation about five blocks from my own home

where there is a gas station, two churches, a seniors block, a school—actually two seniors blocks—right within a very small radius, and there is a big propane tank there—huge issues of safety. Oh, and some right on the corner, the propane tank is right on the corner. It is a major corner, Ellice and Arlington. Actually, probably for the number of people, it has more potential for devastation as far as numbers of people are concerned because it is so densely populated. We have been working with the City and the Department of Labour for years to try and get this situation sorted out and have not been able to do so. It is going through the courts.

So on a personal level, I understand exactly what the Member is talking about. So those are my suggestions for him in this area.

### Chairperson's Ruling

**Madam Chairperson:** Order, please. I have a ruling for the Committee.

On Wednesday, June 12, 2000, I took under advisement a point of order raised in the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 255. The point of order raised by the Honourable Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Rondeau) questioned the relevance of the line of questioning from the Honourable Member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Smith) to the Honourable Minister of Labour (Ms. Barrett). The Honourable Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler) also spoke to the point of order.

I appreciate the contributions made by all honourable members to this point of order, and I thank them. I must rule that the Honourable Member for Assiniboia does not have a point of order.

I would like to take this opportunity, however, to remind all honourable members of some factors relating to relevance in the Committee of Supply. In the current consideration of Labour Estimates, the Honourable Minister and the Honourable Member for Springfield have agreed to a somewhat free-ranging discussion, as noted in Hansard on May 30, 2000.

Agreements such as this one allow for some latitude in the scope of questions and answers as opposed to the more structured line-by-line style of inquiry. While our rule 73.(2) does state that speeches in Estimates must be strictly relevant to the item or clause under discussion, arrangements made with the consent of the Committee do allow for alternative procedures.

With these points in mind, the topic raised by the Honourable Member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Smith) should be considered relevant. I would like to remind all honourable members, however, that ministers do not have to answer all questions.

I believe all honourable members wish to keep the discussion flowing along constructively, and I respectfully ask for your cooperation in this matter.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Schuler:** Back to what the Minister had relayed to us. Basically, Minister, this is really an issue between the City of Winnipeg and Esso, because that is actually who has this first response agreement. Minister, it is quite prevalent to get a north wind—

### Point of Order

**Hon. Tim Sale (Minister of Family Services and Housing):** Madam Chair, I think the questions that are being asked are extremely important and that the Member is asking them in all sincerity, but for the last two series he has been directly addressing the Minister. I think it is really important that we keep it clear that we address the Chair and the Minister answers. I think they are important questions and it is a useful discussion that is going on, but I just think we should keep the process the way it ought to go.

**Madam Chairperson:** Could I speak to that first, please? *[interjection]* Okay. The Member for Springfield, on the same point of order.

**Mr. Schuler:** Madam Chair, I actually believe that I have been fairly conscious to always direct my comments through you. Perhaps, if members were concentrating throughout the whole thing

and not trying to nitpick, instead of just sitting and reading books or whatever it is, doing their paperwork, and then try to disrupt these proceedings.

I think I have been very careful to direct everything through you, Madam Chair. If on occasion it did not seem like that, I had intended to direct it through you, and if I did not, then I stand corrected. Certainly it has been my intention, and I believe I have been very careful on that particular issue to always direct it through you.

I will take that as notice and continue to do it, but to disrupt these proceedings for a trivial and petty matter, I think, is uncalled for.

**Madam Chairperson:** The Honourable Minister does have a point of order. I would like to thank the Member for Springfield for making the attempt to direct questions through the Chair.

However, I would like to take a moment and remind all honourable members on both sides of the table to please address their questions through the Chair. One of the basic principles of our procedure is that proceedings be conducted in a free and civil discourse. To this end, members are less apt to engage in direct, heated exchanges and personal attacks when all their comments are directed to the Chair rather than to another member.

I respectfully ask for the co-operation of all honourable members in this matter, and if the Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler) was not listening, I did acknowledge that he has addressed all questions, not necessarily comments, through the Chair.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Schuler:** Meanwhile, back in the real world, getting away from Timmy's petty moments, I would like to ask, through you, Madam Chair, to the Minister, the fact that you tend to have a considerable amount of north wind that comes down and should you have an incident occur at the tank farm, to the Minister, and we actually at this point in time do not know what kinds of materials are stored there, could the Minister ask her department, the Office of

the Fire Commissioner, if they could table a report to the House through you, Madam Chair, to the Minister, if the Minister could table a report of exactly what is stored at that facility? I think that is something that should be public if it is not.

\* (15:30)

**Ms. Barrett:** I believe I spoke yesterday about this, I cannot recall, but at any rate, the municipal offices should have this information. The Chief of the Fire Department should have this information.

The whole issue of the north wind would be one of the first elements of the five-step action plan for municipal fire services, which would be an incident-management system or a fire prevention program. It would be in either of those two areas, that one of the first things you would look at is the prevailing winds. I do not know the geography, but I would assume it is not a narrow valley, because not only could you have issues of prevailing winds but wind gusts that would come through a narrow valley.

But at any rate, those kinds of weather determinants would be one of the first components of implementing or putting together a fire prevention and an implementation plan. So I would think that that would be the situation there.

As far as the contents of the tank farm are concerned, as I have stated the office of the fire chief or the municipal offices should have that information. So I would suggest that the Member check that out because it is important to know whether they do have that information. I would suspect they do because they have done such a good job in all the other stuff. If the Member wants, we will endeavour to do that same thing, contact the municipal offices and/or the fire chief as well.

But as I stated yesterday, this is not information that the OFC has as a regular part of its duties. The OFC has some regulatory and legal authorities, but in this area it is facilitative; it is educative. It is working with municipalities and fire departments in order to do the training. So we do not have the authority to require that

information be given to the Office of the Fire Commissioner. We are there to act as a training resource, as a facilitator to help municipalities implement a five-step action plan, this kind of thing.

So if the Member wishes, we will endeavour to get that information, but I think it is a good idea for him to check it out himself just to find out if the municipality and/or the Fire Department does have that.

**Mr. Schuler:** I would appreciate it if the Minister would table it. The beauty of that is it then is public information and it could be made available. There are a lot of individuals around and downwind from the site who do have some concerns. Again, Minister, it tends to be in society that if the Minister's office or a department asks for something, it seems to be a pressure that is very influential and seems to open up doors.

I just read from page 9 of your document, Office of the Fire Commissioner Annual Report '98-99. It says: Our values. We believe that people have the right to live in safe communities.

Certainly, I think that is what everybody would like to see, and that is certainly what we would like to see done, through you, Madam Chair, to the Minister. I guess that is why I am bringing these questions forward because we do not just want to have a statement that it is a safe community, but I think we wish to ensure that that is actually the case, that is de facto the case, that we are providing a safe community.

So I would ask the Minister if she would, through her department, be willing to table that information. I suspect it might just be diesel fuel and gasoline. There may not be anything else that is stored on-site, but certainly that being made public would relieve a lot of concerns that people might have.

**Ms. Barrett:** Yes, I am prepared to do that, and I am glad that the Member raised the values that are paramount and underlie the Office of the Fire Commissioner.

The other side of that is we believe that people have the right to live in safe communities—of course, we do—but we also believe and the Office of the Fire Commissioner believes and does much of their work based on the fact and the value that it is a responsibility of communities to help ensure that they are safe, and by communities, I mean the broadest possible definition. In the example of East St. Paul, it is the responsibility of the Fire Department there. It certainly is a responsibility of the municipal government there.

I would suggest that in the past, looking back now, putting houses that close to a tank farm might not have been the best idea from a safety perspective. I understand there are lots of reasons, and heaven knows, we all have situations in our own neighbourhoods and in our own constituencies where you look at it and say hmm, if I had it to do over again or if I were in charge or something, that is not what I would have done.

But hindsight is 20/20 and there are, I am sure, many reasons why houses were built there, but I think that because that is such a potentially dangerous and catastrophic situation, this is a good indicator whether the municipality needs to take responsibility, too. I am not for a moment suggesting that East St. Paul is not, but I do think it is a both/and here. We do need to ensure that the municipal or whatever level of government does its job, but we also need to ensure that individuals do their job as well as partner in making safe communities, and that is much of what the Office of the Fire Commissioner does as well.

So I will endeavour to get that information but I suggest too just for his own checking out that the Member might ask. I would recommend that the Member ask for this information in addition to the Minister asking for it, because the Member did say earlier that the Minister asking for something, the Minister doing it has a little bit more clout. The office of, not the person of. I will say that before the Member says it. That may very well be the case, so it might be just a good sort of test to see if an individual has access to this information as well.

\* (15:40)

**Mr. Schuler:** The Minister certainly has a good point, Madam Chair, and that is something that I will do in the next day or so. Again, to the Minister, this site is situated that should there be any fumes that go up it would all go downwind into the city of Winnipeg. I would also like to point out to the Minister that if you were to sit and watch the traffic, I dare say that 99.9 percent of those trucks would head due south, that actually this was a site that was clearly—a lot of land was needed and it was positioned such that it could feed the city of Winnipeg with fuel, diesel and automotive fuel, and it actually is there to service the city of Winnipeg. I think perhaps in that the City of Winnipeg also has an obligation to ensure that that site has some safety in it. It also means safety for its own citizens.

When I said that the Minister's department or the Minister herself has more clout than an MLA, certainly when it comes to, for instance, the Mayor's office, if the Minister's office calls up and says you know, we have had this concern raised. It is a concern. I would suggest that perhaps the Mayor would sooner respond than if a lowly MLA from the back bench were to contact the Mayor's office.

Just as an encouragement that they would continue this program with Esso, because it is basically between Esso and the City of Winnipeg, and again, as I mentioned, they are in negotiations right now that this is something that we all see as being a concern. We have all heard this quote, save us from ourselves, and right now, it is not an issue. It is certainly not a hot and sexy topic around kitchen tables, but if an incident happens there, all of a sudden it is an issue and who was responsible and who should have done something, and who should have put pressure on and, you know, it is so much better to do this up front and to get the parties together and say, come on folks, this is not a biggie. This is not a stretch.

We are not asking for an awful lot. It is a system that was in place, and, frankly, the City made good money off of it. Maybe this should be a system that is preserved. Minister, if there was abuse of this system, I would say that there would be a good case made to say, you know what, either the fees are doubled or it be stopped

or whatever the case may be, but in this case I would say that it has been very responsible.

So I would like to ask the Minister, again, if she would—sorry, I would ask through you, Madam Chair, to the Minister's department, if they would just, in an encouraging mode—of course, you cannot tell the City of Winnipeg what to do and we respect that, nor should one tell any other level, be it school board or otherwise what they should do. But in this case an encouragement, because certainly if a concern is raised and it is brought through the Department, I do believe that there is some merit to that, and it does heighten the concern on the issue because, Lord help us all, Minister, if something were to happen here, and all the finger pointing starts and on and on.

Let us get it on the record that we see this as a concern and that the system as such should be preserved.

**Ms. Barrett:** Before I briefly respond, I think we have agreement that we will temporarily leave the Office of the Fire Commissioner and go to the Citizenship division so that the critic for the Citizenship division can then get back to her other Estimates. If that is agreed by the Committee, we will do that.

**Madam Chairperson:** Is that the will of the Committee? *[Agreed]*

**Ms. Barrett:** Yes, if I may introduce Gerald Clement, who is the Assistant Deputy Minister responsible for Citizenship and Multiculturalism.

**Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Seine River):** I assume that we are starting with Citizenship first. In the Supplementary Estimates book, it is page 48. I have a question relative to the substantive increase under Professional—first of all, I guess, I will back up. I am sorry. Could the Minister please identify who the manager of this Citizenship branch is?

**Ms. Barrett:** The Immigration, Promotion and Recruitment branch has a director, Deborah Zehr. The Citizenship, Settlement and Labour Market branch Director is Zimena Munoz, and the Adult Language Training branch is directed by Marilyn Kenny.

The fourth person would be the Assistant Deputy Minister under the Managerial category, so one ADM and three directors.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Just one quick question on that line. Is it a correct assumption that the differential year over year is attributable to the merit increases?

**Ms. Barrett:** Yes, merit and one reclassification.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Under the next line, Professional/Technical, there is a substantive increase although the numbers of employees remain identically the same. Is that due to reclassification or merit increase?

**Ms. Barrett:** Yes, I apologize. The first line, the four Managerial positions, that increase was merit only. The second line, Professional/Technical, that was a combination of merit and a reclassification. Sorry, I apologize for that.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Under Other Expenditures, could I please get an explanation as to the increase on the line reading Transportation?

**Ms. Barrett:** Yes, basically, Madam Chair, it is an adjustment to reflect the actual expenditures from the former year. It is estimate to estimate, so many of these in this Admin Support kind of area, the estimate for this year is based on the actual for last year.

\*(15:50)

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Yes, I think probably by now I know the answer to this question, but I will ask it anyway. I see that there has been almost a direct shift under Supplies and Services and Other Operating, and I have had that explained to me in the Department of Culture as attributable to Desktop Management. Is that a correct assumption?

**Ms. Barrett:** Basically, yes.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Are there other changes, as well, or is that all attributable to Desktop Management?

**Ms. Barrett:** There is a slight decrease in telecommunications costs and a slight increase in rent, but basically it is a status quo situation.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** I am looking for direction now from the Minister and my colleague. I have some general questions, and I am not sure where the preference would be to start posing those questions as opposed to the line by line.

**Ms. Barrett:** I am prepared, along with staff, to answer questions in any of this area, because it is all under the same area.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** My first question is that, as of October, the Citizenship and Multicultural department was moved out of the Department of Culture to the Department of Labour, and I am just curious as to the potential for duplication of services, and what type of sharing and overlap is there now with the Department of Culture, Heritage and Tourism when it comes to multicultural issues and applications of grants, et cetera?

**Ms. Barrett:** The whole entity moved from Culture to Labour, so there is virtually no overlap. There are no grants that are given that are overlapping. There is no programming that is overlapping. It is all quite distinct.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** I thank the Minister for that response. I just want reassurance that there will be no duplication of service, and I guess I have a concern relative to the clients. Do they now fully understand that the department that they are referred to is the Department of Labour and Citizenship and Multiculturalism and not the Department of Culture?

**Ms. Barrett:** Yes, I accept the Member's concern and understand it. Basically, the phone numbers have all stayed the same. The location has stayed the same. We have had some phone calls in the Minister's office and we have referred them over. All the literature and the brochures now reflect that it is part of Labour, but because it moved intact and did not change location or anything like that, it has been a fairly easy transition.

When we send out information from the Minister's office, we make that clear. When I go

out and speak, I make it clear that there has been this change, so I think, by and large, most of the clients of the division, if they are aware at all, because they deal with the division, do not really care that much what the head is. The transition has taken place.

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

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Can the Minister explain the rationale behind having a minister for Culture and a different minister for Multiculturalism?

**Ms. Barrett:** Yes, I think I can. I will try. What the Premier (Mr. Doer) did at the beginning of the new government was—well, he had made this commitment in the election campaign as well to reduce the size of government, the bureaucratic size of government and senior levels.

What happened is that we reduced the number of ministries from 18 to 15. By doing that, you needed to do some shifting internally. It is like a domino effect. The Department of Energy and Mines, in effect, was eliminated; Mines went into Industry, Trade and Mines; Tourism left Industry, Trade and Tourism and went to Culture, Heritage and Tourism; the Citizenship and Multiculturalism went from Culture to Labour. Technically, that is what happened. That is the kind of domino effect that took place.

Also, historically, this area used to be in Labour, as well, so it has moved back and forth. I guess the other thing is that, on the surface, the connections are not always completely clear as to why you put one in another, but, for example, because the Department of Labour deals with Employment Standards and Workplace Safety and Health issues, many of the new Canadians work in occupations where there are concerns about employment standards, minimum wage issues, things like that. They have a lot of questions in that regard. So there are actually connections that I am finding that work quite well with the Department of Labour.

\* (16:00)

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Well, I assume the Premier (Mr. Doer) then wanted to have a very busy minister,

because I think the Minister of Labour's portfolio is much more comprehensive and far-ranging than the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism, with the greatest respect.

I thought perhaps that one of the rationales the Minister might have provided for this change would be more related to the training component that deals directly with the immigration and transfer of—what is the word I am looking for? Once you get the immigrants, then the job-finding skills and the training and the education component, I understand, is part of the responsibilities of the Citizenship department. I am just wondering, because I know ESL comes under this, have there been any changes in the services provided, such as ESL, or recognizing, as an example, the transfer of their credentials from their home country to making it applicable so that they can apply for the same level of position once they are accepted in Manitoba?

**Ms. Barrett:** Yes, and I thank the Member for that additional linkage that settlement services have and ESL programs, particularly in workplaces, and getting people ready for work is a critical link and one that is a fit with Labour as well.

The programs in this division have not changed, when the move came. We do have an increase in money, as you will find in settlement services. That is an increase from the federal government. They fund these settlement services, so we are recognizing as well. You mentioned accreditation, and we continue to recognize that this is a critical area, a hard nut to crack.

I will be very honest with you. It is not a simple thing to deal with but an issue that we feel very strongly about working towards. This, again, is a connection with Labour and Health and a number of areas, because many of the people who come here who have credentials, who have experience, are not given credit for those credentials and that experience for a number of reasons. We can go into them if you would like, but it is very complicated. I think the Member probably knows some of the challenges facing this whole issue.

But we have critical shortages in many areas, and we have people here who if they could get an accurate reading of their credentials and



could get acceptance by the licensing bodies of their professions, would be able to provide the services that we are desperately needing here in Manitoba. So we are working very hard in that area, in health care, in professions such as engineering, lots of various areas.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Yes, I want to move my line of questioning now to the Immigrant Settlement Services. There is a substantive increase year over year, and I assume that is to address, as the Minister alluded to earlier, the immigration agreement and federal assistance. Is that correct?

**Ms. Barrett:** Yes, it is correct.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Prior to '98 and '99, there was a program available called cross-cultural violence prevention projects that had a number of components, primarily services to immigrants on probation and the multicultural partner of youths prevention project. Is that program still in place, and can the Minister provide me with an update on the status of that program?

**Ms. Barrett:** Yes, the cross-cultural violence prevention project is still in operation. It was a federally funded project and then when we took over when the federal government said we were doing such a good job in these areas that we were going to have responsibility and they continue to fund it, the program was kept.

So it is still in existence, and it does still do the work that it was. The program was part of a federally funded project originally and then when the feds gave us the money and the responsibility to do all of these services, we kept that program. It is still being funded out of Immigrant Settlement Services.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Can the Minister tell me how much has been devoted to that program out of the 1.608?

**Ms. Barrett:** The portion of that project funding that comes from Immigrant Settlement Services is \$20,000, but the project does have funding from other sources.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** The Minister mentioned that there is funding from other sources. Can she

identify, is that government sources, or is that a different level of government, or is that private?

**Ms. Barrett:** We do not have the specifics of the other funding sources for this program, but if the Member would like, we can get that information. I do not want to put on the record assumptions, so if the Member would like, we will provide that information.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** I would appreciate that, and I would like to receive that information at some point in time. I just have a couple of more questions under Citizenship, and then I will be moving to Multiculturalism.

Can the Minister identify what the total number is? I am somewhat confused in reading this agreement, but the current level of numbers of citizens Manitoba is eligible to accept.

**Ms. Barrett:** There is no ceiling. The federal government has a target of approximately 200 000 immigrants a year, and, unfortunately, they have been unable to reach that target in the last couple of years. But let us not go down that road.

Our target would then be 4 percent of that federal target, 4 percent being approximately our percentage of the population of Canada, which would be approximately 8000 regular immigrants, refugees. The total would be 8000, approximately.

\* (16:10)

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Does the Minister have the number of immigrants that were accepted last year?

**Ms. Barrett:** We accepted 3700 immigrants in total, which was 700 more than the year before, so a 23 percent increase.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Is there anticipation that that will increase this year?

**Ms. Barrett:** We are working toward increasing that number, as the province increased it last year. We recognize the importance that immigration plays in increasing our population. We have, unlike some other jurisdictions in the

country where there is perceived a problem with immigration, we recognize, and I think most Manitobans recognize the importance—well, we are a province of immigrants.

We have been, by and large, very accepting of immigrants and very proud of our record and wanting to expand it and being able to use the skills and talents of our immigrant population to assist their quality of life and also our own. We are looking to definitely increase that number.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** I am being pressed for time and reminded of it every second I breathe it seems. I would have many, many more questions. I have one more, though, very important, what I feel is a very important, burning question on this, and then I want to move into the Multicultural.

Does the Minister have any plans to renegotiate the Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement such as the Provincial Nominee Program with the federal government? The intent of that program was to attract more skilled workers and professionals to Manitoba.

The Honourable Minister.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Rondeau):** The Honourable Minister of Labour. That is my job. [*interjection*] It has been a long day.

**Ms. Barrett:** Thank you, and I must congratulate the Member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay). She provided a highlight which probably will not make it into Hansard.

Having been recognized twice—yes, we are very proud of the Provincial Nominee Program. One of the first things that I did within the first month or so of becoming minister was to go to Ottawa and meet with the federal minister, Ms. Caplan.

We were able then to renegotiate just not even having to officially renegotiate but get an increase in the number of provincial nominee families that could come in from 200 to 250. We know that we can accept a much larger number. Much larger. I am not going to give a quantum, but yes, we feel that we can increase our immigration numbers through programs such as the Provincial Nominee Program. We are in

pretty regular contact with the federal government, and they are very supportive of the program too, so I think we would not have any difficulty getting additional numbers.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** I thank the Minister for that response. I would like to ask a couple of questions under Multiculturalism Secretariat, and then I will defer to my colleague to continue. I believe he has questions under this section as well.

Just quickly looking at the Multiculturalism Secretariat, there has been a decrease in the Administrative Support, and I wonder if the Minister could explain what the rationale was for that as well as the deletion of one position under Professional/Technical?

**Ms. Barrett:** The Administrative Support is still there. It is still one staff year. The Professional/Technical full-time equivalent has been the deletion of one full-time equivalent, and the Multicultural activities from the Secretariat have been reassigned within the Citizenship division?

This goes back to an election promise that was made both in 1995 and 1999 by our party, that we would relook at the whole way that the Government interacts with and takes advice from the multicultural community. It is a long story, and the Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler) may have questions on this, because I understand that he was involved with the Manitoba Intercultural Council at one point.

At any rate, it is a recognition that we are going to be looking at the whole configuration of all of these activities. To that end, we had a very successful forum on May 18 with over 120 representatives of various multicultural organizations and are beginning that discussion and that consultation.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** The Minister recently held a meeting with a number of groups. I understand it was by invitation. I wonder if she can now explain what the difference in the role of the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council will be and how she is going to tie in the Manitoba Intercultural Council.

**Ms. Barrett:** This could take a long time. It will not, but it could. Basically the reason we held the forum on May 18, and we invited every multicultural organization that was on the records of the Citizenship and Immigration Division, was, as I said, fulfilment of an election commitment.

The Member may remember in the early 1990s when the former government made changes to The Manitoba Intercultural Council Act. I spoke extensively over several days on that piece of Legislation. We were not in favour of the changes that were made. This meeting on the 18th was the beginning of the commitment that we made in the last two election campaigns to review the relationship with the multicultural community.

My understanding is that the Manitoba Intercultural Council basically, well, it does not exist in the format that it existed prior to 1989. When I have been talking with multicultural groups, I have been using, just for shorthand, MIC as that. What we are going to do, how it is going to be reconfigured, whatever process is finally decided upon through consultation, which began on May 18, whatever it looks like at the end, it may not be called MIC. It may be some completely different configuration.

We are getting information, we are getting recommendations from groups and individuals on basically how government and the multicultural community should connect with each other. Should there be an advisory role, should there be an advocacy role, should there be a granting role? What would a group look like, what would an organization look like? It is in very preliminary stages. So I cannot give a definitive answer at this point.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** Can the Minister please give me perhaps her expectation in terms of time lines?

**Ms. Barrett:** The short answer is as quickly as possible. We definitely want to work as quickly as we can on this issue, but we also want to keep in mind the need to continue the consultation process. Any time you have a consultation process, you spread the time out because, particularly with volunteer groups, these are groups that meet in some cases monthly but in

some cases not necessarily. It took us several months to get this first meeting together. Over the summer we will be developing a process.

\* (16:20)

**Mrs. Dacquay:** My final question is: Would the Minister please explain why there is such a substantive decrease in the amount of grant assistance being provided under this year's Grant Assistance line year over year?

**Ms. Barrett:** Again, as part of our election commitment, one of the elements we looked at was the granting process. We are saying that we were going to look at—we have some, a range of ideas and recommendations that have to come to us not only through the May 18 meeting, but prior to that in this area. What we wanted to do was to provide some basic continuity from MGAC, Multicultural Grants Advisory Committee, to whatever some entity looks like in the future. So that is why we have kept some of the funding. But we also wanted to have the flexibility to deal with these issues as they arose. That is the reason why we had a reduction.

We are still accepting applications, and we are still providing support to multicultural organizations.

**Mr. Schuler:** I understand there are other individuals on the Committee who would like to ask some questions. Perhaps they would like to ask.

**Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona):** Mr. Chairperson, I think we are still in the area where I can ask questions dealing with immigration policy and matters such as that.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Rondeau):** That is correct.

**Mr. Reid:** Then I have a question. I have received this piece of correspondence from a constituent who has expressed some concern regarding the safety of her son and two grandchildren. Her son, she has indicated, is separated from his wife, and they are living in Sri Lanka. She indicates to me that she is trying to sponsor her son and grandchildren to come to Manitoba to live here in Manitoba. She has

indicated that the lives, not only of her son, but the grandchildren's, are apparently in danger from many conditions that one has no doubt seen or heard through the various media sources that would be available to Manitobans on many different occasions regarding the situation in Sri Lanka. I will not go into further details about that part of it.

My constituent has indicated that they fear for the safety of her son and her grandchildren. The grandchildren are quite often kept home from school as there are often threats that the school will be bombed. That is obviously a very serious concern for this constituent of mine. No doubt she has had continual and ongoing communications with her family members living in Sri Lanka.

She, my constituent, very much wants to see her son and grandchildren be able to immigrate to Canada. Of course, I am not totally familiar with the policy with respect to immigration. I would need to ask questions of the Minister, and perhaps she can describe for me or define for me what the policy is with respect to immigration and how my constituent might best be able to meet whatever rules or policies that are in place with respect to immigration.

I am wondering if the Minister can advise me so that I might be able to pass this information on to my constituent. I may have other questions that may arise out of that as well.

**Ms. Barrett:** In Canada, immigration is basically a federal matter. We have in Manitoba, through the Provincial Nominee Program, a delegation of some, but not all, of the authority to deal with immigration. But, in this case, my sense is it would be a refugee process or a family reunification situation, in which case this would definitely be a federal issue.

If the Member wants to give this situation or the information or the letter or the correspondence to me, or to the Assistant Deputy Minister, we can work with the Member and the family to see what available recourse there is, but in this situation, this is completely a federal jurisdictional matter.

**Mr. Reid:** Sorry, I neglected to thank the Opposition critic for giving me the opportunity to ask this question.

This matter obviously is very serious for this family. The individual, my constituent of course, has indicated to me that she cannot sponsor her son because she herself at this point is not a citizen of Canada. I do not know if that is a rule or requirement that we have that would preclude her from sponsoring, but that is what she has indicated to me. I am wondering if the Minister can clarify for me whether or not that is a policy of either the federal Immigration Department or some other policy that may exist?

**Ms. Barrett:** The Member is correct. The issue of sponsorship is relevant here. I believe that because she is not a citizen she could not sponsor—sorry, I misquoted myself. The issue here is the fact that her son is married and has dependants; therefore her son would be the person who would be the head of household and the mother, whether a citizen or not, would not be eligible for sponsorship. So her son would have to come in on his own, not through the sponsorship route but as an immigrant. So it would not even be family class. Family reunification would have to be individual immigration and/or potentially refugee status.

**Mr. Reid:** I understand that. The individual, as I have indicated, is not currently married, is divorced, although there are dependent children as a result of the marriage. My constituent herself is a landed immigrant and, if I understand the Minister correctly, is not eligible then to sponsor her son and grandchildren to come to the country. I am just wondering are there other provisions that may apply?

Is it the refugee policy that there would be some consideration given if a person's life is at risk by remaining in that. Is that the area that the person would apply? Do they have to apply to the federal government? And if that is the case, it is my understanding that the individual might have to wait many months before having their application reviewed and some decision resulting from that process. Of course, it is quite distressing to my constituent who wants to have this matter resolved in a more timely fashion.

I am wondering if the Minister can advise me on whether or not there is some way to speed up this process. I know it could be considered to be family reunification, but there are extenuating circumstances here that the family views this as a personal safety matter and that the family may be at risk if they were to remain in their country of origin. I am wondering whether or not the Minister can advise whether there is a way for this process to have a review of this matter undertaken in a more timely fashion where there are cases of potential life-threatening situations.

\* (16:30)

**Ms. Barrett:** Before I answer the question, I would again suggest that the best thing for the Member to do is to discuss with Citizenship and Immigration staff the specifics of this case. But your constituent's son is not eligible for a family reunification because that would require again a dependent relationship because he may not be married but he has dependent children and he is an adult. He is no longer considered a dependent of his mother. So she is out of the picture as far as having any ability to sponsor or be part of family reunification or anything else like that. So he is going to have to come in as an immigrant.

The refugee part of it is problematic as well because the UN definition of refugee means that you are outside your homeland. So to be a refugee he would have to leave Sri Lanka and prove that going back would be probably more than—again, this is where you need to have the discussion with staff on this and figure it out—but my sense would be the threat probably more than the school might be bombed.

I am not saying I agree with this in saying this is not a bad situation, but the definition of refugee is quite constrained and quite constricted. So my suggestion is that you discuss with the staff the implications here, but on the surface it appears, in this situation, given the circumstances, that his one best avenue right now is the immigration avenue, and it does take a long time.

*Madam Chairperson in the Chair*

**Mr. Reid:** I thank the Minister for the information. That is the part that is distressing to

my constituent is the time period that would be involved in the process. From what she has indicated to me, the children are quite often home from school as a result of potential bomb threats. That is the part I think she finds most distressing, as indicated to me, not only the general safety but also for the safety of the children.

I am wondering, in applying for either refugee or immigrant status, perhaps not on the refugee, but on the immigrant status side, whether or not there is a requirement that an individual applying would have to possess a certain skill set or have some trade or profession prior to making application to allow for that application to receive a positive reply to the individual that would be making application. I am wondering whether or not this individual would have to possess certain skills to be eligible to be considered.

**Ms. Barrett:** Again, for the details you need to talk to our staff and then get involved with the federal immigration authorities. But, yes, every individual who comes, I believe, even refugees, are classified with degree of severity and this kind of thing. Certainly immigrants are assigned numbers. If you have a certain set of skills, if you have a certain level of education, if you have language, if you have either a job offer or employment opportunities, a number of elements go into that.

So, again, I am suggesting that you talk to our division, our department, and then they can help you and your constituent with the details of those things.

**Mr. Reid:** I thank the Minister for that response, and I will talk with her staff about this matter. I just wanted to also raise with the Minister that the individual—I do not know whether there is a list that is kept within her department or the Department of Education and Training, and I am looking for some guidance on this—my constituent indicates that her son has truck driving experience.

I do not know whether that is one of the criteria or one of the shortages we would have in this province, whether her department keeps that information or whether it is the Department of

Education and Training who may sponsor that. Perhaps the Minister or her department can provide me with some guidance in a general way on whether or not this is one of the areas that the individual may qualify for immigration into our country and our province.

**Ms. Barrett:** There is a list that is kept in the Department here. I would suggest that the Member speak with our department, not only about the potential for immigration but also the potential for applying under the Provincial Nominee Program which, if the applicant were successful, would reduce the time that would be required.

Not to spend a whole lot of time on it, but this is the program that we have worked out with the federal government that allows 250 families to come into Manitoba each year, up to 250 families, and there is another grid, another set of criteria that need to be met, one of which is a job offer or a skill in a high-demand occupation. I do not know if truck driver fits in that high-demand occupation list, but there are—and again another set of criteria that have to be followed. So that is another option that the Member should talk directly to the Department about.

**Mr. Reid:** I thank the Minister for that answer, and I will be in contact with her department staff to further talk about this matter and the case involved. I thank the critic for giving me the opportunity to ask these questions on behalf of my constituent.

**Mr. Jim Rondeau (Assiniboia):** I have had four cases where constituents of mine have asked about how they get—they have family members in other countries that are high-demand nurses, et cetera. They have applied six to eight months ago, and they have not heard back. I understand that there is a nursing shortage, et cetera.

What special measures are we taking to assist high-demand employment areas such as nurses to immigrate quickly to Manitoba to fill the shortages?

**Ms. Barrett:** Yes, we do have, again under the Provincial Nominee Program, a limited program that is designed to bring registered nurses into Manitoba. The requirements would be the same

as the Provincial Nominee Program, and I am going to suggest at the end of my answer that you talk to the Department about the specifics.

But what has to happen is they have to be able to pass a licensing exam, and the licensing body is MARN, Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses. Then our department, in conjunction with the Department of Health, is putting forward this limited program. I do not know from which country or countries your constituents come, but in some cases what is identified as a registered nurse in a country of origin is not a registered nurse according to our requirements, which is why they have to pass a licensing exam first before they would be eligible to come in under this special program.

I would suggest that the Member talk to our department about the specifics of this situation.

**Mr. Schuler:** Madam Chair, I would like to congratulate or compliment the Member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) and the Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Rondeau) for their questions. I was wondering if there were any further questions that were wanted to be asked by members of the Committee. If not, certainly on this side we would be prepared to pass the section by section of expenditure Estimates for the Department of Labour.

**Mr. Scott Smith (Brandon West):** Just for clarification, Madam Chair, I know we had said we would go back to Fire Commissioner. I did have some questions in that area. The staff is present, if we can move back into that. *[interjection]* Not strictly in this section, but I did have some questions on the Fire Commissioner's end of it.

**Ms. Barrett:** I am wondering if I could ask the critic for the Official Opposition if he had any questions on the Citizenship and Multiculturalism division at this time?

**Mr. Schuler:** I guess I have some questions of some of the members opposite. Are there other individuals that also have questions that they wish to ask on other sections? *[interjection]* Then I do have some questions on the Multiculturalism Secretariat.

The cross-cultural violence project, who are the proponents? Was that done within the Department or was that done by a—was it a private group that came in and did that? Who was it that actually did the sessions?

\* (16:40)

**Ms. Barrett:** This project had a number of sponsors that included the Justice Department Probation Services, Victor Mager School, the Rev. Jim Wolfe, who is in charge of the Taking Charge! program, Mount Carmel Clinic, and the Immigrant Women's Association of Manitoba.

**Mr. Schuler:** Madam Chair, over at the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council, as the Minister knows, it actually all has a very intriguing history. I believe it was the Minister's government, back quite some time ago, that created the Manitoba Intercultural Council. At that time, the Manitoba Intercultural Council, the way I understood it, was sort of a political arm. It was a voice for the multicultural communities, on the one side, and on the other side, it was a grant giving body.

The way the whole system seemed to work, every multicultural community was allowed to send delegates. Those delegates basically picked the Board, and the Government actually appointed the Chairperson of the Board, at which now you have changed to an elected board. About some 10 years ago, the Manitoba Grants Advisory Council was created. Now, the Minister did indicate that she had met with, I believe it was members of the Manitoba Intercultural Council. Was it also individuals outside of the MIC or was it basically groups represented by the MIC?

**Ms. Barrett:** The short answer to the specific question is that the invitation list for the May 18 forum was made up of the presidents, I believe, of every multicultural organization or ethno-cultural group that the division had in its records.

The Manitoba Intercultural Council, itself, while it still remains a technical entity, has not functioned for several years as an entity. So, even back in its heyday, I would venture to say that the number of organizations that were

invited to the May 18 event would have been larger than the number of organizations that sent representatives to MIC. Because I understand, and I am open to being corrected on this, but if my memory serves me correctly, there were umbrella organizations as well as individual organizations that sent representatives to MIC. In this case, we sent invitations to a very much broader array of groups.

**Mr. Schuler:** You know, Madam Minister, perhaps you could clarify. I was under the impression though that MIC still did exist. I understand they still had an office. For the last years, I thought there was still some organization. In fact, I thought Gabe Dufault was still the sort of interim executive director.

**Ms. Barrett:** No, the Member's information is quite out of date. I am almost tempted to say woefully out of date, but quite out of date. MIC, as I said, still exists because it is still in legislation. I believe it is incorporated, but it does not—as a matter of fact, it was a year or a year and a half ago that actually there was an attempt to have an annual meeting to re-energize or see what was still there, and the then-chair or the past president, Wade Kojo Williams, did not come to the meeting. So the meeting was not officially constituted. I do not know if the Member remembers the Monty Python skit about the parrots: this parrot is not dead; it is just sleeping kind of thing. Well, MIC is pretty much that. It may technically be still existent, but it is pretty much dead.

**Mr. Schuler:** Minister, I will have to admit to you I have not received a mailing nor any information from the MIC as a past chairperson of the board for a long time, so the fact that Gabe Dufault may no longer be an employee may entirely be the case.

Does the MIC not have any staff currently? Did it not get some funding from MGAC?

**Ms. Barrett:** Yes, I believe that MIC did receive a grant from MGAC in '97-98, but they still have an outstanding—half of that grant is given to the organization, and then they are obligated to provide an accounting, an accountability process, and MIC did not do that. So the second half of that grant was not sent.

**Mr. Schuler:** So then I take it that the Minister's department has not received a financial statement from MIC since '98-99. When would be the last year that she would have received a financial statement from the MIC?

\* (16:50)

**Ms. Barrett:** In order to receive even the first portion of a grant, in order to have your application looked upon favourably at all, an organization would have had to have sent in a financial statement. So let us assume that it was '97-98. I might be out by a year. It certainly was not any later than '97-98. MIC would have had to have put forward a financial statement then, but they would not have complied with the accountability requirements to get the second half of that grant. So it has been at least several years since we would have seen any financial statement from them.

**Mr. Schuler:** Who would have been the board of directors at that time? Does the Minister know?

**Ms. Barrett:** We do not have that information on file here. It would be on file back at the division. To correct it, '96-97 was the last time the application came forward from MIC.

**Mr. Schuler:** Because I suspect that would probably have been the last time they had an annual general meeting.

**Ms. Barrett:** I would suspect that is the case.

**Mr. Schuler:** So when the Minister had the May 18 meeting, how did she go about inviting groups? Did the Minister use lists from the MIC, or was it lists from MGAC?

**Ms. Barrett:** It was a list that has been developed by the division over a number of years. As I stated earlier, it would have included not only umbrella organizations, such as the Council of Caribbean Organizations in Manitoba, CCOM, but it would have included the Trinidad and Tobago Society, which would be a member of CCOM, so it was that broadly based.

We did not invite every single organization that was on that list because that list is like, I

think, way over 200, maybe 300. The extensive list that is available to the division includes a number of groups, dance groups, for example, the Folk Arts Council—well, no, actually the Folk Arts Council was invited—folk arts groups. We just felt we could not invite the huge list, so we narrowed it down to groups that would have had, we felt, an interest in the broader context of connection with the Department. We asked issues about advocacy, advice to the Government.

MIC, in its former incarnation, provided an enormous amount of research capacity, did a great many reports, gave a lot of advice to former government. That is the kind of thing we were looking at. We felt very strongly. If the Member wants to put himself to sleep some night, he can just read the eight hours of *Hansard* that I put on the record when the legislation came into effect in '92 or '93 that, in effect, killed MIC.

One of the reasons we were in opposition to that piece of legislation was the good work that had been done from 1983 to basically 1992 or 1993 by the MIC. Those are the kinds of organizations that we invited, but we did invite approximately 175 organizations.

**Mr. Schuler:** Was the last board of the MIC invited?

**Ms. Barrett:** The last president that we knew of, Mr. Williams, was invited. Parenthetically, he did not come.

**Mr. Schuler:** I take it then the Minister did not invite all the past executives of the MIC.

**Ms. Barrett:** We did not invite past executives of MIC as such because those are not on the database now. Just from the numbers of people who came, I will bet if you asked—and we should probably have asked how many had actually been on the board of MIC in the past. I would suggest, just from the people I knew and the recollection I have of former MIC executives and boards, a majority probably had participated in MIC in the past, or their organizations certainly had.

**Mr. Schuler:** Certainly, the Minister could have just sent a note to the critic of Labour inviting



one of the former chairmen to the event. Of the 175 organizations that were invited through you, Madam Chair, to the Minister, approximately how many showed up?

**Ms. Barrett:** I sent out thank-you letters to the participants who had come, and I believe I signed approximately 112 letters. So that would have been, in some cases, there were two or three people who came from an organization. There were well over 100 organizations represented and over 120 people.

**Mr. Schuler:** The Minister referenced that in '92-93 the Act was changed. As she knows, MIC used to be an act of the Legislature. When the previous government got into office, the MIC had hit some difficulties. There were some internal disagreements. I believe an audit had been done, and there were some internal difficulties that were brought forward just within the organization itself.

I think the Minister would probably know. I am not too sure if she was in the last NDP government. I believe not, but there were a lot of concerns by various organizations that certain groups and individuals had hijacked the MIC. Whether that is true or not, I do not know. That is not for me to judge. But certainly there was a grave concern by many individuals that certain groups and individuals were getting more money than others and that even the way delegates were being sent to the MIC, the kind of expenditures, I know for myself, when I became chairman of the Board, that we used to once in a while splurge and have some Chinese food, but I believe they used to dine at times at Oliver's.

I think perhaps the controls that might have been, the accountability was not where it should have been. It had become quite a bit of the money that was transferred, and I think it was over a million dollars—I could be corrected on that—to the MIC. It certainly was a substantial amount, and I could be corrected on that amount, but it had gotten fairly top heavy. Administration had started to eat a considerable part of the budget. I think out of that is one of the reasons why the MGAC was created, that the funding arm was moved away from the MIC, that the MIC would then become an advisory body, a

group that would be funded by MGAC and those would be its funds.

I think one of the things that did happen to MIC, quite frankly, I know when I was on the Board I was a director for some time and then I became the chairman, is that people did not find it quite as worthwhile to be involved in the MIC because the funding arm was gone and also we really watched our money. The executive director at the time, the Board and I, certainly we watched our money. I would like to say to the Minister that at that time we still had a sizeable chunk of money saved in our account. If memory serves me correctly I believe we had well over \$100,000 in savings, and we were being very prudent with the way we were dealing with the money.

\*(17:00)

In fact, there was an incident that did come up at MIC where we were informed as a board what our rent was for the MIC, and it was just unbelievable, Madam Minister, the kind of market rates we were paying for basically, I think the building we were in it is considered a C-class building, certainly not B-class, probably C-class building, and we were paying A-class rates. We as a board instructed the executive director to go to the management company and say you negotiate a better deal to C-rate value, what we would pay for a lease, or we are out of here. It was phenomenal how we lopped an unbelievable amount of money off the rent.

But again to the Minister, one of the things that had to be instituted, I believe, previously, if you came to a meeting if you were from out of town you had your expenses paid for, your travel paid for, you had your accommodations paid for, you got dinners. It was very substantive what you got when you were involved with the MIC. When the funding arm was taken away, because it was quite easy to fund yourself, and it was given to MGAC, that what happened was, for instance, we did not pay a stipend anymore to individuals. Again, if memory serves me correctly, the Board got paid for attending board meetings. If you came representing your community, you got paid a stipend on top of your expenses, on top of all the other goodies. I think those were some of the problems that MIC

had, that people felt that the largesse had gotten too great. You know the dinners at Oliver's and that kind of stuff that perhaps that money should really have gone to the communities themselves and the communities would have been better suited.

I am wondering if in her discussions with these organizations on May 18, if that was part of the discussion, if those kinds of concerns came forward because certainly at that time when the Act was being changed those were some of the concerns that people had, and quite legitimately so. Certainly when money is supposed to be handed down, it is best when it is handed directly down and not administration eating up a good part of it.

**Ms. Barrett:** In '92-93, whichever, it was spring and I cannot remember. I think it might have been '92 when the legislation was changed. I went through as critic a lot of background, a lot of information. I do not know if the Member remembers the Blair report, or is that prior to his time, where the government of the day asked Mr. Don Blair to do a survey about MIC. I could go on for a good hour on the problems associated with the Blair report, just from a research point of view, but I will not. But, needless to say, the Blair report recommended what I think the government of the day wanted to hear, which was that there were major problems with MIC and what needed to happen was take away all the money.

I was not party to the specifics of the financial situation that the Member is referring to. I do think I recollect long time ago that there had been an audit done of MIC. There had been some concerns raised. Those concerns, to the best of my recollection, had been addressed or were being addressed on financial issues. There is no question that you need to be efficient and effective in your administration of anything. I think we all recognize that. We recognize the need to be prudent financially, and I wish the former government parenthetically had paid a little more attention to that before they allowed an over-doubling of the costs of the renovations at McPhillips and Regent casinos, but never mind that.

Even if we agreed, which I am not saying I do, but even if we agree that there were major administrative shortcomings in MIC, there was major financial lack of controls, what the Government did in taking away and did not just take away the granting capability of MIC, it, in effect, made MIC nothing but a shell of its former self.

The Manitoba Intercultural Council when it was first put in place by Eugene Kostyra who was then Minister responsible for Citizenship, Heritage and, I think, Recreation at the time, in I believe 1983—the role of the Manitoba Intercultural Council was not just another group, it was an umbrella organization. It was designed to allow the multicultural, the ethnocultural community to get together, to be represented in this council, to have a way, an avenue of advice and advocacy from the multicultural community to the Minister and the Government.

There was also a funding component. I will just digress a bit by saying at the May 18 meeting—I am not sharing any secrets when I say those representatives who were there, those people who were there were all over the map as to whether whatever the new configuration is should have a granting authority or not. That was a real challenge. It was a real challenge for MGAC. It was a real challenge for MIC. It is a real challenge for any organization who funds organizations, especially when the funds can never reach the need. So that is one element.

As I say, even if one had accepted all of the admin shortcomings, there was no need, in my view, in our party's view at the time, in our government's view now to have completely emasculated the organization as a whole when I believe an audit had been done and the changes that were recommended were being implemented. I said in the Legislature at the time, and I will say again today, the reason that the MIC was gutted, the reason that that bill came in taking away not only the granting authority but the administration costs, all funding, was that the government of the day was uncomfortable with what the MIC was saying to them or the potential that MIC could say we do not like what you are doing; we think you should be doing something else.

Up to two-thirds of the membership of MIC were representatives of various ethnocultural groups and organizations. The government of the day had the authority to appoint up to one-third. That was decided so that in case there was a group that was not represented through the community component, it could be represented through the government component. You will find that kind of structure throughout government boards and commissions today, as we have spoken about, the kind of representative from the community and then public interest representatives.

I might say parenthetically, as well, that the percentage of government appointees to the MIC was never higher than it was under the Conservative government in the few years that it had before it took the wheels right out of MIC. So the argument that it was run by government appointees is spurious at best. I would suggest that one-third versus two-thirds is difficult to have a critical mass there unless you are women in an organization where one-third is pretty good critical mass.

I said I spent eight hours in the Legislature dealing with this. I still remember a whole lot of it. I feel very strongly about this whole issue. We can agree to disagree and probably will on what happened and the validity of what happened. Our perspective of what happened, the history we had with MIC has flavoured and coloured what our election commitment in 1995 was and our election commitment in 1999.

We want a strong organization that provides an advocacy role, advisory role, a role for linking between the multicultural community, the ethnocultural groups in this province, and the government. What frame, what focus, what structure that body will take is still up in the air because we have just begun, as I have mentioned in discussions earlier this afternoon with the Member for Seine River, because we are just beginning the process.

\* (17:10)

We are committed to this process. We want as quickly as possible to put in place something that will provide an avenue for the multicultural community in this province to have access to the

government in a structured way. We want to recognize the fact that there is a need for that kind of an organization.

I believe, given the large number of people, the large number of organizations that came out on May 18, that there is a will and a recognition of that requirement in the multicultural, ethnocultural community as a whole.

**Madam Chairperson:** Is it the will of the Committee to take a five-minute break?  
[Agreed]

*The Committee recessed at 5:13 p.m.*

*The Committee resumed at 5:20 p.m.*

\* (17:20)

**Madam Chairperson:** Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. The floor is now open for questions.

**Mr. Schuler:** I would like to thank the Chairperson for that recognition. I would like to say to the Minister that maybe we should have called for that break a little bit sooner because, boy, did this room clean out fast. Nice to see everybody back.

I have to say to the Minister it was with great interest that I heard her perspective on the MIC. She says that we probably will not agree. First of all, Minister, it is within your power to re-enact the MIC and put it back with its funding arm as it was before. I would suggest to the Minister that perhaps like the community is not of one mind, maybe the Minister should be very careful in proceeding on that.

The Minister is absolutely correct when she calls it an umbrella organization. I have to tell you, it was a very effective umbrella organization. When I think that it is probably one of the few organizations within Manitoba, I cannot speak for all provinces, but I had been to quite a few multicultural conferences across Canada, and the fact that even the Hutterian Brethren or the Hutterite colonies had representation, the amount of representation across the whole multi-

cultural spectrum was really, really phenomenal. I think she and I can agree wholeheartedly that it was very representative.

The Minister is right that the Government did have the opportunity to appoint some individuals. Certainly I was actually one of those appointments. It was interesting, because it took very little time. It was the non-government-appointed members of the Council that approached me and said: You know, why do you not come and sit on the board of directors, which is something that I then did.

It was a great opportunity for myself. I was actively working in the multicultural community at that time. I was very involved and certainly enjoyed it, made some incredible lifetime friends in the various communities, who we still see each other on occasions. I know the Minister's good friend and mine, Wade Kojo Williams. In fact, I dropped in on Manitoba Hydro the other day and lo and behold there he was at the headquarters of Hydro. I guess he is working security there. We had a good opportunity to speak. Minister, I might even point out to you that I am even on his e-mail list.

**An Honourable Member:** As am I. This is not an exclusive club.

**Mr. Schuler:** I know the Minister and I am probably part of a very exclusive club here. *[interjection]* Pamela Rebello was one of the former chairs, very good friend. One of the things that I just love about Pamela is every time she would have company coming in, particularly from somewhere in India, faithful as can be, she would bring them into my store at The Forks and introduce them. We would have just incredible conversations. In fact, if you wanted to get a grounding on international politics, this would be the organization to be part of. So I did get to meet a lot of individuals.

One of the things about MIC also was, and I agree with the Minister on this, the calibre of people that were involved in the MIC. You can get into some organizations where they will send basically a weak individual from the community to an event or an organization. With MIC you often had the president, the vice-president, someone off the executive. They were the

leadership of the community. I think that is one of the reasons why you had such strength in the MIC. That transferred also to the board of MIC.

Certainly there were a lot of very exciting things that were done. I think where the MIC did good, I think what the previous government was trying to do was to get the MIC to focus on those things that it did best. There is a very good report that was commissioned and was presented on racism. It is just a fantastic document. I think it would probably be as relevant today as it was back then when it was written. I would suggest to the Minister or certainly to her department that perhaps they would pull that out and have another look at it.

It is that kind of stuff that the Manitoba Intercultural Council did exceptionally well. It had a way of getting into the communities, getting very good feedback because it was well connected. The individuals involved were strong individuals from the community. You had very positive feedback, so that when a report was written, when a document was written, it was well done. It was done in the most professional way possible.

Just some of the staff that come to mind, Sam Koshy, who is probably one of the most dynamic and incredible people you could ever want to meet. Certainly he was the executive director when I was on the board and then when I became chairman of the board. He was just outstanding. His ability to grasp the problems and the needs in the multicultural community was just incredible. He was obviously the catalyst to drive those kinds of reports. Vijay Sharma was another one of the individuals that worked there. I believe he now works somewhere else within the public service. He was just excellent. Again, these individuals were the catalysts that brought forward these good reports.

I think what the point was, to the Minister through you, Madam Chair, was that the MIC would start to focus on the area of strength, that it would start doing the things that it did best, because I believe what happened was the funding side of it started to cloud the real purpose of the MIC, which was to be an umbrella organization, which was to be an

advisory group, which was to produce these kinds of reports and documents. In fact, it was there to be an instrument whereby the Government, if there was an issue coming up with the Government, could go to the MIC. In many cases, the Government did go to the MIC, and they produced excellent reports.

The funding, certainly when I left as chairman of the board, was still in place. There was still a healthy organization. Certainly when we cut the kinds of things that I had mentioned to the Minister earlier, kinds of benefits, I think that did hurt the organization. I think a lot of people really liked coming to MIC and the stipends and that kind of thing. We had a very, very spirited and exciting debate, which, I am sure, the Minister has been in and has heard and been part of, that these can be very spirited. In the end, we decided to go away from the MIC paying a stipend for people to come to meetings.

I think that was part of why you had some people not getting quite as involved. I am wondering is the Minister considering re-enacting the MIC and having a body not just as an umbrella advisory board but also a grant-giving board?

\* (17:30)

**Ms. Barrett:** We are absolutely open-minded on these issues. We had the meeting on the 18th, and as I have said, the group that met had a wide range of opinions on whether the organization would have granting capacity or not.

Some people felt very strongly that it should. Others felt very strongly that it should not, and still others did not know or could see both sides. This will be a very important and critical area for us to decide on, as well as what the organization will look like, how it would be structured, what should it do. Those issues are issues that we are starting to grapple with and will be discussing with the community again hopefully in a number of ways over the next months and come up with a formula that will reflect the current situation.

The former MIC, which I should tell people who may not know it was the Manitoba Intercultural Council, had a range. It had an

advisory, advocacy and granting component. We are looking at all of the range of those things.

I would like to comment briefly on some things that the Member said because I agree with him. I agree with his analysis of some of the individuals he was speaking about for sure and some of the work that was done by MIC. Frankly, Madam Chair, what the Member is saying is exactly what the former government eliminated. It not only eliminated the granting part, but it eliminated the critical, critical ability of MIC to provide that kind of advocacy, to provide that kind of research, to provide that kind of advice to the Government because it reduced and then eliminated the resources necessary to have an executive director, and as the Member referenced, Sam Koshy was a wonderful executive director. In order to produce the kind of material that this kind of organization produced over those ten years, you have to have people who can keep the process moving.

Purely voluntary organizations have an enormous role to play in our society, particularly in the multicultural community. We could not exist as a multicultural society without those voluntary organizations, those organizations that, by in large, were reflected in MIC. But an umbrella organization that has those kinds of responsibilities, not just granting, take that away. If you took away the granting capacity of MIC and kept the ability of MIC to provide the kind of background research, documentation, papers, reports, advice and advocacy to the government, you would still have an enormously important and effective organization. This is what the former government did. They took away the ability of that organization to act in the way it was designed to act. Not just in the granting but in the advice and the advocacy and the report generation.

So I am in total agreement with the Member that that provided an enormous service. That report on racism is as relevant today as it was 10 or 11 years ago, whenever it was produced, which is kind of a negative comment on how far we have not come as a society, but really remarkable things were done by MIC. So we are agreeing that the former government should not

have taken away the ability of that organization to function in its major role.

I will go back to the statements that I had made in earlier comments when I said that my understanding and my recollection is there was an audit done of the organization, some recommendations that were made, and those recommendations were either implemented, or in the process of being implemented, when the Government in the early 1990s pulled the plug effectively. So I think that we are on very solid ground with our campaign pledge of both 1995 and 1999 and in our actions that we have taken to date to actually implement that campaign promise, which is to put in place some organization, some structure, that will provide the kind of information, the kind of advice, the kind of advocacy, and maybe the granting.

I do not know what we are going to ultimately do in that regard but very clear from many people in MIC in the early '90s, when that legislation was brought in, many, many people were very, very unhappy about the role that the Government was taking, people who recognized that there had been challenges, but people who said those challenges are being faced, and this organization is essential. We are reflecting that. We are reflecting the Member's own comments, and we are going to put in place an organization that will have that capability to provide that kind of service to the Government, that critical, essential service to the Government. If we are going to be reflective of the diversity of this province, if we are going to actually do what we say we all want to do which is out of the Multiculturalism Act, recognition that we are a multicultural society, that we have to work together, that we have to reflect the diversity, we need the MIC in order to be able to do that. And we are going to be able to do that. And I thank the Member for his support for that and expect that if we need to bring in Legislation, or if we need to bring in any kind of legislative enablement, that he will carry on what he has just said here tonight and support our efforts in that regard.

**Mr. Schuler:** I guess where the Minister and I probably do have some disagreement—see, I believe the former government was right in that the MIC had a seriously confused mandate. On

one side, it was the funding arm and tended to fund itself quite well. On the other hand, it was supposed to be an umbrella organization advising the Government, almost being a political arm of the multicultural community. The focus, Minister, tended to be more on the funding side.

If the Minister would have been involved in a multicultural group involved in the organization, there was a feeling—certainly the group I was involved with and many of the groups that I spoke with—that it depended on who you curried favour with. It depended on who you were involved with. It depended on the kinds of grants you got. The problem was, instead of focussing on its strength, Minister, they started to focus on the granting side.

What I am basically saying is I think the creation of the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council was a very wise and prudent move. I think the challenge the Minister is going to face is how do you create an MIC with the calibre of individuals with the kind of bottom-up approach that the MIC had without the golden rainbow, without that carrot that there is money. To some degree, people felt that the more you were involved the better chance you had of getting money for your organization.

Whether that is true or not, I do not know, but if that was the feeling in the community then I would suggest to the Minister that she be very careful, because you start to confuse what it is that the organization is supposed to do. It really does attack the effectiveness of the organization. I would go so far as to say I happen to think the MIC produced some of the better pieces of work, I think that the MIC did some incredible work when it no longer had the funding part of it as its mandate. I happen to think the MIC did fantastic work, some of the names that we mentioned, individuals who were responsible for that.

I said to the Minister that certainly when I left as chairman there was a substantial war chest available. There was a lot of money left in the MIC to continue it further, and we were very, very prudent with the way we spent our money that we could afford a good executive director. In fact, our executive director later went on to

work for another organization. He had moved up.

So I would suggest to the Minister that real caution should be taken when dealing with the MIC, because I think the communities would be much better served if it again be revived. Maybe now is a good time. Maybe there was a time when people wanted a little bit of distance and now are willing to come back on again, I do not know.

\* (17:40)

The Minister had the meeting, and I, unfortunately, did not really know about it until afterward. I think, from the meeting, from what she has said, people are really all over the place on it. I would take that as a real message, coming from the multicultural community. I would take it as a message, coming from the people involved, from the organizations, that maybe it is time for something different, that they are not having a problem with MGAC, because from what I understand it worked well. I think it was a very balanced approach to funding. I think people were basically pleased.

Certainly if the Minister feels that there was not enough money, it is up to the Government to increase the money that can be given to MGAC to hand out, but as far as combining them both again, I would caution the Minister, because what you do is you actually have a confused mandate. The Minister sort of said that the organization was emasculated and that funding was eliminated.

Again, Minister, I suspect that is not quite what you meant to say, because, again, the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council basically took over that role and continued with it. I know that over the last 10 or 11 years there have been some great strides done in multiculturalism. I know that there were a lot of exciting things that took place, and I think the kind of excitement that we see around a lot of the events throughout the province comes from 20 to 25 years of working in the different communities, of going and helping them out, and certainly we are a much better province for that. I guess, Minister, I would really caution you on this point, that an advisory body should be there to advise and not become an opposition to the Government.

Within the MIC, at the end there was a considerable amount of friction in regard to what constituted advice to the Government, to the Minister, and I would suggest to the Minister that perhaps an idea would be to bring in all the former chairs of the MIC and just have 45 minutes—by the way, Minister, I will not be offended if I am not one of those. I would understand clearly if I were not one of those. But there were some excellent people, and the MIC had a real internal friction, and it exhibited it at the meetings. If I stand corrected, I believe I remember seeing the Minister as an opposition MLA there. I mean, she knows the kind of excitement and the kind of passion that was brought up at the MIC meetings. Man, if you ever want to see an exciting time, that would be the place.

That kind of friction also carried over to the board. We had a lot of debates. We had long debates on what constituted an advisory role, what does an umbrella organization do when it represents its members so that it does not look like it is attacking the Government yet is giving advice. And, Minister, I am sure you have probably heard over the years, over that time, that even at board meetings there was a lot of difficulty in defining that, and then when you throw the funding side into it, it really does muddle it. I was wondering, on that particular point, if the Minister had any comments.

**Ms. Barrett:** Oh, I think I put my comments on the record several times already about the relationship between the challenge facing us as a government and the individual groups that we will be working with to establish this new entity, that we have a challenge before us to learn from the past, both the strengths and the weaknesses, to try and establish an organization and a structure and a relationship with government that will service well now and in the future.

**Mr. Schuler:** The Minister mentioned that she has now consulted with community one time. How is she planning on moving ahead? Is she going to create a working group to advise her, is she looking at having another community consultation? Knowing the multicultural community, I am sure there is a lot of excitement. Is the Folk Arts Council involved at all? How is the Minister going to proceed with this?

**Ms. Barrett:** Well, that is something we are working on now. We have made a commitment to send out to all of the organizations, a report on what happened on May 18, and we are working on putting that together. Then, from there, we will have to figure out how we carry on the consultation. I made a commitment at that meeting that this would not be the only time we would communicate or work with the community. It may be a range of options that would include working group or another series of consultations or asking for written responses to questions. Any one of a number of ideas was floating around. We have not got clarity yet on what the next step will be, but we know that it is going to involve more consultation and dialogue with members of the community.

**Mr. Schuler:** Just on that one, the other thing is, too, that the community has certainly changed. The long-standing, traditional communities are going to have different needs. There are always new groups that are coming in, getting established, and they will have different needs again. Has the Minister looked at that as well? For instance, I happened to be out at Cooks Creek yesterday and the church of the Immaculate Conception where the grotto is. There is a community out there that is looking at different things as compared to a community that has newer immigration. Has the Minister factored that kind of analysis in?

**Ms. Barrett:** We are open to discussion and dialogue and suggestions from every ethnic community, every organization in the Province of Manitoba.

**Mr. Schuler:** Would the Minister be willing when she has this report ready and is going to be mailing it out, make it available to myself as the Labour critic?

**Ms. Barrett:** Certainly.

**Mr. Schuler:** I would certainly appreciate that. With the whole multicultural community, is there a commitment by the Government to increase funding? What is the Minister looking insofar as the kind of monies that they are going to be granting over the years? Has she made any decision as far as that is concerned?

**Ms. Barrett:** It is all part and parcel of the discussions that are being undertaken with the community. We will be making a determination as we go through this process.

**Mr. Schuler:** I would like to thank the Minister for that answer. It certainly answers a lot of questions. One of the things that was a question when the MIC did the granting was accountability. Insofar as the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council, is the Minister satisfied with the kind of accountability that goes along with the grants? Certainly, we have heard of incredible horror stories that have come out of federal departments, where literally a department had gone completely wayward, where there was no accountability, where there was no tracking of funds. In the case of the MGAC, is the Minister confident in the kind of accountability that has been established there?

**Ms. Barrett:** That is one of the things that we are looking at: What were the procedures that had been put in place? Were they followed? If they were not followed, why were they not followed? What challenges are facing this process? I think the Member is very accurate when he references the Human Resources Department in the federal government, and the vast challenges—I use that word—facing that department and many questions that need to be asked and answered about the accountability process that was put in place.

So I think it is incumbent upon every organization, particularly government organization, that provides funds to groups to make sure that their procedures and their processes are clear, they are understood, and they are followed through. That is what we will do.

\* (17:50)

**Mr. Schuler:** That is very good. I would like to ask the Minister: There used to be a process where your grant was contingent on getting involved with volunteering at a bingo. I was wondering: Is that still the case?

**Ms. Barrett:** The combination and the granting mix was cash and bingos. Some organizations received cash only, some received bingo only, and some received a combination. Of course, if



an organization, for whatever reasons, did not want to participate in the bingo process, that was, of course, acceptable as well. It would be reflected in their grant that they would get only cash, rather than the combination.

**Mr. Schuler:** Is that system still in place?

**Ms. Barrett:** Yes, we have not changed that at this point.

**Mr. Schuler:** Approximately how much of bingo or lotteries money then goes into the multicultural community?

**Ms. Barrett:** The cash is 175 in the Estimates, and the bingos last year were worth approximately \$300,000.

**Mr. Schuler:** Again, the premise of this was—if the Minister could just confirm for us—that people would come in and would volunteer, and I believe what it was is they would sell break-open tickets. They would run around bingo cards. I believe that was one of the things they did. It involved clean-up. I would suggest to the Minister that within an organization it was a test of how much you really loved your organization participating in one of these bingos.

I had the misfortune of going to an awful lot of them, and I neither gamble nor smoke. Here I would go to bingos where I would be selling break-open tickets and inhaling more smoke than you could normally get out of about a carton of cigarettes in an hour. I know since then the facilities have changed. They tended to be just the most incredible things. I have to tell the Minister, I think I have seen enough rabbit's feet, good luck charms, wishbones, stacked dice and all that to last a lifetime. But I guess the point was that it helped bring in individuals, because I know if you were the last group you actually had to sweep the floors and clean up. I think I have seen enough emulsified plastic cheese to last me a lifetime, which seems to be the going fare, these little plastic cheese trays with the nachos.

Is this something that the Minister would like to see continue? Not the plastic cheese, having the people volunteer for bingo so they can get part of their funding. I am not advocating the plastic cheese.

**Ms. Barrett:** For the second or perhaps the third time during these Estimates, the Member has rendered the Minister speechless. I know that has never happened before. I was going down memory lane when the Member was talking about his experiences. I have had several similar ones myself.

But my understanding at this point is that things have changed, that the bingos that are undertaken are done at the two casinos, McPhillips and Regent. *[interjection]* Yes, the Regent Casino is what it is called. It is actually on Regent, because Nairn turns into Regent at that point.

**Mr. Schuler:** Is the Minister intending on continuing this process where part of the grant is contingent on the involvement in helping out at the bingo?

**Ms. Barrett:** That and all other issues are up for debate and discussion and input as we go through this process. So I have not made a determination on any of that at this point.

**Mr. Schuler:** The \$300,000 that came from Lotteries, is that a fairly constant number? Is that a budgeted number that is given, that they are allowed up to \$300,000. How does that work? Has that been fairly constant through the years, or has that been growing or declining?

**Ms. Barrett:** For the last three years, it has been constant. The \$300,000 is an approximation because it depends, as the Member will know from his experience, on how many people actually show up and how long they stay and this sort of thing. It is based on the number of bingos that will give you approximately \$300,000 if everyone shows up and does their whole shift, et cetera.

**Mr. Schuler:** Of course, the Minister is right, because it does depend on what shift you got; it depended on the weather. I know, in the instant, if you happen to sell a lucky ticket—when I was there, somebody sold a break-open or some kind of a ticket, and somebody won several thousand dollars. Instantly, basically the whole place lined up by this individual, and I think this individual sold \$1,000 worth of break-open tickets. If you sold something that happened to be lucky, then

everybody wanted you to walk by and touch them, because then the luck was transferred to them.

So it really did depend on the weather, it depended on what shift you got, so I was just wondering if that number was then a constant number.

**Ms. Barrett:** Yes, within the context that I just referred to.

**Madam Chairperson:** The hour being 6 p.m., committee rise.

## AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

\* (14:50)

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

We are on page 27 of the Estimates book, Resolution 3.4 Agricultural Development and Marketing (b) Animal Industry (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,763,100.

**Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food):** Mr. Chairman, during the Estimates on May 25, the Opposition critic asked for some information. He asked for the seeding deadlines for the year 2000 for field peas. He was looking for field beans in particular. He was also looking for the 2000 hail reinsurance with respect to field beans in Risk Area 12, and also a comparison of crop insurance premium rates between Manitoba and the provinces. That was mainly a comparison between Manitoba and Ontario. I would like to give the Member that information.

With respect to the Manitoba Crop Insurance insurable crops and seeding deadlines for the year 2000, the deadline for full coverage for field peas grown in field bean Area 1 is June 10, with an extension coverage seeding period from June 11 to 15. The deadline for full coverage of field beans in areas 2 and 3 is June 6, with an extended coverage period from June 7

to 11, and the coverage is reduced by 20 percent during the extended seeding period.

With respect to hail insurance in the 2000 year, the basic premium rate for 2000 in Risk Area 12 is 2.7 percent. The crop factor for beans is 1.5 times the basic rate. For \$100 of hail coverage in beans in Risk Area 12, the full premium is \$4.05 per acre. There is a 5% cash discount if premiums are paid at the time of application.

The Member also asked about the comparisons of Manitoba to Ontario. This is coverage and premiums at 80 percent. I will only use beans as an example, just to give him a comparison, and then I will provide him with further detail. But if you were looking at coloured beans, in Manitoba, the premium would be \$52.06. Whereas, in Ontario, the premium would be \$34.90. However, the coverage for that \$34.90 in Ontario would be \$328.31. Whereas, in Manitoba, the coverage for \$52.06 would be \$197.10. So, roughly speaking, in Manitoba, for \$50, you are getting about a little better than three times, because you are going to 187. In Ontario, for \$34.90, you are over 300. So it is, roughly speaking, 10 times the coverage. So the level of coverage that is provided in Ontario is much higher than it is in Manitoba.

Those are the concerns we have. Now we have some changes, where there will be more money going into other provinces. Based on cash receipts, they will indeed be able to offer richer coverages, and we have less coverage here in Manitoba.

So I will provide the Member with additional information. He may have some follow-up questions that he has to ask on that. So if I could ask the page to take this over, please.

**Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson):** I want to thank the Minister for that information. That is very useful. I will have some follow-up questions, but I will wait till we get to Soils and Crops on those questions if you do not mind. I would like to finish the livestock, as I indicated to you yesterday, and will follow up with questions then.

We had concluded yesterday on the issue of the PMU industry. The Minister had made some closing remarks to yesterday's questions that I had put and indicated that she had always been very supportive of the PMU industry. Then she indicated that she had had a meeting with the PMU industry. I am very pleased that she did have a meeting with the PMU industry because the discussions that a number of us had had with the PMU industry prior to the Minister becoming the Minister of Agriculture would have led us to believe that they were quite concerned about the position that the NDP party members had taken to the PMU industry and the position that they had exercised in debate. I am glad that the Minister clarified her position to the PMU industry because I think it is a very valuable industry to this province and is a good contribution, a good mix to agriculture in this province.

I would certainly hope that we do not allow ourselves the latitude which was exercised in debating the negative sides of an industry and putting on the record some very questionable kinds of comments at times regarding the industry and how we treat especially the animal side of our agricultural industry, because I think most farmers, as the Minister stated yesterday, are very cognizant of the net income side of the equation of raising livestock.

Anybody that thinks that farmers purposely abuse animals in various ways for whatever reasons I think should think again because the investment is far too high to even allow one to think that farmers would purposely abuse animals, except in some extraordinary cases. But that is the unusual side of the industry not the norm because the amount of investment when one looks at the hog industry, for instance, and one has to assume that you would be spending millions of dollars on a single farm enterprise to build what one would consider an economical unit, whether it is one barn, two barns, three barns, a single barn today can cost well beyond a million dollars, to make that kind of investment and then spend another probably half a million to a million stocking those barns and to assume that these people would abuse those animals is simply unthinkable.

I think similarly the discussion that took place in the PMU industry, again one has to

respect the amount of investment that goes into a single farm operation and the huge number of hours people spend caring for those animals and ensuring that they are warm and comfortable, because only when they are comfortable will they produce to the maximum. So the level of comfort that is given these animals needs to be, I think, truly reflective. That is why I said to the Minister yesterday that I would want to conclude my remarks on this on that note because seldom ever do we truly realize how much effort, No. 1, how much management expertise, how high the investment is and how narrow the margin of net return is in most of the agricultural area today. And to even assume that any manager or any person managing an enterprise would want to abuse the potential net profit is really unthinkable, and I think we need to view raising animals in that respect. Therefore, everything under human power in most animal operations will be driven toward that net profit basin which will see to the comfort of those animals housed in those facilities. I truly want to express my appreciation to the Minister that she had that meeting and clarified the positions, because I think that will add to the comfort of the industry as well as encourage maybe even further expansion in that industry within the boundaries of this province. Maybe we will not have to have product come in from Saskatchewan or North Dakota.

I want to very briefly ask the Minister, regarding the elk industry, whether she sees another capture of wild animals in the offing, or what is this current government's position on the expansion of the elk industry, and how does she see that come about? Does she see that as another—especially in some of her area. I think some of the residents in the Swan River area have been very, very negative on the damages that have been caused by herds of elk coming into the Swan River. I have had significant discussions with a number of her farmers in her area and have visited farms in the Swan River area and personally seen the damage they have caused to their hay supply as well as to the crops. That was one of the reasons, I think, the elk capture was initiated, to reduce the herds and to find ways to ensure those herds would not move out of the park and into the agrarian area. I am wondering whether the Minister sees a further capture of elk as a means of expanding

the elk industry in this province or how she sees the elk industry in the future in this province.

\* (15:00)

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, the Member talked about the PMU industry and his hope that the industry would grow here in Manitoba. Certainly there are many producers that would like to see the industry grow as well, but in order for the industry to grow, there has to be a quota available to them. That is allocated by the Ayerst company, based on demand. There has been a slight increase in quota, but there was also a decrease a few years ago, so they are building up again. I am not sure that would mean that there would be room for new producers. It will be ultimately the industry that will determine whether they need more of a supply or not.

I know there are people out there that are interested, and I have no doubt that, just as in other areas, although the Member would want to portray, maybe, that there is some concern with this government's position, as I indicated, I have met with producers, as has the Premier (Mr. Doer) had discussions with them and met with the company, and at no time were we given any indication that there was concern about our position. When you see that there is the growth in the industry, growth in the quota, and when you see the number, the dollar value of a few grams of quota, the price the producer is paid for it, then you can see there is confidence. That happened in the spring of 2000.

Mr. Chairman, with respect to the elk capture, there was an agreement between the two departments, between what was Natural Resources and the Department of Agriculture, to capture elk. That agreement came to a natural end in 1999 and there is no further agreement. If the Member will recall, we were not impressed with some of the capture that was going on. With the number of elk that are on private land right now, the number of elk that are in captivity, I believe that there is enough elk to support and see the industry expand.

That is how other livestock industries expand. They expand based on the natural growth of the herds. As of March 9, 2000, there were 1943 elk. I think that is quite a healthy

herd, and I believe that the industry can grow from within. Certainly there are still some elk that are being held that will be distributed in the usual manner of distribution. There is a lot of interest in the industry. So that should bode well for those people who have herds right now, and should maintain a reasonable price for the stock, when it goes on sale.

I believe there was supposed to be a sale of elk at Brandon, but because the demand was so high producers were able to make their own arrangements and sell them privately; it was not necessary to hold a sale. But, as the numbers grow, I anticipate that we will be seeing some of those sales in Manitoba as well.

**Mr. Jack Penner:** The Minister has indicated that we have less than 2000 elk in captivity right now on farms. Can the Minister tell me how many are in captivity that have not yet been distributed?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** There are 378 elk being held in government holding sites, as well as a few more that are being held on First Nations sites.

**Mr. Jack Penner:** Can the Minister tell me where these holding sites are and who manages them, and how many are contained in each holding site?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, the Grunthal site is managed by Nick Janz, and at that site there are 180 animals. The Inglis site is managed by Clint Marzoff, and there are 132 animals there. The McCreary site is managed by Ron Chotka, and there are 66 animals there for a total of 378 animals.

**Mr. Jack Penner:** Can the Minister tell me how many elk have been captured in total?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, a total of 732 animals have been captured between 1996 and 1999.

**Mr. Jack Penner:** The Minister indicated that she had no intention of further capture. Is that correct?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, the responsibility of wild animals and the capture of

animals was an agreement that was negotiated between the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Agriculture. I would not be encouraging another capture.

**Mr. Jack Penner:** Mr. Chairman, does that mean that her colleagues in Cabinet might have different views on that?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, it would be unfair of me to put comments on the record for my colleague, and I would encourage him to go to the Department of Conservation for those Estimates. I think that if he looks back at the record of our term in opposition, our position was quite clear that we did not support the concept of capturing elk for domestication. I also said that I believe that within the numbers that we have in Manitoba, that those are enough animals to see the industry grow at a reasonable rate. So I do not believe that we will have another capture in Manitoba.

\*(15:10)

I think what we have to look at is what the impact of the capture has been, and certainly I think we have to review the numbers of animals that we have in the various areas of the province. There have been calls from the hunting associations of Manitoba asking for increased licensing. There has been a tremendous amount of work done by people in various areas of the province.

I want to point out the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation in the Swan River area and other groups who have done a lot of work on feeding sites to discourage the animals from coming down to the farmland. I hope that that work will be successful, so that the numbers can be controlled in that way to take the pressure off the farming community.

**Mr. Jack Penner:** Mr. Chairman, when one looks at the livestock industry and when one looks at the bison industry of almost 10 000 head of bison in the province, and when one looks at the cattle industry, which would be, for the meat production perspective, the competitive factor in the elk. I know the elk have other elements of interest in some of the Asiatic countries.

However, when I think one really truly reflects the competitive nature of the industry, it has to be the meat industry.

Elk meat, when I speak to people, seems to be a preferable meat; most people will tell you it is a good meat. From that perspective, one would wonder how the Minister could state that 1900 animals in a province would appear to be a large enough herd to meet the demands of the marketplace, and whether she would have any interest in accommodating the importation of elk from other areas, if she does not favour the capture of more wild elk, recognizing full well that Manitoba elk are known for their genetic superiority over other elk in other parts of Canada and the U.S. and would have probably a significantly higher value and demand than some of the other elk species in Canada and the U.S.

I am wondering, if the Minister saw a need to cull a herd in an area of the province, whether it is Swan River or any other area of the province, if she saw a need to cull a herd because of exceeding numbers and damage that they cause to agriculture and other herds, whether she would reconsider initiating the capture or supporting the capture of elk if they were a detriment to the environment.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, the Member talks about the value of elk meat, and I certainly have to concur with him. Elk meat is one of the best meat from a wild species that I have every tasted. Quite frankly, we enjoy it very much, but I want to tell the Member that there is no concerted effort, there has been no call to have elk meat processed here in Manitoba. Basically, that is because the herds are building up.

The Member talks about having another capture. I want to tell him that the Manitoba Elk Growers Association, which is the organization of elk growers in Manitoba, have indicated they do not support the idea of another capture of wild animals.

**Mr. Jack Penner:** Mr. Chairman, I am going to leave this area of the Estimates with the comment that I think that there is a major opportunity here to build an industry. Again, if we have producers who are looking for product to encourage the further expansion of the

industry to meet certain demands of the industry other than the limited demands, if it is the meat side of the industry that needs to be met, I could certainly be encouraged to support further expansion via the capture if we saw the need to cull a herd instead of going out there and killing it by rifle. To utilize the herd to expand an industry that could create an economic livelihood in communities that might not otherwise be able to, I would certainly encourage that.

I think the Native community, First Nations communities, could certainly benefit to a much greater degree in expanding the livestock industry than they could ever by gambling that this government is intending to encroach upon. I would strongly suggest to the Minister that, if there was an inquiry by the Aboriginal community in this province to be allowed to capture a larger portion of the wild herd to expand the livestock industry on their reserves and on their land or on Crown land, we give strong consideration to that instead of building gambling houses for them to teach their children in.

I think that is, quite frankly, to me it is appalling that any society has to even look at gambling as a means of supporting a nation, or even a portion of a nation. I think it is absolutely appalling and I am very serious about that. I have never been a proponent of utilizing that as an economic base and will never, hopefully, be convinced to utilize that as an economic base. Quite frankly, I think our Aboriginal community deserves better, and if we could utilize this industry as well as the pork industry to encourage that community to get involved in investing in the expansion of the pork industry, I think there is a tremendous opportunity there for them. I think there is a tremendous opportunity, as some have demonstrated, to expand into the beef industry and that is where we should be targeting our real efforts. That is where government should be, and I hope, Mr. Chairman, that this government will see the wisdom of that in the near future. Hopefully, the Minister could be encouraged to support an initiative such as that to benefit rural communities instead of putting our efforts into trying to create gambling communities.

\* (15:20)

Mr. Chairman, I want to move next into the poultry area. I discussed very briefly yesterday the whole issue of how our supply management quotas—and those things were established nationally and provincially, and I think the poultry industry is an example. Again, I give the former minister, Mr. Enns, a significant amount of credit for probably taking a position that was not supported by everybody in this province initially, and yet we have demonstrated that we can build an industry out of and within the supply management sector if it is done right, and I think it needs some careful examination. Our whole quota-setting mechanism needs some very careful examination in how our industrial side of the industries are encouraged to expand in this province.

I think we should have a significant discussion amongst our agricultural community, community leaders and others, industry leaders, specifically and especially those that are involved in supply management and those that see the opportunities of the industrial expansion of our supply-managed commodities and all the other commodities, including the livestock and the grain sector, especially crop sector sides, to see how we could work together to convince our national governments that they must change the way they do business and the way they allow business to be done. I think freedom is the key word in our society, and I think we should guard very jealously our rights and our freedoms. We should respect the right of the individual to make decisions within the perimeters of the laws.

I think, Mr. Chairman, that this whole area of how we encourage expansion of the processing sector, the processing side, was demonstrated by the previous minister, and the allowance within that this could, in fact, have. I know that it has caused some pain nationally and probably will cause some more pain. But it will take a tough minister from the Manitoba perspective to ensure that our side of the arguments and Manitoba's position be clarified and clearly stated and not backed off on.

I would say to the Minister—and I listened very carefully when first she went to Ottawa to negotiate a safety net program. We have touched on this, and I wanted to wait until the end of the

Estimates debate until we got to those lines on safety nets, but to be very careful that she does not allow her emotions to dictate her actions, because stomping out of meetings will never get you to where you want to go. It will only encourage those who are your opponents to strengthen their positions because they know that once you walk out of negotiations, you have lost. I would encourage the Minister to stand tall for Manitobans and Manitoba farmers in negotiations. Similarly, in these times of change, one should take a very strong position in ensuring that Manitoba's needs are, first and foremost, met in those negotiations.

So I would ask the Minister whether she has any intention to meet with her federal counterparts to further the discussion and debates and see to it that our quota allocations in Manitoba, on both these issues, all the supply-management areas, can be expanded significantly.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** The Member asks a very important question, but before we get to that question, I have to revert to the comments he made with respect to the elk industry and his comments about gambling.

I did not think that we would get into that issue in Agriculture, but since the Member raised the issue and his concern about gambling, I have to wonder where the Member was when the whole gambling industry was being expanded in Manitoba, when VLTs were being put into every hotel in Manitoba, when VLTs were put on almost every reserve in Manitoba, Mr. Chairman. It was his government that negotiated that, and I am sure that they thought about economic development at that time. It was his government that commissioned the Bostrom report that made recommendations on Aboriginal casinos, but they did not implement them. So the Member says that he is opposed to gambling, that he does not see it as economic development. But I encourage him to look back a little bit, and, indeed, his government did put VLTs on reserves, because every reserve that I visited prior to our taking government had VLTs there. His government expanded the VLTs and gambling in Winnipeg by building two very large facilities in Winnipeg, way over budget, I might remind the Member.

With respect to the elk industry, this industry is going to grow, Mr. Chairman, but it is going to grow at a rate that is determined by the demands of the marketplace. At the present time, the industry is growing very slowly. The Member talks about taking more animals out of the wild. I guess we have a responsibility, too, to not only provide animals, as a government, for the agriculture industry, but we also have to manage the wild herds, and there has been a decrease.

For example, the Riding Mountain herd is down from about 5000 animals to 3500 animals in the past two years. So there is a decrease in that herd. There has been some counts taken in the Swan River area. I do not have those numbers with me, but my understanding is that there has been a decrease in that population, as well. That is not my responsibility. That is the Minister of Conservation's (Mr. Lathlin) responsibility. All those things have to be taken into account when you are considering the use of wild species.

The Member also referred to the Aboriginal people in agriculture, and I think that is a very important point. I do not know whether or not the Member is aware that there is an Aboriginal agricultural association, because we do have Aboriginal farmers in this province. They have talked to me. I have met with them and discussed their issues, and they have a genuine interest in furthering their agriculture operations. Certainly, they have looked at how we can support them more as a government and open some doors for them. That is something that I am very committed to.

As a department, we are working at how we can improve the opportunities for Aboriginal people who want to be involved in agriculture, because if you look at many of the places where the reserves are there are large tracts of land that would be ideal for livestock operations and some of them for grain operations, as well. I think that it is very important. I appreciate the Member raising the issue of Aboriginal agriculture, and we are looking at MACC and how we can work with them, as well.

But the Member asked whether I am going to be having discussions with my counterparts in

the federal government. Well, I hope that the Member will agree to pair me to go to the Agriculture ministers' conference. That is in two weeks' time, and that is the time when we will be definitely discussing those issues.

\* (15:30)

Mr. Chairman, we were in very difficult negotiations with the federal government with respect to safety net programs. Manitoba and Saskatchewan were very much getting the short end of the stick as far as the allocation of funds. We were going to see our funding reduced by \$10 million. Saskatchewan was going to have theirs reduced somewhere in the range of \$50 million. There was no support for us from the gang of eight, and that was why we made the decision that we had to leave that meeting. I do not regret what we did. I have had tremendous support from the farming community with respect to that.

But I encourage the Member to ensure that his Whip will sign my request for a pair, so that I indeed can take part in those discussions in a couple of weeks.

**Mr. Jack Penner:** Well, Mr. Chairman, if the Minister intends to leave here in a couple of weeks, then we will either have to adjourn the Estimates debate or we will have to all go to Ottawa to the negotiations and maybe continue them in the evenings as we go along. That is an option to the Minister but only if she would pay the way. One has to have a bit of light-heartedness around this table I think once in a while.

I have heard what the Minister says, and I truly believe that she is serious about creating economic activities and opportunities for the Aboriginal community other than gambling. I heard her and I appreciate that. Quite frankly, I think the Minister and I would probably have very similar views on gambling and the effects of gambling and the whole economics of gambling. But, be that as it may, I think one has to look at the realities of the world, I think as the Minister has, and say to ourselves we are surrounded by it and maybe one cannot always avoid the inevitable. Sometimes I think one can, however, take significant actions to curtail.

My biggest concern is the huge expansion of the gambling industry that I see right now and that truly concerns me not for my generation but for our future generations, for our children and their children when they grow up in that kind of environment. I do not think it is a healthy environment, quite frankly. That is my view, and I intend to stick by that. I have always voiced that opinion, and I intend to keep on voicing it whether it is in public or in private.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Shall this item pass?

**Mr. Jack Penner:** Mr. Chairman, I want to move to the Veterinary Services for a very brief period of time. I understand that my colleague had previously dealt with the Veterinary Services. I just want to ask the Minister: How many provincial veterinarians have we got? How many have we got on staff in the Department?

Mr. Chairman, I would ask that she include all the vets that we currently have as provincial vets in the various regions, other than the private ones.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, we have seven veterinarians on staff, and we have, throughout the province, about two hundred and fifty vets, and of those about seventy-five would be working in vet service districts.

**Mr. Jack Penner:** Are they on government salary, or are they salaried to the vet district?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, as I indicated, we have seven vets on staff at the present time, and those would be on government salary. The others would be on salary with the vet services district or in private practice, and they would be paid on a fee-for-service basis.

**Mr. Jack Penner:** What kind of grants, or how many grants, what are the grant provisions now to the vet districts, if any, at the current time?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, there is a grant of \$444,100 that goes to the vet districts. Along with that, there is \$300,000 that is available for equipment and infrastructure that the various districts make application for to access those funds.



**Mr. Jack Penner:** Mr. Chairman, is the St. Pierre vet clinic now staffed?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** No, Mr. Chairman, the St. Pierre clinic does not have a vet on staff right now, but I understand that they are trying to find someone who will fill that position.

**Mr. Jack Penner:** Are there any other vet districts that are not being staffed, or vet clinics that are not being staffed?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, Souris is the only other clinic that does not have a vet at the present time.

**Mr. Jack Penner:** How many districts do we have in the province, Madam Minister?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, we have 28 districts involving 55 veterinarians and their support staff who provide 24-hour, 7-day-a-week service to their local communities.

**Mr. Jack Penner:** Thank you very much. The Vita district has one vet on staff currently, is that correct?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, that is correct.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Item 3.4. Agricultural Development and Marketing (b) Animal Industry (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,763,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$568,600—pass;

Item 3.4.(c) Veterinary Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,912,500—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$717,600—pass; (3) Grant Assistance - Operating \$467,100—pass; (4) Grant Assistance - Capital \$300,000—pass.

Item 3.4.(d) Soils and Crops (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2, 924,000. Shall the item pass?

**Mr. Jack Penner:** Mr. Chairman, before we proceed to that line, there is one item that I would like to ask a question on, and I am not going to beleaguer this for a long time, but in Marketing and Farm Management, item No. 4, Other Grants, the item last year had a budget of \$82,000 and this year a budget of \$42,000. Why is that reduction in that line? I am sorry, I should

have asked that the other day. It slipped my mind. I think it was towards the end of the day when we passed that.

It is Marketing and Farm Business Management, item (a) under Agricultural Development and Marketing on page 27; 3.4. Agricultural Development and Marketing and (a) Marketing and Farm Business Management (4) Other Grant Assistance. I am wondering whether—

\* (15:40)

**Ms. Wowchuk:** I would just take that question as notice and then get back to the Member.

**Mr. Jack Penner:** Thank you very much. We will proceed then to Soils and Crops, Mr. Chairman.

The whole area of Soils and Crops, what I would like to do, if I could, is I would like to proceed to Irrigation Development if the Minister concurs with that. I have a colleague here that is limited in his time that he can spend. He has responsibilities in another committee.

I wondered whether we can move to that, and let Mr. Fauschou ask his questions on irrigation and irrigation initiatives.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** We have been joined by Mr. Barry Todd, Director of Soils and Crops, and given that Irrigation Development also comes under his department, we would be prepared to take those questions as well.

**Mr. David Fauschou (Portage la Prairie):** I welcome Mr. Barry Todd to the Chamber this afternoon and look forward to his responses to the following questions.

I would like to ask the Minister some questions in regard to the Irrigation Development budget, and perhaps at this time allow the Minister latitude to provide a little bit of the specifics in regard to the expenditures of over \$800,000 expected in this forthcoming budget here.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** The majority of the \$800,000 is devoted to infrastructure development. A small amount of that money goes to area management

for areas where there are smaller associations working with irrigation. The majority of the activity with these projects is in the Central Region, in the Portage area, Winkler area, the Pembina Valley area. That is where the majority of the work is being done right now, and various projects such as pipelines, retention ponds, and dugouts. It is very difficult to be specific about the amount of money because the projects are changing. Some that were funded in the previous year are ongoing this year. To break it down specifically to the amount of money that is going to each project is quite difficult. But that is the general intent of that money.

**Mr. Faurchou:** In regard to the infrastructure development, is this co-ordinated with PFRA, which is a federal branch which essentially is tasked with much the same mandate?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** This is a program that is shared equally between the federal and the provincial government, and it is PFRA that co-ordinates on behalf of the federal government. The Province and PFRA work together.

**Mr. Faurchou:** So this in fact is monies being directed onto the strategic water initiatives that the previous government had the three-year plan that essentially was 50-50 cost-shared along with proponents that would have to invest at various levels dependent upon whether it was in the planning stages, whether it was in fact the architectural or design stage versus the actual construction stage. There are various levels of support under the strategic water initiative that individuals receive.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** That is correct. The original program was to be terminated on March 31, 2000, but it has been extended for a further two years to expend the money that was allocated to the program both by the federal and provincial government.

**Mr. Faurchou:** So essentially then it is just an extension in time with the same parameters and mandate that it had previous to March 31, 2000. There are no further discussions as to a long-term commitment to a strategic water plan within the province and assisting in the development of irrigated acres or higher value crops.

\* (15:50)

**Ms. Wowchuk:** There are still funds from the previous program. That is why it has been extended for two years. But we have been talking to PFRA to look at extensions or additional plans for irrigations, but those are at the very preliminary stages.

**Mr. Faurchou:** I am wondering whether the Minister is aware that at last year's annual meeting for the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration was that currently the number of projects on the books would require more than 80 years to accomplish under the current level of funding available to that particular agency. I mention that on the basis that the Minister, I believe, should take that into account with in fact her deliberations with the federal government in this regard. It is absolutely imperative that we co-ordinate at both levels of government the best use of available funds is made and that one project versus another project, in fact if they are harmonized in time of construction, make for a much better return on the invested dollar to do the projects in that fashion.

I see the Minister is listening. I would appreciate knowing whether she is aware of that particular situation.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, the numbers that the Member refers to about 80 years, projects that would take up to 80 years to complete are not irrigation programs. These are every possible water project that PFRA has on the books as far as supplying municipal water, all of those kinds of things. The money for the surplus water irrigation initiative that we have been talking about was a special initiative, and what we have to do is look at continuing having a special allocation of money for irrigation. We would not want to look at taking money away from projects that have been designated by PFRA and the Water Services Board as important services to rural Manitoba as far as providing water services for communities and things like that. There are two separate issues.

As I indicated, I very much recognize the importance of irrigation, and in fact I saw some numbers where Manitoba is quite far behind. I hope that the federal government will recognize

that and agree to another program, so that we can have the opportunity to improve our irrigation systems here in Manitoba.

**Mr. Faurichou:** Mr. Chairman, the reason I had mentioned PFRA in this light suggested that there would be negotiations ongoing and would have opportunity to discuss water-related issues with the federal government and that this would be an excellent opportunity to share with the federal government the need for additional funding to support very, very worthwhile projects that have been placed under consideration of the PFRA.

I would like, though, to press the Minister at this time on the surplus water initiative that is underway at the present time because of its extreme value to agriculture in this province and broadens the opportunities that producers have to produce crops that will assist not only the growth within the agricultural industry but certainly increase the viability of their continued operations.

So I ask the Minister once again: Will she commit to this province's allocation of dollars for continued support of strategic surplus water initiative in the upcoming years?

*Mr. Stan Struthers, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair*

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Acting Chairman, I agree with the Member. This is a very important project, and there are many requests and many opportunities for producers. Manitoba is further behind than other provinces as far as irrigation goes. We have begun the negotiations with the federal government for future programs. I tell him that I support the concept of additional irrigation projects to meet the needs and the opportunities of people in various parts of the province.

**Mr. Faurichou:** I was waiting for the other foot to drop in regard to the acknowledgement that the Minister has placed upon the record of the strategic importance of making and supporting the initiative so the producers in Manitoba have irrigation opportunities. I believe the situation where in fact the Province has to be committed to making certain that this surplus water and

strategic irrigation programming continue regardless of the federal government's posture on this one because it is so vitally important to Manitoba producers and to the continued growth of the agricultural sector.

I will leave the Minister with that opportunity to respond to the producers of Manitoba with her commitment on this most vital element in agriculture.

\* (16:00)

**Ms. Wowchuk:** I think I have indicated to the Member that I recognize the importance of irrigation projects. I have indicated to him that we are beginning the negotiations with the federal government, and we have to go through that process. I am not quite sure what more I can say to the Member. He knows that there is a process in place and that budgets are set. It is impossible for me to be today making commitments to future budgets.

I have given him my commitment, Mr. Chairman, and my interest in this project. I have indicated that the Department is in fact discussing this with the federal government, but he has to remember that the federal government has always played a very important role in water supply. As he indicated in his comments, there are many projects that the PFRA have on their books with the Water Services Board. This is another area of water management that the federal government is involved in, and we should be negotiating with the federal government. I have indicated to the Member that I recognize the importance and that we are beginning discussions, and if the Member is expecting me to start putting numbers on the table for future years, he knows that is not how the process works.

We have a process where budgets are set, and we have to work through those. We have a commitment in this budget for irrigation initiatives, and we will continue to work on that, recognizing that there are opportunities for the growth in the economy of Manitoba. One of the tools that is needed for that growth is increased irrigation in parts of the province.

**Mr. Faurichou:** I appreciate the position the Minister is in. However, because it is such a

fundamentally important topic for future growth in agriculture, regardless of whether it be field operations or available waters to supply more intensively managed livestock operations, it is imperative that we have a strategic water plan in using the surplus waters that we have in this province to the best of our advantage.

I understand the Minister and the budget restraints that she is under, but I encourage her, in fact, implore her to make her other colleagues aware that significant dollar expenditure in this particular area is going to be required over the next number of years, if Manitoba Agriculture is going to remain competitive.

Having said that, essentially a non-monetary issue that affects current irrigation in this province is a lack of co-ordination between government departments. I speak specifically of the Assiniboine River floodway that is in the centre of my constituency and, in fact, borders alongside properties that I farmed prior to my entry into the Manitoba Legislative Assembly. The frustrations that one has when you are looking at five, five government departments and branches before you can receive water down that channel to your pump, so that it can begin pumping waters onto fields.

I will give you the example of even placing the irrigation pipes. They travel over the Agricultural Crown Lands Branch, which one has to garner authority from first, before you put the pipe down. Then, once you are into the channel, you are into the Engineering Branch, and you cannot position that pump without the Engineering Branch authorizing how you position your pump. Then the water flow, that is the Water Resources Branch. Then, before the Water Resources Branch can let the water go, they have to, in fact, contact the Highways Department, because there are major Manitoba provincial roadways that cross over the channel that are able to have their say so first. Then, before you get the water out, you have to go to the federal government to see whether or not there is enough water in the Assiniboine in order to be able to divert it down there. The process is absolutely the most cumbersome. I will not fault any particular minister or government, but this is the bureaucracy at its finest.

I am hoping that the Minister, through the strategic water initiative, or through her strategic planning for further irrigation in this province, can bring together a management authority that will essentially be the be-all, the end-all, as far as one contact number, so that all of these entities, through that one contact, will in fact give their blessing for the particular water to be made available for irrigation. As individuals, you can appreciate, every single producer that wants to access the water in there has to go through the same process.

I do not know whether the Minister is aware of this particular situation, but—I see her nodding her head—I would like her response, if she has one.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** The issue of managing surface water to ensure that there is a supply ongoing for the growing season is a very important issue, and one that I raised several times when I was in opposition, to look at how we could capture some of that water that goes rushing down the rivers and ends up in Lake Manitoba. If there was a system where we could better manage that water to maintain a supply for producers over a longer period of time, that is certainly something that I think has to be looked at.

The Member raises a very important issue. It is very cumbersome to get a licence. I guess it has been that way for some time now. The previous government did not fix it in the past 11 years. I hope that, under our administration, we can look at that and improve the system. Whether it means bringing together a management authority or whether it means some kind of initiative, I think that is a very valid point that the Member raises. I will certainly raise it with my colleagues to look at how we can improve that system, because it is an important issue for farmers. There is a possibility that you could bring in, find a way to deal with all of the provincial departments in a simpler fashion. I do not believe that we could deal with the federal government. They still have a federal responsibility that I do not think the province could take over, but the Member raises a valid point and one that I will take to my colleagues to see whether we could find a way to improve it.

**Mr. Faurshou:** Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the Minister's comments. I am still waiting for the word "commitment" to follow through and make certain that it happens. We can all try, but we do want to have, at the end of the day, a more manageable way of accessing water. *[interjection]* So I will move on. The next point was that the previous government was committed to streamlining and bringing together the various departments and two levels of government, federal, provincial, in regard to the Assiniboine River, as it flows through the province of Manitoba. It was known as the Assiniboine River Advisory Committee.

Now, that advisory committee was struck under the former minister of natural resources and undertook a very valuable mandate to study that river and to come forward with a strategic plan of management for that river. That particular committee has requested that they have a meeting with the now Conservation Minister. However, the Conservation Minister has yet to find time to meet with that particular committee. I would like to get a commitment from the Minister of Agriculture today that she will entertain and meet with this committee and look at the valued work that they have in fact provided to the province. With a great deal of fervour, they have looked at the river in every mentionable fashion, whether it be for agricultural purposes or for domestic purposes, to supply urban areas such as Brandon and Portage la Prairie. I would like to ask the Minister that she provide time for this committee to in fact discuss their documents that they have put together in regard to the Assiniboine River, which commutes into my previous questioning about channel authority and more streamline management for whatever purpose. Could we have that commitment?

\* (16:10)

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, as the Member indicated, the Assiniboine River Advisory Committee is a committee of the Department of Conservation; it is not a committee of the Department of Agriculture. I will certainly talk to my colleague about this, but I would encourage the Member, when the Department of Conservation's Estimates come up, that he also raise the issue at that time, but I am not adverse

to meeting with any group. I do not believe I have had a call or a letter from this group with the request of a meeting, but I know that the water supply from the Assiniboine River is very important to the agriculture community. There has been a lot of discussion on how that water can be better used and how levels of that river can be maintained so that there is a continuous supply through the summer months. I certainly will talk to my colleague, and I would encourage the Member to raise it in Conservation Estimates as well.

**Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose):** Mr. Chairman, just to follow on the point and the answer to my colleague from Portage la Prairie, I do not think it would be unreasonable to ask this Minister to commit to seriously considering having a meeting with this group. Even though it is an appointment of a current Conservation Department, this is one of those committees that I hope this new government will consider useful, and largely non-partisan. It is composed of a number of reeves and interested individuals, some with stature in the community that goes far beyond any political leanings. If there is any talk in the presence of this minister of disbanding or reorganizing or reappointing membership, I hope that she will, first of all, avail herself of the knowledge of the group that is there, because the Assiniboine is indeed the highway for water across parts of western Canada, parts of Saskatchewan, as well.

But would the Minister put on the record that she will, indeed, commit to not only talking to her colleague but to apprising herself of the information that this committee has at its fingertips?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Acting Chairman, I believe I said in my previous answer that I had not had a request from this group for a meeting, but I would be most certainly prepared to meet with them. I believe that the water on the Assiniboine River is a very important water supply and one that has to be managed. I would not hesitate to meet with the group, although I have not had a request. I will also share with my colleague the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin) that a request has been made in this Chamber for a meeting and check with him whether he has had a request for a meeting.

But I certainly appreciate the fact that there are people on this committee who have a lot of knowledge about the Assiniboine River. I would expect that all of these people live within close proximity to the river and understand it, understand the water supply. I would welcome the opportunity to have a discussion with them.

**Mr. Cummings:** I do not think the Minister would normally expect a letter of request from this committee, because they were appointed by and generally reported through the Minister of Conservation. But it does lead to—and I hope there would be nothing inappropriate about her inquiring and possibly meeting with them because of the interest that this has for agriculture and for development across the western part of Manitoba. Beyond that, it does raise a question of whether or not the Minister can share with us if there has been a committee or designation of a lead minister in terms of exploring the opportunities for increased water retention in the province. Obviously, we are interested in discussing the Assiniboine, but there is the Pembina, and there is the Red, there is Lake Dauphin. The Acting Chairman would be upset if I did not mention that.

But there are a number of opportunities in this province that require some co-ordination and leadership, and given the reorganization of the Department of Conservation I would bet that the Minister has plenty on his plate not to be thinking about leading a Cabinet committee to discuss water retention in southern Manitoba. But I would like this Minister of Agriculture to consider the importance and the spin-off relative to her portfolio, and if she would (a) either undertake to examine the possibilities around what I just mentioned, or if in fact there has already been an initiative taken by her and her Cabinet colleagues to deal with this issue.

\* (16:20)

**Ms. Wowchuk:** This government recognizes the importance of water management, as did the previous government. I understand that there was a committee under the previous administration dealing with this particular issue, and we have a committee of ministers of government departments dealing with infrastructure and

irrigation and long-term water supply. Those discussions are ongoing.

The lead depends on the specific issue that we are dealing with. As I say, there is a committee, and it is a shared committee between the various departments. As Minister of Agriculture, I am on that committee, and we have had several meetings discussing the importance of management of water and the need to continue and have a long-term water supply that is available for the growth of the agriculture industry.

**Mr. Cummings:** I am not asking for internal secrets, but I am a little confused when we say whoever has a concern would be the Chair or perhaps they would be the lead. I am assuming a committee of this nature is chaired by someone who would call the meetings and the various ministers would bring their urgent or priority issues to that committee. I believe the Minister indicated that she would be part of that, or is part of that, committee. Is this a planning-and-priorities committee, or is that a water-priority-issue type of committee?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** This committee deals with water priorities, and the Member would know who the main departments would have interest in water. There is Conservation, there is Agriculture, there is Intergovernmental Affairs. It depends on what the particular issue is as to which other department might be brought in. If there is an issue dealing with health, it might be the Department of Health that has to come in to address an issue. But it is a group of people of the various departments that have issues dealing with water priorities.

**Mr. Cummings:** Perhaps I am a little slow on the uptake, being it is a damp day outside and the humidity is rising in here, but would the Minister characterize this as a planning-and-priorities committee, or is this what she just said, that it is related to water issues? Further to that, I am still interested to know who in fact would be the lead minister. Is it the Premier (Mr. Doer)?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, I do not know where the Member is going. It does not matter if it is called a waters issue committee or a priorities committee. What I want to tell the

Member is just as there was a committee under his government to deal with specific issues, to deal with irrigation and other water issues, there is a committee that deals with it at the present time.

**Mr. Cummings:** Well, each government is quite entitled to organize itself under any format that it sees fit, but being on the receiving end of the planning and the direction that might come from this sort of committee, I think the people interested in water management, particularly water retention because we have so many irrigation opportunities ahead of us, might want to know that this is not just a committee struck on an ad hoc basis or not just a committee—and apparently it is not—that has a huge myriad of planning and priorities to deal with.

I will explain why I asked the question. I am not trying to make it awkward for the Minister. I simply want some reassurance that this government is committed to continuing to look at the long-term supply, a sustainable supply of water for potable purposes. The Winkler-Morden area is certainly the perfect example of that because there was so much furor over their desire to get water out of the Assiniboine a few years ago, furor which the current government helped to fuel, I would suggest, and now they have the problem. Where are they going to get the water from to supply to these communities, or are they going to tell them that they have got a growth problem? I mean, I do not think they would want to do that.

Under the previous administration, the Sustainable Development Committee of Cabinet often dealt with issues of this nature, and there was leadership provided by the Department of Natural Resources because of their responsibility for water, and Agriculture and other related departments were represented. But there was one minister who was held responsible for moving the discussion forward into planning. Obviously, when resources were tight, planning could be done but the expenditures not necessarily undertaken when we wanted to.

But there is a growing need that this government has inherited to supply reserved water to meet this demand, and I simply want the Minister to assure me, give me some better

assurance that this committee sees this as a priority.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** I can assure the Member that this government does recognize the importance of water, that there has to be planning done, and this committee is addressing those particular issues and a commitment to properly manage water. There have been discussions and there continues to be discussions to ensure that those very important issues are addressed.

**Mr. Cummings:** Did the Minister of Agriculture have any direct input into the structure of Bill 5, The Wildlife Amendment Act and the bill dealing with the water drainage jurisdictional issue that is before the House? The number eludes me at the moment. The title eludes me but I am sure the Minister is aware of it.

To help refresh the Minister's memory, the other one under the motion of the Honourable Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin) is No. 15. My question is: Did this Minister have some direct input into the structure of those bills, knowing that they have a direct effect on the agricultural community of which she is the lead advocate in this province?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, both bills that the Member raised are bills that are under the Department of Conservation. Both bills were, of course, discussed in Cabinet. The water bill, the Department had no direct input into that bill, but certainly I was part of discussions on the bill, both in caucus and in Cabinet. With respect to The Wildlife Act, Bill 5, our staff was consulted on that bill, but it was drafted for the Department of Conservation, and, yes, I had input and discussion on that bill, both in caucus and in Cabinet.

**Mr. Cummings:** Well, then, I can assume that there is not a committee of this government that reviews these bills before they reach the Cabinet table. I presume that she wholeheartedly supports both of these bills. They are government bills, so she really does not have much choice. But I hope that she had an opportunity to have input into the structure of both of these bills.

*Mr. Chairperson in the Chair*

While they are not in and of themselves singularly critical to the future of agriculture, they are, particularly The Wildlife Amendment Act—we will have ample opportunity to discuss that further—I do want to put it on the record at this point that I see that as being somewhat in conflict with the opportunity to diversify. It is a situation that has probably gone far beyond what the diversification ramifications were ever intended to be. It has gone into the political arena more than it has in the agricultural and wildlife debate.

The Minister says she has had opportunity for input at caucus. I accept that, but given that she is—I think it is the right term—the lead advocate for agriculture within the province, she has an especially onerous task related to those two bills and the discussion that is now being generated around large livestock operations. If I am on ground that has already been plowed, I hope my colleagues will stop me, but the current discussions that are being taken to the public regarding livestock operations, the Livestock Stewardship program would be the correct terminology, I wonder if the Minister could explain how the American models were thrown in there, and not the current regulations and standards by which we maintain a grip on the nature of large livestock operations in this province today?

\* (16:30)

This strikes me as being a backhanded, if not underhanded and deceitful, way of taking this debate out into the public. An uneducated person not in the agricultural community today, and I say uneducated in terms of the knowledge around management of livestock manure and dead stock particularly, if someone who was not knowledgeable in that area was to pick up this document, I suspect that they would be apoplectic before they got half way through it, because in many respects this document paints agriculture in Manitoba with a very black brush. I think the Minister has allowed a real genuine disservice to be done to agriculture in this province by allowing this to be put out in this manner. There is nothing wrong with the debate. I encourage the debate and I look forward to participating in it, but I think that the biggest problem agriculture has today is that larger

communities—after all, we are a minority and I use the term "we" advisedly, but on this side of the House, we still have some active farmers here including myself.

I am offended by the fact that we put out a publication. We, in the name of the Manitoba Government, put out a publication that leaves the impression with someone who may not have an agricultural background that this is equivalent to a Chernobyl that is about to happen in Manitoba if we end up the same as some of the hog operations in the States. For goodness sake, we already have regulations that are far more stringent, that restrict the construction of hog barns adjacent to each other on Manitoba land, on quarter sections, not in the way they have them in the States where they will have 10 barns literally linked to each other by a walkway and one common lagoon.

You are probably looking at 150 000 hogs with the manure being emptied into one lagoon. Of course you have a huge problem. I think it is most unfair and unreasonable to put that type of information in here without the balancing information. If that information was going to go into this Manitoba publication, the publication on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Conservation and the Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs, those three ministers I think should be apologetic for having their names attached to this without a full gamut of the information being included. I would be very interested to hear the Minister defend how she thinks that is a reasonable way to take this debate out to the public when 3 percent of the population are active farmers.

She has just set it up so the other 97 percent of this province thinks we are running amuck with the environment out there. Have a debate but do not slant the debate through a publication of this nature.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, we had a very thorough discussion of this issue under the Animal Industry Branch, which has already been passed. The Member seems to have some of the same feelings as his colleague the Member for Emerson (Mr. Jack Penner). I would ask the Member to look from page—he talks about the regulations not being outlined or the guidelines.



I do not know whether he has not looked through the report thoroughly, but if you look at pages 24 to 32, that part of the document outlines all of the regulations and the acts that we have here in Manitoba, that the producers abide by in Manitoba.

I think there is plenty of information in here for the public to look at, to get an understanding and that is part of the purpose of this document, is to give the public the understanding that the livestock industry is not expanding in Manitoba without any regulations and guidelines. There are regulations and guidelines in place in this province that guide the expansion of this industry, and the Member seems to be afraid of a discussion.

I am not afraid of a discussion, and I do not believe that this document paints the industry in a negative way at all. It gives some information. It says that we are going to have growth in this industry in Manitoba. There are some issues that have been raised by other people, issues that are raised by people both in rural and urban Manitoba, issues that are raised by people who are in the industry.

I look forward to the discussions that will result from this document being circulated. I have great confidence in the three people that we have appointed to the panel, to have the ability to look at the scientific information that is being put forward, the information that is being put forward by farmers as to how they are doing the job of managing both the livestock that they make their living from, as well as the environment. I would encourage the Member to look closely at the document from pages 24 to 32 where he can see indeed that Manitoba's regulations and guidelines are spelled out very clearly.

**Mr. Cummings:** Well, Mr. Chairman, I said that I do not appreciate the tone and the context in which this was put together. The Minister is correct, the reference to the regulations are at the back of this publication. On page 19, Experiences Elsewhere, North Carolina. Well, hog production is concentrated in the eastern part of the state. It says that most of them are on hills; manure runs downhill.

I am not sure if that is a new scientific discovery, but the fact is if you are going to compare us to Carolina, why does it not say somewhere that you have to have 10 times the population of hogs in this province than we have now to equivalent density in Carolina. You are doing a disservice to the public of this province. That kind of comparison would be more valuable, and I hope the Minister does not create a firestorm by going out with this type of a presentation.

It can be pro or it can be neutral, and I think probably the intent was let us have a neutral philosophical and scientific discussion, and if that was the intent, then that really adds to my displeasure for the way this is put together. To point to the Netherlands and the problems that they have, I suspect that it is true to say that they have extremely high densities. We also have the two examples of where control has required that they do reduce their population. All of the bad stories in this country, however, are probably located in Québec, and I think we have set ourselves up for a discussion out there that is probably going to not be as informative as I would like.

I am certainly concerned that the nature of this discussion does not have a point-by-point demonstration of where these regulations exist, where there might be improved implementation, where there might be improved definition. It is couched in a way that strikes me that until people have finished having their eyeballs pop out when they read the lead pages, that by the time they get back to the rationale part of the document, they may not be quite as willing to listen to a rational discussion about large livestock operations in this province.

\* (16:40)

My colleagues inform me that there was a significant discussion in this area before, and I apologize for not joining this discussion at that time, but I wanted to put on the record my feelings about this publication and the manner in which it is put together. I do not think that I have said that there is anything that is not right about what is stated here; it is the contextual way that it is presented that strikes me that it is going to

be a heyday for those who are opposed to large livestock operation.

If we are going to talk about North Carolina, everybody has seen the pictures on television of manure and dead stock floating down the river at the times of floods. We just had the flood of the century in this province about three years ago. We did not have any of that problem despite the horror stories that were supposedly coming from the States. We had people phoning government offices saying that there was 10 000 cattle that died in the storms in the States; when are they coming floating down the river? To my knowledge, there was almost none of that that occurred.

So it is that type of fear tactic that tends to put agriculture on the defensive, and it strikes me that at a very crucial time in our development, this was not a wise choice. I will leave that topic. If the Minister wishes to respond, that is fine, but it is an issue that is going to have some negative ramifications for agriculture in the way it may well be discussed out there.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, I get the impression that he is saying that this document is very boring from the beginning, that the people will get tired of reading it and not bother getting to the regulations—*[interjection]* Well, whatever his term was. I question the Member on that. When you look at the message from the ministers, but then looking at a historical overview of Manitoba, I would not think that Manitobans would find that boring, to look at the whole historical overview of what has happened in Manitoba, and how the livestock industry has grown. I do not think that they will find it boring as to why our livestock industry is growing and changing.

I think, in fact, that Manitobans will find that very interesting to learn about why our industry is changing, and in fact that some of the change is driven by changes by the federal government, and that our producers are looking for ways to diversify. I do not think that the members will find it boring to see an outlook of Manitoba's livestock industry, whether it be in hogs, poultry, dairy, beef, or the impacts of crop, research and development, processing, export

trends, or the employment opportunities. I cannot believe that the Member thinks that people would not be interested enough to look through this information. I think that they want to learn more about agriculture.

The Member talks about why we put North Carolina in, and why we put the Netherlands in. We went through the same discussion with the Member from Emerson (Mr. Jack Penner). I think we learn from other people. In fact, Mr. Chairman, I know that the previous government sent a delegation down to North Carolina to look at these issues to see what we could learn from it. So I guess it is okay for their government, when they were in government, to send people to North Carolina to learn from their experiences, or in fact for the Minister of Agriculture to go to Taiwan to look at the hog industry there to see what we could learn from them. That is okay. It was okay for them to do it but it is not okay for us to talk about North Carolina and some of the lessons that we have learned from North Carolina.

For example, that design of manure storage facilities should incorporate sufficient freeboard capacity to withstand heavy rains. Certainly that is an important issue that we have right now, with the rainfall that we have. There are things that other countries have done that we can learn from. Many of those things have been incorporated into the regulations that we have right now.

The Member talks about how people, being opposed to the industry, are going to make comment. Well, I do not know where the Member has been, but there have been people who had been opposed to the growth of the livestock industry when his government was in power and there are people who are opposed to it now. *[interjection]*

The Member just said, across the way, including me. Well, I think the Member should be very careful about what he is saying about me, because I have never been opposed to the growth of the livestock industry in this province. He should be careful of what he is saying there, because I have been a strong supporter of the livestock industry. I have said, when they were in government, and when we are in government,

that there is room for the livestock industry to grow in Manitoba, and we have to ensure that growth happens in a sustainable way, so that we can have the long-term benefits from it.

So the Member can say that this is a negative document. If he chooses to put a negative spin on it, I am disappointed in him, because he says he supports the livestock industry. I would hope that he would participate, make a presentation or put in a written submission to the Committee sharing his views. I certainly hope that he will put on a much more positive spin to his views than he has put in this committee here.

We have the opportunity for growth of the livestock industry, whether it be in hogs, in beef, or some of the smaller species, such as goats and sheep. There are many opportunities for growth. Let us put a positive spin on it. The public will have the opportunity to share their views on the industry. I think that is a positive step to be taking, and certainly I have a lot of respect for the people who are on the Committee. I suspect, and I expect, that they will certainly be able to sift the scientific evidence out from the height of negativism that some people will put on it and come forward with a report that will indeed help us ensure that this industry grows in a positive way and will be long-term growth.

I do not think we should be afraid to talk about some of the challenges that are there and look at ways we can improve on them. We should not be afraid to look at problems that have happened in other countries and learn from their mistakes. His government did it. As I say, they went to North Carolina, they went to Taiwan, and I believe they even went to The Netherlands to look at what was happening over there. We learned from other people we should not be afraid to talk about those, and I look forward to hearing the results of the discussions and the report that our panel brings forward.

**Mr. Cummings:** Well, I was hoping that I might get a different type of response from the Minister, and I feel compelled to engage her on the points that she is making. The fact is that if we are looking for a logical debate, the ministers have introduced this debate at one of the more critical times for development of the hog

industry in western Canada. This province has just attracted the two larger processing operations to this part of western Canada. That means that we intend to be drawing hogs out of Saskatchewan as well.

The debate is raging on in various municipalities across this province right now. I have just been involved with some people promoting opportunities in this area. It seems to me that there is a very large portion of the population in parts of the province who have the view that hog barns are smelly, that they lower the value of neighbouring properties. Their comment is very often, we do not need another North Carolina. So there is a fair level of sensitivity that has been raised out there already to this type of commentary. North Carolina and hogs are automatically a negative connotation in the minds of a large number of people out there today.

\* (16:50)

This document does not need to be a promotional document. What it lacks and what I was referring to earlier is that it lacks the assurance that development even to this date has not been haphazard and illogical, that simply to state what the regulations are as a package of regulations—I refer to the comparison between the operation of lagoons in Manitoba and North Carolina—strikes me that that is not necessarily helpful either when a lot of people in this province of any volume of manure are injecting it. The management of the system, by regulations already in place, is different than North Carolina.

It might well be that I am offending somebody who did a fine job of putting together this proposal, but what I think is that the three ministries probably signed off on this without thinking about some of the reaction. Psychological mindset of the public out there is already far too much in one direction, in my mind. We have probably opened up a situation where, instead of indicating to the public that this is an industry that we already have a fair bit of regulation around, one that can be further fine-tuned, if you wish, one that can be forced to use further development in terms of scientific expertise in manure management and livestock health. We have opened up a debate now that seems to give the public the feeling that it is now

open season on hog barns. At the very time when I would hope this minister—and she says she supports the livestock industry and she is offended that I said that she was critical of it. As so often happens in this business, when she was in opposition, she was very critical of some of the initiatives and environmental controls around livestock manure management. Whether she used that as a tool to try and make it go further, that is fine, but she also unfortunately put herself in a position of appearing to be somewhat negative about that development.

I am sure the Minister is fairly conscious of this. If at the provincial government level, there appears not to be some willingness to step forward and advocate on behalf of the industry and defend it in terms of what I think is a pretty good track record in this province, then that does affect the investment climate and the willingness of municipalities and the general public to accept this type of an investment in their community.

When you are talking about a \$50-million investment that was being shopped around out in my neck of the woods, and one of the first negative criticisms that came up is we are not going to turn this municipality into another North Carolina, I suggest the Minister, unfortunately, has allowed a very negative connotation to be brought to this.

The other way of looking at it would have been to say it is our intention to have one of the best regulated and best developed large agricultural, large animal production systems in western Canada. We have huge acreages here. We do not need to go to the density of the Netherlands and Carolina. Therefore, it is probably not appropriate, as was already pointed out around the use of lagoons, to see the comparison as being valid. But I am afraid what the Minister has done is what happens so often between opposition and government is that she raised concerns in a way that appeared to be very negative when she was in opposition.

She is now faced with the responsibility of speaking out on behalf of agriculture and agriculture development. Because she represents a constituency now that is one of the driving forces for jobs in rural Manitoba and needs to be given the ability to and encouragement to

develop with, knowing it has the support of government, if it does it in an environmentally sound manner, and knowing that it has some political support for those who are bringing in tens of millions of dollars from outside of this province.

I am not exaggerating when I use that figure, because when one small municipality that I am familiar with has an opportunity for \$50-million worth of hog barn development, then there is probably several others of the same stature being shopped around out there, and given our density, it is an unfortunate comparison.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, we debated this extensively under another line of the Department, and the Member chooses to revert back to this and be critical of my previous comments. I would only encourage him to go back and check my comments, but I would also encourage that we get back to the issue that we are debating and that is the Soils and Crops and the Irrigation line.

**Mr. Faurschou:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the Minister, in respect to the previous discussions and the importance of water within the province, as to what initiatives she is undertaking at this time to address the need for additional irrigated acres in this province. I believe at this point in time, there are individuals that represent potato processing interests, looking at Manitoba, but I understand also that the shortage, lack of acres that are available for irrigation for the production of potatoes is a significant concern.

I would like to know whether the Minister is undertaking some strategic planning, some initiative that will effectively make Manitoba a viable place for further expansion of the potato industry.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, the potato industry is a very important industry in Manitoba. There is potential for growth. I am told that we have about a million acres of land that could be potato land, land that could be used for potato production if there were irrigation systems there. Presently we have about 75 000 acres that are irrigated. So in comparison to what we have and what opportunity there is, only a

small portion of that land is irrigated. So irrigation is a significant issue.

As I indicated to the Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings), we have a committee that is looking at how we can improve irrigation. At the present time there are about 5000 acres annually that come under irrigation. Certainly if there are more opportunities for processing or more opportunities for more growth of potatoes in this province, that whole process is going to have to be accelerated.

\* (17:00)

**Mr. Faurchou:** Mr. Chairman, I appreciate that the Minister recognizes that this venture must have an accelerated, a more prioritized stature within government at this point in time.

The previous government had outlined in their re-election bid, if I might say, the absolute importance of the water initiative in this province, not only for irrigation, but for every other purpose, and had stated that they were going to in fact have a minister that was going to be a lead minister on this very, very important issue for the vitality of Manitoba in the future. Is that the type of fashion to which this committee that she refers to or not?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, as I indicated in my previous answer, the issue of water management and the use of water crosses various departments. It is not only one department. We believe in working together, departments working together, and that is what we are doing now. The various departments that are impacted by water management and the use of water are working together and putting a plan in place as to how we are going to continue to work on this path of water management, water retention, water flows in various rivers. We are looking at that.

But I say to the Member that there is a lot of potential. We recognize the importance of it and recognize that there are opportunities in Manitoba, and the various departments of government are working at it at the present time.

**Mr. Faurchou:** Mr. Chairman, it is certainly one component to recognize the need. Another

is, in fact, to focus and implement so that the need is satisfied. I sound repetitious. However, if Manitoba is going to seize upon the opportunities that we have at present to diversify and, in fact, have more high-value crops available to the farming community of our province so that we will maintain viable operations, this is one very critical element. I cannot stress more strongly to the Minister in that regard.

So moving on to one other related question, and I will then yield the floor to my honourable colleague for Emerson, and that is, in fact, a component of management. When one enters into high-value cropping, one must be more intensive in management. The program involving microweather stations is a very important element in that increased management. I am pleased to see the support for that acknowledged in the dialogue with the Finance Minister, but I am very concerned as to the specifics of what that one line in the budget meant as far as to the irrigation acres which this microweather station project is related.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, I am not sure. The Member is referring to a particular line that was in the budget speech that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) made with regard to the weather network, I believe. I guess I want to inform the Member that Manitoba Agriculture and Food has contributed close to a million dollars to support the establishment of ACE and a real-time weather network, and Manitoba Conservation has contributed \$300,000 for Adcon equipment for flood monitoring and the management program. We recognize the importance of very accurate weather information, particularly in some of the crops that have a lot of applications of pesticides. Timing is very important. I was very pleased that we were able to fund that program since we took government. The ACE is set up at Carman and will establish 400 weather networks across Manitoba. This will help in prediction and give farmers timely information to help them with their management practices.

**Mr. Faurchou:** I was perhaps a little ambiguous in my line of questioning, but that is specifically what I wanted to hear from the Minister as to the level of support for this particular project, which producers in and around

Portage la Prairie very much appreciated. Now, the number of microweather stations, if I am incorrect in using that term of a microweather sensing equipment. I am very familiar with them. I have seen them in operation. I do not know if I am using the right term though.

Currently we have how many? The 400 which she mentions, is that this year's projected number of operating sites?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** In the initial phase of the project, this is the initial phase that we are in now, we expect to have 150 operating this year. In addition there are 40 of these weather stations that have been installed by the potato industry. So this year we will have close to 200 that will be operating.

The Member says he is familiar with them, but I just want to say that there is very, very accurate information that is provided from them that is available on an ongoing basis. For example, I have information here where we can have the total precipitation from Friday the 9th of June till Wednesday the 21st of June. It is updated regularly. For example, at Carman, there was 86.9 millimetres. Winnipeg has had 218.2 millimetres; Dugald 186.4 millimetres. If you go down to St. Pierre-Jolys it was 197.4. If you go to Cloverleaf it was 190 millimetres. It is a variety, whereas in Gilbert Plains it is only 64.4 millimetres of rain. So it gives very accurate information and very accurate collection of data which I believe will be very helpful to all producers in Manitoba.

\* (17:10)

**Mr. Faurichou:** I appreciate the Minister's response. I invite her out to Portage la Prairie if she has time on her travels back to her home in Swan River or Cowan to visit the Manitoba crop development and diversification centre where one is operating, it is, as she was briefed, a very accurate and valued information. Because if one is going to go into irrigation and high-value crop production, one has to appreciate the conditions that exist in that field not only at a specific point in time but one that is of a cumulative nature so that you can understand the progression of the crop, the potentials that that crop has, and the requirements that it needs to reach that potential.

I would like to stress and ask the Minister for a long-term commitment, once again, to not only the instrumentation that is required in the field but for the program development that will take that information and commute that information into management tools, where one can appreciate and fully utilize the information in actual cropping practices, the different pesticide applications, as well as nutrient and water applications. So if she could appreciate the need for the two very distinctly different elements within this project, as the program and ongoing software development that will take this information and commute it for a valuable management tool.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** I would think that a million dollars is a pretty good commitment. If I was not interested in long-term commitment, I would not have gone to Cabinet to try to get this project funded. Part of that, there is \$300,000 that went directly to develop the kind of program and development of the new products as the Member is referring to. This is what ACE is all about, developing a long-term product.

The people who manage the program at the Soils and Crops branch work very closely with the ag extension to ensure that there are programs, that the information is out there and available for producers. I do not know why the Member would even doubt that there is a long-term commitment, because I do not think any government would make that kind of investment and not be planning for a long-term commitment to ensure that there is the kind of information there to assist in development of pest management and other weather-based, crop production models.

The Member talks about irrigation, about irrigation scheduling. That is the kind of commitment that is there. The Member should not even question it, if there is a long-term commitment given that there is that kind of investment made into the project. I certainly anticipate that there will be recognition of the value of this service and that we will indeed see growth of this kind of service across the province and across western Canada.

**Mr. Faurichou:** I know that there are not only producers, but personnel within the Department

that are very excited about this leading-edge technology which, in fact, is just that, leading not only our province but our nation and North America in this type of technology.

Leaving the Minister with one last question and that is: As an irrigator, we sometimes look with envy to the situation that some of the producers in Saskatchewan have benefited from, that being the provincial government's undertaking to provide turnkey irrigation projects that producers have benefited from in that province, and whether there is any consideration of mirroring their initiative, where, as a producer, one goes to the field and turns on the switch and pays for the water in use and the capital and the pumping and all of that is taken care of by the Province whether the Minister is looking to be considerate of Saskatchewan's irrigation initiative at any time in the future.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** We will work to develop a sustainable responsible model for irrigation. That may be the Saskatchewan model. That may be the Alberta model. That may be the model that we have here in Manitoba. Maybe the Surface Water Irrigation Initiative will be the right model to look at. We will work very closely with the producers to develop that model.

If you look at what is in place in Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan has a lot of pipe in the ground, a lot of irrigation there, but the potatoes are not being grown there. So maybe the Saskatchewan model is not the right one to look at. We have a very healthy potato industry here in Manitoba, second highest production in Canada. That has been developed by working with the producers.

The Member is looking for a turnkey operation. Whether we are looking at the one in Saskatchewan, I do not know whether his government looked at that model. If they did, they certainly did not implement it, but I want to assure the Member that our model will be a responsible one working with the producers to decide what they want. The health of the industry that we have right now gives an indication that that is probably a better way to go than what Saskatchewan has. But we will look at all of the models and improve it and take

advantage of the opportunities that are there. We are now the second highest producer of potatoes in Canada, high quality potatoes. I look to see that industry grow and look to see Manitoba as No. 1 potato producer and producer of very high quality potatoes.

\* (17:20)

**Mr. Jack Penner:** Mr. Chair, we have a bit better than half an hour left today. It will not give us enough time to finish Soils and Crops. I thought that maybe we could get through Soils and Crops today but that is not going to be possible. So we are going to have to continue that section tomorrow.

I want to ask the Minister about the real-time weather network. The whole project was started what, two years ago? Was that two years ago or three years ago?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** The program has been in operation for three years with the forty weather stations. I mentioned forty that were put in by the potato growers. So those were in place with the potato growers. There were a few sites that were in place for the vegetable growers. So the preliminary work with the potato growers started three years ago.

**Mr. Jack Penner:** I understand that the province, three years ago, had done a contract with Geotech Environment Services. Can the Minister tell me whether Geotech Environment Services are still involved in this project?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** No.

**Mr. Jack Penner:** Can the Minister apprise me of the reasons why the contract with Geotech Environment Services was terminated, the reasons why, and some background on it?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, the province made the decision to deliver the program through ACE. ACE made the decision that the services would be delivered directly. So there was no need for Geotech to be involved.

**Mr. Jack Penner:** Mr. Chairman, would the Minister be able to tell me who ACE is and what sort of a corporation ACE is and what their

background is and what the make-up of the corporation is? Who are the shareholders? Who would be the management team at ACE?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, ACE is a not-for-profit corporation, wholly owned by the Carman Community Development Corporation. So that would be the only shareholder, and the board would then be the Carman Community Development Corporation, which is made up of 15 business people. There is an executive group of that group of business people. They have hired one permanent staff. There are also four seasonal staff, and they are supported with assistance from the Department of Agriculture and Food.

**Mr. Jack Penner:** Would the Minister be able to give me the names of the staff people that are working at ACE?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Can the Member clarify if he is looking for the names of the ACE staff?

**Mr. Jack Penner:** Yes.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, the person who has been hired as the office staff is Mr. Dolf Feddef. There are four summer students who are the seasonal staff, and I do not have the names of those students.

**Mr. Jack Penner:** That is fine. Thank you. Who is the general manager of ACE?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** That position is vacant, the general management, but Mr. Dolf Feddef with the support of the executive is doing the management of ACE.

\* (17:30)

**Mr. Jack Penner:** Could the Minister tell me what sort of arrangements exist between ACE and the province and/or the department? Is it a contractual arrangement? If it is, could she give me the value of the contract?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, the arrangement is there will be a signed agreement between the Province and ACE. The Province will supply the funding that we talked about earlier. ACE will be responsible to provide a certain level of

employment, collect data, and continue to develop the programs that we have talked about. The information that they collect is put out through the Internet and is available for producers through the Internet. Also part of the agreement is that the Department has two ex-official members of the Board.

**Mr. Jack Penner:** I guess, Mr. Chairman, the Minister did not understand the question. I asked what the cost of the operation of ACE would be for this year, and I wonder whether the Minister could give me two figures, whether she could give me the cost of the operations of ACE for the year 1999-2000 and for the current year 2000-2001. Could you tell me what the contractual arrangements are between the Corporation and the Province?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** As I indicated earlier, we have put in a million dollars, and there are various pieces to that. There was \$48,000 to develop the computer model on disease prediction and irrigation scheduling. There was \$300,000 for operating, for the start-up of ACE; \$90,000 for some purchase of some equipment, and, again, the \$590,000 for purchasing of equipment. All of those numbers make up a little over a million dollars that has gone in to ACE, but for the present year the operation is on its own. So there is no need for additional funding for the Corporation other than the support staff that we would provide for them.

**Mr. Jack Penner:** Madam Minister, I have a draft budget for 1999 operations for the ACE operation. This is a draft budget for—that is the reason I ask the question—1999-2000, March 31. Total budget according to this draft document is \$95,315 for year 1999 to March 31, 2000—\$95,315.

\* (17:40)

**Ms. Wowchuk:** I am not sure what budget the Member is referring to because there have been a lot more expenditures than that in ACE as I indicated. It is over a million dollars that has been spent on equipment and start-up costs, development of programs and purchase of equipment. I am not sure what the Member is referring to as a budget of \$95,315.



**Mr. Jack Penner:** I can table this for the Minister, both of these documents, if she will. I can make copies for her and give them to her tomorrow if she wants. The second document I have is ACE budget for Real Time Potato Network 2000 operations, item description of operations, and I will go over these with her: facility lease; site of computer-based station; set up a collection of data; issue compiled products and hardware storage, six-month term, \$8,998; base station operation, six-month period, individual telephone lines, telephone long distance, faxing twice weekly, Internet connections, Industry Canada radio licence, remote receivers, and the items are \$1,095, 87.50, 175 and 3,600 respectively.

Office supplies, 350; data disks \$75; print cartridges, 345; printing services, \$750; weather network supplies, cleaning supplies, field equipment, \$600. Personal cost potato network manager salary and benefits, \$43,333; field and travel expenses, \$7,800; cellular phone, Potato Network manager, \$1,350; weather network technician salary, \$13,156; bookkeeping, audit and other administration \$2,250. Total, \$92,327. This is an ACE budget for Real Time Potato Network operations.

That is the reason I asked the Minister what the operations budgets were for ACE network that she had signed or her department has signed with ACE. Are these the budgets or are these the amounts? Where does the million dollars come in?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, I am not aware of the document that the Member is speaking about. He said he is going to provide a copy of it, but we are assuming that that is the budget that was put in place running the original 40 sites that are for the potato project. It is not the complete project. We made a decision to put additional funds in so that the service could be expanded across Manitoba and further developed. So there is more than a million dollars that has been put into the project. I do not know what that particular budget is. I am assuming that that is the budget that someone has put together for the operation of the 40 sites on the potato project.

**Mr. Jack Penner:** Mr. Chairman, my information is that this proposed budget, the ACE budget for the Real Time Potato Network 2000 operation, was approved on January 6, 2000.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, we are assuming that that was the budget that was approved by SWII for the 40 sites with the potato industry. However, after that was given approval by the SWII, there was a decision made to put additional money in to expand the program. When that additional money went in, ACE also took on the responsibility of managing all of the sites, and there was no need for that particular budget that the Member is referring to. That contract did not proceed. If it was approved by one level, it never made it any further through the system, because we took a different direction.

**Mr. Jack Penner:** Could the Minister tell me what SWII stands for?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** I thought the Member was aware of what it stood for because we were talking about irrigation. It is the Surface Water Irrigation Initiative. I was referring to it by the short, abbreviated form, but that is the term. I thought the Member understood that because we were on the line of Irrigation, and I was talking about that particular project with his colleague a little earlier.

**Mr. Jack Penner:** I know most things, but I do not know everything, so I thank the Minister for that explanation. I will give the Minister a copy of a letter that I have here and also a copy of the two documents I have referred to in fairness to her, and I would like her to respond. It may not be done in this committee; it can be done outside of the Committee, since it is for personal information.

There are some indications here which I do not think we need to discuss publicly, but I would like some explanation on this matter, if the Minister could. *[interjection]* I will give her a copy of this after committee, and then we will deal with that matter.

\* (17:50)

**Ms. Wowchuk:** I appreciate the Member giving that document to me after the Committee. I think that there might be some sensitive issues here, and we would be better to discuss it in a private discussion rather than put it on the record.

**Mr. Jack Penner:** There have been a number of discussions over the last number of years dealing with water management issues, specifically directed, as some of my colleagues indicated before, towards the supply of water, both potable supply of water and irrigation water.

The Province has been a partner in setting up an infrastructure that I think over the past number of years has allowed for the expansion of the irrigation industry in the southernmost part of the province. I refer largely to the agreement that was done between the potato producers and the Water Services Board and PFRA a number of years ago that established a significant number of water-holding areas in southern Manitoba.

I think that the total amount of money allocated to this project on a one-third, one-third, one-third basis, I understand, was about \$3,272,650. Is that program continuing or is there a need to continue that program?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Can the Member clarify for us if he is talking about the Surface Water Irrigation Initiative which is an agreement between the federal and the provincial government?

**Mr. Jack Penner:** Yes, Mr. Chairman, that is what I am referring to. I am referring to the program that was initiated. I do not know exactly when this was initiated, but some—

**An Honourable Member:** Three years ago.

**Mr. Jack Penner:** No, Mr. Chairman, I think it was initiated some time prior to that, when the province and the federal government agreed to cost-share a program that would see a large number of dugouts, some of them up to 80 acres in size, for irrigation purpose, to store water, and most of them are filled during the spring run-off time and then recharged again, and there are some specific questions I have around that.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** There were some trial projects that were done early on to see whether this was feasible to collect surface water in retention ponds and then use it for irrigation purposes. But the official program started in June of 1999, and it is a joint agreement. It is called the Surface Water—oh, I am sorry, my mistake, Mr. Chairman, I said '99, I meant to say June 1997. It is a federal-provincial agreement; it is the Surface Water Irrigation Initiative. A total of \$6 million, \$3 million from the Province and \$3 million from the federal government, and, to date, \$3,267,132 have been expended. The program is carrying on because there are still additional funds there that can be used for additional projects.

**Mr. Jack Penner:** When is that program going to terminate, or is there a termination date on it?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, the program has been extended for an additional two years because there are funds that have not been used up, and we recognize it as an important project.

**Mr. Jack Penner:** Are the numbers in this book correct, of the monies that are still available, roughly about one and three-quarter million dollars?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, there are \$2.8 million available.

**Mr. Jack Penner:** Mr. Chairman, I wonder whether the Minister has had any discussion with her colleagues. She referred to a water committee of some sort that I am not quite sure I understood what the meaning of it was, but she referred to a committee that she was a Member of. I wonder whether she could give me the name of the Committee, who the members of that committee are and what the mandate of that committee might be.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, what I indicated is that one of the previous members had asked whether we recognized the importance of water and the need for additional water for irrigation and water management. What I indicated to him is that we do recognize this, and there is a committee of Cabinet that involves the various departments who have an interest in water—Agriculture, Conservation, Intergovernmental

Affairs. But there are also other departments that are called in depending on the issue. If it were a health issue, then someone from Health would be called in to the Committee, for discussions. If it might be an Education issue, or it might be another issue, then those departments would be called in.

As with many issues that affect rural Manitoba, many times it is Agriculture, Inter-governmental and Conservation that are the departments that are involved. What I have indicated to the Member is that we do recognize this as an important issue. We have had discussions across departments to look at how we address it and how we ensure that there is a supply of water needed for various projects, whether it is for human consumption or whether it is for agriculture purposes, for irrigation purposes. But I very much believe in having departments work together and understand the issues that each are working on. That is the kind of committee we have and it is certainly a committee that is not exclusive to particular departments. It depends very much on what the issues are, who is involved in it.

**Mr. Jack Penner:** I wonder whether the Minister, for tomorrow, could give me the name of the Committee, what the real Cabinet name is of that committee, and whether she could give me tomorrow a list of the membership of the Committee and what the mandate of the Committee is. We would really appreciate that.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** I have just indicated to the Member that this is a group of people that is talking about the issues of water from various departments. I have also indicated that the composition of the Committee will change depending on what the issues are that we are discussing. There is no particular name to the Committee or a given structure to the Committee.

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

Call in the Speaker.

#### IN SESSION

**Mr. Speaker:** The hour being 6 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow (Thursday).

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, June 21, 2000

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