

**Third Session - Thirty-Eighth Legislature**  
of the  
**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**  
**DEBATES**  
and  
**PROCEEDINGS**  
**Official Report**  
**(Hansard)**

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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Eighth Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
AGLUGUB, Cris	The Maples	N.D.P.
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	N.D.P.
BRICK, Marilyn	St. Norbert	N.D.P.
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CULLEN, Cliff	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
CUMMINGS, Glen	Ste. Rose	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.
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	P.C.
HAWRANIK, Gerald	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
HICKES, George, Hon.	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri	Fort Garry	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar, Hon.	The Pas	N.D.P.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
LOEWEN, John	Fort Whyte	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McGIFFORD, Diane, Hon.	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
MURRAY, Stuart	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	N.D.P.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack	Southdale	P.C.
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
ROCAN, Denis	Carman	P.C.
RONDEAU, Jim, Hon.	Assiniboia	N.D.P.
ROWAT, Leanne	Minnedosa	P.C.
SALE, Tim, Hon.	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Wellington	N.D.P.
SCHELLENBERG, Harry	Rossmere	N.D.P.
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield	P.C.
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	N.D.P.
SMITH, Scott, Hon.	Brandon West	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	N.D.P.
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Tuesday, May 24, 2005**

**The House met at 1:30 p.m.**

*PRAYERS*

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**PETITIONS**

**Pembina Trails School Division—New High School**

**Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

Overcrowded schools throughout Whyte Ridge, Lindenwoods, Linden Ridge and Richmond West subdivisions are forcing Pembina Trails School Division to bus students outside of these areas to attend classes in the public school system.

Elementary schools in Pembina Trails School Division have run out of space to accommodate the growing population of students in the aforementioned areas.

Five-year projections for enrolment in the elementary schools in these areas indicate significant continued growth.

Existing high schools that receive students from Whyte Ridge, Lindenwoods and Linden Ridge are at capacity and cannot accommodate the growing number of students that will continue to branch out of these subdivisions.

Bussing to outlying areas is not a viable long-term solution to meeting the student population growth in the southwest portion of Winnipeg.

The development of Waverley West will increase the need for a high school in the southwest sector of Winnipeg.

The government is demonstrating a lack of respect for the students and families in Whyte Ridge, Lindenwoods, Linden Ridge and Richmond West by

refusing to provide adequate access to education within the community.

The Fort Whyte constituency is the only constituency in the province that does not have a public high school.

NDP constituencies in Winnipeg continue to receive capital funding for various school projects while critical overcrowding exists in schools in Lindenwoods, Whyte Ridge and Richmond West.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the provincial government recognize the need for a public high school in the southwest region of Winnipeg.

Secondly, to request the provincial government, in conjunction with the Public Schools Finance Board, to consider adequate funding to establish a high school in the southwest sector of Winnipeg.

Signed by M. Nemeth, P. Nemeth, D. Breckman and many, many others.

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

\* (13:35)

**Supported Living Program**

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba. These are the reasons for this petition:

The provincial government's Supported Living Program provides a range of supports to assist adults with a mental disability to live in the community in their residential option of choice, including a family home. There is a lack of group homes available and this means special needs dependants must remain in the family home.

The provincial government's Community Living Division helps support adults living with a mental

disability to live safely in the community in the residential setting of their choice.

Families with special needs dependants make lifelong commitments to their care and well-being, and many families choose to care for these individuals in their homes as long as circumstances allow.

The cost to support families who care for their special needs dependants at home is far less than the cost of alternate care arrangements such as institutions or group and foster home situations.

The value of the quality of life experienced by special needs dependants raised at home in a loving family environment is immeasurable.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Family Services and Housing (Ms. Melnick) consider changes to the departmental policy that pays family members a reduced amount of money for room and board when they care for their special needs dependants at home versus the amount paid to a non-parental care provider outside the family home.

To request that the Minister of Family Services and Housing consider examining on a case-by-case basis the merits of paying family members to care for special needs dependants at home versus paying to institutionalize them.

This is signed by Reg Berezowecki, Denise Berezowecki, Yvonne Neufeld and many, many others.

#### **Generally Accepted Accounting Principles**

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

Manitoba's provincial auditor has stated that Manitoba's 2003-2004 budget deficit was the second highest on record at \$604 million.

The provincial government is misleading the public by saying they had a surplus of \$13 million in the 2003-2004 budget.

The provincial auditor has indicated that the \$13-million surplus the government says it had cannot be justified.

The provincial auditor has also indicated that the Province is using its own made up accounting rules in order to show a surplus instead of using generally accepted accounting principles.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the provincial government to consider adopting generally accepted accounting principles in reporting Manitoba's budgetary numbers.

Signed by Rorie Resendes, William Pabon and Laura Pagtakhan.

#### **Ambulance Service**

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

In May 2004, 46-year-old Peter Krahn suffered a heart attack while exercising in East St. Paul and was pronounced dead just under an hour later after being transported to the Concordia Hospital in Winnipeg. Reports show that it took nearly 18 minutes for an ambulance to arrive for Mr. Krahn.

The Interlake Regional Health Authority claims that 21 minutes is an acceptable emergency response time, whereas the City of Winnipeg uses a benchmark of 4 minutes.

Ambulance coverage for East St. Paul is provided from Selkirk, which is almost 25 kilometres away.

The municipalities of East St. Paul and West St. Paul combined have over 12 000 residents.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the provincial government to consider providing East St. Paul with local ambulance service which would service both East and West St. Paul.

To request the provincial government to consider improving the way that ambulance service is supplied to all Manitobans by utilizing technologies such as GPS in conjunction with a Medical Transportation Co-ordination Centre (MTCC) which will ensure that patients receive the nearest ambulance in the least amount of time.

To request the provincial government to consider ensuring that appropriate funding is provided to maintain superior response times and sustainable services.

Signed by M. Kirton, A.G. Kirton, S.W.H. Kirton and many, many others.

### TABLING OF REPORTS

**Mr. Speaker:** I am pleased to table in the House the Annual Report of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner for the 2003-2004 year.

\* (13:40)

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### Bill 48—The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act

**Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Struthers), that Bill 48, The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la pension de retraite des enseignants, be now read a first time.

**Mr. Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Education, seconded by the honourable Minister of Conservation, that Bill 48, The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

**Mr. Bjornson:** I am pleased to introduce Bill 48, an amendment to The Teachers' Pensions Act. This amendment is part of the progress this government has made on teachers pension legislation. In consultation with stakeholders, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say that Bill 48 is a step towards ensuring the long-time viability of teachers' pensions. Thank you.

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

### Introduction of Guests

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to

the public gallery where we have with us from Prairie View School 14 Grades 7, 8 and 9 students under the direction of Mrs. Geraldine Rempel. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu).

Also in the public gallery we have from Parkland Christian School 13 Grades 7, 8 and 9 students under the direction of Mr. Lester Goossen. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Conservation (Mr. Struthers).

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

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### Health Care Services Private/Public Partnerships

**Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, according to the *National Post*, this NDP Premier was in Toronto last week touting the fact that provincial governments should quote, "look to private providers to improve service within a single-payer system."

Mr. Speaker, while he does not have the political courage to say that here at home, this Premier, while in Toronto, was not shy about promoting public-private partnerships in health care while he emphasized, and I quote, "practicality must trump the rigid dogma that surrounds socialized medicine."

Mr. Speaker, now that this NDP Premier has a long overdue conversion on the road to Toronto, will he stand in the House, turn in his place, and say to the Health Minister that he should meet with the Maples Surgical Centre to ensure that all options in front of Manitobans are looked at?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** The article, I believe, talked about the fact that when we were in office we sent cancer patients that required treatment to the United States. Members opposite may laugh about that, Mr. Speaker, but when we came into office we were aware that there was a proposal made to the former government that outlined the risk to individual safety and health of patients waiting over eight weeks for cancer treatment. We then decided, against our so-called election promise, we had to basically admit that the situation was severe and we sent patients to the United States to get cancer

treatment because that was the right thing to do for patients.

Members opposite did not want to do it in government because they were worried about the political ramifications of that. Well, we put politics aside, Mr. Speaker, and we—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I have to be able to hear the questions and the answers.

**Mr. Doer:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We did that but at the same time we were sending patients to the United States, we were developing a strategy with resources with CancerCare Manitoba to reduce those waiting lists from eight weeks to seven weeks to six weeks to five weeks to four weeks. We were still sending some patients to the States at four weeks. We finally had reduced it to one week, and that is what I was meaning when I was talking about the Canada Health Act. Its first requirement is to deal with patients' needs, and I think the Minister of Health proved that with the action he took with our patients in the States.

\* (13:45)

**Mr. Murray:** We hear from this Premier from time to time about the American style of health care system and how bad it is. Where is he sending patients? To America, Mr. Speaker. It is unbelievable what this Premier will say when he is in Toronto, but he does not have the courage to say it here in Manitoba.

Under his watch now in Manitoba there are some 12 emergency rooms closed in rural Manitoba. The Brandon hospital's chief of emergency is warning that patients could be placed at risk in an emergency doctor shortage as the hospital reaches critical levels in Brandon. In Winnipeg the WRHA is going to keep at least one city operating room closed every day of the week. Mr. Speaker, Manitobans deserve better health care. Under this NDP Premier, they are getting less and less health care by the day.

Just last week this Premier was in Toronto talking about the need to ensure the work with the private sector and the benefits of it. Mr. Speaker, he will not do that here in Manitoba. I ask him simply will he turn in his place and instruct his Minister of

Health (Mr. Sale) to look at all options, meet with the Maples Surgical Centre because that is the right thing to do.

**Mr. Doer:** I would remind the member opposite, when he talks about what happened in Toronto, that that was announced, I believe, in Manitoba some five years ago, Mr. Speaker, maybe over five years ago. It was a public announcement made, I believe, in late October, early November 1999. It was a public announcement that was made—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable First Minister.

**Mr. Doer:** —and I was pointing out in the discussions about the Canada Health Act, in that discussion I said and I still say, we support the Canada Health Act and the five principles contained within it. Having said that, under the Canada Health Act, we have in the last few years not been fined as we had in the past for provisions that are outside of the Canada Health Act. Some of the corporate entities that the member opposite is the one-trick pony for in British Columbia have been fined. Maybe the members opposite want to spend the taxpayers' money on paying fines and clawbacks to Ottawa. We want to spend our resources on patient care, Mr. Speaker, patient care.

The member opposite talks about talking to members around him. He may want to talk to four former Cabinet ministers who refused to send patients to the United States before the election and put their treatment at risk. We changed that, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Murray:** Mr. Speaker, I would love to stand in my place and remind this Premier of all of the things he said about health care, but Question Period simply is not long enough. He promised Manitobans and he failed. We know that the Maples Surgical Centre has some very cost-effective proposals that they put in front of this government but they will not even meet with them, let alone return their phone calls.

The duplicitousness of this Premier is appalling. On one hand he goes to Toronto and says working with the private sector is something that we should all look at, we should provide innovation in health care. He says that in Toronto, but he does not have the political courage to say it here in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker.

Maples Surgical Centre said very clearly they have flexible schedules. They could reduce pediatric, hip and knees. All of those things are important to Manitobans. If he believes in health care for Manitobans, he will turn in his place and simply say to his Minister of Health explore all the options in front of you. Explore every option available for Manitobans, because that is the right thing to do.

\* (13:50)

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Doer:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would point out to the members opposite that there are procedures approved at Western—*[interjection]* Too many notes. I have not read any of them. I usually get time to read them after the question but—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Doer:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would point out to the member opposite his one-trick pony solution to all of health care that—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The honourable First Minister has the floor.

**Mr. Doer:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would point out to the member opposite that when we had cancer treatment waiting lists that were too long we sent patients to the United States. When we had a situation where some procedures had to remain in the private sector, I believe Western clinic is still receiving patients in Manitoba. We also, though, took over and stopped a clawback of public money when we took over the Pan Am Clinic. We have increased—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I need to be able to hear the questions and the answers. We have students in the gallery and we have the viewing public. They came down to hear the questions and the answers, I am sure. So I ask the co-operation of all honourable members, please.

The honourable First Minister has the floor.

**Mr. Doer:** Thank you. The United States Western clinic—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, we also had a situation with the Pan Am Clinic where we stopped the clawback of money from the federal government. We increased the procedures and, interestingly enough, the cataract operation costs went down \$300 at a private clinic with our action. That is what we do. We try to deal with the challenges of patients.

I would say to members opposite that there remains to be challenges. There are challenges in this province dealing with the doctor shortages in some of the locations, members opposite have mentioned. We are still trying to do that with bursary programs, more students in medical school, retaining more doctors here in Manitoba. We have a shortage of anesthetists, which is very important for the operating waiting list time. We have acknowledged that and we have some challenges obviously ahead of us, but when you look at the three sets of actions we have taken dealing with patient care you will always have a government that puts patients first.

#### **Physician Resources ER Doctor Shortage (Brandon)**

**Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo):** Well, it is nice, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier (Mr. Doer) has finally recognized that there is a serious shortage of physicians in the province, but maybe if he would take some action in recruiting and retaining then we could actually get someplace.

The doctor shortage in Brandon, Mr. Speaker, reached crisis proportions quite some time ago and yet this Premier and this Minister of Health have refused to do anything about it. According to the Brandon Regional Health Centre's chief of emergency medicine, and I quote, "Patients could be placed at risk as an emergency doctor shortage at the hospital reaches critical levels."

Over the last few months we have repeatedly questioned this government, this government's inaction on the issue of physician shortages in Brandon.

What do they do? They put a spokesperson for the Minister of Health who states that, and I quote, "You cannot just add water and stir to get more doctors in the province." Now there is a profound statement.

It has been six months and absolutely nothing has been done. I would like to ask the Minister of Health what is his plan to—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

\* (13:55)

**Hon. Tim Sale (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to serve in a government where our Premier and the previous Health Minister did take action. They moved the number of doctors in training from 70 up to 85. We moved it now up to 93. That is taking action. We put in retention and recruitment bursaries and payments for physicians. That is taking action and the result of that action is 160 more physicians in Manitoba today than there were in 1999. Of those 160, 52 are in rural Manitoba. The Brandon situation is one that is challenging but there is a new ER doctor coming in July and there is a locum for the summer, and all shifts will be filled.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Mr. Speaker, the minister knew in January that two ER doctors in Brandon would be leaving at the end of April. The recruiter for the Brandon Regional Health Authority on January 11 said, and I quote, "We have got a lot of time. We will be able to find someone."

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the recruiter has now been recruited elsewhere, and Brandon is now without two ER doctors and one more leaving in July. Clearly the minister has been aware of this looming crisis for months, yet he has failed to develop solutions to the doctor shortage in Brandon. What is the Minister of Health's plan to ensure that western Manitobans are able to access the emergency services in Brandon?

**Mr. Sale:** Mr. Speaker, I was in conversation with the CEO of Brandon Regional Health Authority this morning about this because I am concerned to read in the *Brandon Sun* that there is an issue of this nature that has arisen, apparently without sufficient warning for us, so I was in conversation with the CEO. She indicated they have a new physician coming in July. They have a locum for the summer and she indicated that all shifts would be filled and that the Brandon

Regional Health Authority's ER in Brandon hospital will not be closed. I take those assurances with some degree of satisfaction, and I believe that the CEO is a very responsible and capable person and that she will fulfil the commitment she has made to the people of Brandon and to her health authority.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Mr. Speaker, this is the Minister of Health. He is responsible for health care for all Manitobans. It rests on his shoulders to ensure that proper ER doctors are in place. It has been an issue since January. I quote in a letter to the editor dated November 6 of 2004 from three Brandon doctors, doctors Sutter, Maier and White, who said, and I quote, "The Minister of Health and Manitoba Health should realize that Band-Aid, short-term, election-year-to-election-year solutions will not work. It is time to think outside the box, to study other models that are more successful in recruitment and retention of specialists and develop some imaginative new solutions that reflect and understand Brandon's unique situation and needs."

That was November. That was six months ago, Mr. Speaker. We have repeatedly asked questions in this House of this Minister of Health and this Premier and warned them of the seriousness of the doctor shortage crisis, and now the minister is saying that he just realized because he picked up the *Brandon Sun* today. Well, shame on him. Will the minister ensure that not one person is turned away from the Brandon hospital's emergency because of the shortage of physicians?

**Mr. Sale:** Mr. Speaker, the CEO of Brandon Regional Health Authority has given that assurance and I have confidence that she will do that job on behalf of the citizens of Brandon.

But let me tell the member opposite, through you, Mr. Speaker, that the previous government received a warning in 1996 from the Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians that estimated that by the end of the century, that is 1999, there would be a shortage of over 400 emergency room doctors in Canada because of the cutbacks in medical school enrolment. Yet, for four more years they did nothing to reduce their cutbacks. Had they acted in a timely fashion, we would not be sitting in the situation we are today where we have fewer doctors graduating than we need because that government made cuts to medical schools in Manitoba. That is perhaps some history she should be aware of.



### **Rural Hospitals Emergency Room Services**

**Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell):** Mr. Speaker, what is becoming abundantly clear is that Manitobans cannot believe the promises that are being made to them by the Premier (Mr. Doer) nor by the Minister of Health.

Mr. Speaker, I would and I think Manitobans would probably choose to believe a professional who says, and I quote Doctor Norman, "I do not think that the public needs to know we no longer have a problem. We have got a serious problem."

Mr. Speaker, small hospitals across rural Manitoba were assured that their facilities and their services would not close. The Premier made that commitment. The former Minister of Health made that commitment, and today we see 12 emergency room services across this province closed. In addition to that we have the Brandon situation.

I would like to ask the Minister of Health when he is going to take some positive action to assure Manitobans that the Premier's commitment regarding facility closures and service closures will be fulfilled, Mr. Speaker.

\* (14:00)

**Hon. Tim Sale (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, I think that the record is very clear. There are 160 more doctors today than there were in 1999. That is not enough. That is why we are raising the enrolment in the medical school so that in years to come there will be more physicians. That is also why we set up the Office of Rural and Northern Health, and I want to commend that office for the tremendous work they did earlier this year in helping us to resolve some situations in The Pas where we now have a stable situation.

We will continue to have challenges in a number of physician areas: pediatricians, anesthetists, and obviously ER doctors. We will continue to compete aggressively for the available supply, but the available supply is smaller than it needs to be because of decisions that were made in the 1990s, decisions that were warned against by, for example, the Canadian association of emergency room doctors in 1996. Unfortunately the previous government did not heed those warnings.

**Mr. Derkach:** Mr. Speaker, after this Premier has been in office for six years we have 12 communities in rural Manitoba who are without emergency services, yet something that this Premier promised that would not happen. Secondly, the second-largest community in this province, being Brandon, is now in danger of losing its ER services because of the inaction of this government. What are patients to do? Where are patients to go who need those services in the areas where their emergency room services are closed and yet they cannot get into Brandon to meet their needs? Where are they to go? Where is the accountability of this minister?

**Mr. Sale:** Mr. Speaker, first of all, the member opposite is putting together a hypothetical situation. The Brandon ER is open. It is functioning. I am told by the CEO that it will continue to be open, will continue to provide the quality service that it has provided over many years.

So let the member opposite not fearmonger among residents of western Manitoba who can be assured that Brandon will remain open, who can also know that there are 52 more doctors practising in their communities, in rural Manitoba, than there were when this government formed office in 1999. So let the member speak to the real situation which is the structural shortage of physicians because of decisions that were made in the 1990s to cut back on enrolment in medical school when we were losing doctors to the United States by droves because of the way they handled the situation. We now have 160 more. We have more in training. We will work to continue to resolve this problem, but it is—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Derkach:** Mr. Speaker, this has nothing to do with fearmongering. This has to do with the commitments and the promises that were made by the First Minister of this province to communities in rural Manitoba when he said that it is not the RHAs that sign the cheques, it is we who sign the cheques. He assured communities that no services would be lost. Today we have 12 communities without emergency room services. Why would people not be afraid of a situation that might result in Brandon when this minister was warned about it in January and yet he has done nothing?

I ask this minister when he will take action and ensure those rural communities, as well as the people

in western Manitoba, that emergency room services will be there when they are needed.

**Mr. Sale:** Well, Mr. Speaker, we have taken action. There is a new hospital in Brandon. There is an MRI in Brandon. There are 52 more doctors in rural Manitoba than there were in 1999. There are 869 more nurses than there were in 1999. There are 140 brand new ambulances that were not here in 1999. There is a new CT scanner in Portage being opened in August. There is a commitment to an MRI in Boundary Trails. There are new CTs in Steinbach, in Selkirk, in The Pas and other communities in Manitoba. The record of action of this government is incredibly positive, and we will continue to work to resolve the issues that remain. I can commit to the people of Manitoba that we do not ever stop trying to solve the problems that occur in our health care system, many of which occurred because of the dismal days of the 1990s.

#### **Youth Violence Reduction Strategy**

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** This weekend Manitobans were shocked by the senseless act of youth violence against a 10-year-old boy who was lit on fire. The accused were 14, 13 and 11 years old. Sadly, Winnipeg's police spokesperson said that this is a trend. It is a growing trend towards youth violence and violent youth crime. Violent youth crime threatens the safety of our province, and it threatens our reputation, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of Justice has failed in six years to provide programs and to provide a deterrence on youth crime. Why has he failed Manitobans on this issue, Mr. Speaker?

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Mr. Speaker, myself and I know members on this side were certainly very concerned to hear of the situation on the weekend and the account. We say that not only as parents and I as a proud northender, but as well I think we have to think of the impact that these kinds of accounts also have on youth.

It is for that concern that this government has ushered in a new era of several programs, initiatives and investments to counter the threat of youth crime amongst young Manitobans and against Manitobans. I think, for example, and this is just one example, but

rather than just complain about the Youth Criminal Justice Act as I know members opposite did when they were in government, we did something when the federal government did not deliver, and that was Turnabout. The only program of its kind in Canada to deal with—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Goertzen:** The minister talks about Turnabout, but it is a roundabout way to avoid his own responsibility. In November of 1996 the Premier (Mr. Doer) stated that he would provide a positive and comprehensive response that provides alternatives to youth. After six years in government, police say that the trend towards violent crime among young people is going up, not going down.

Mr. Speaker, the youngest of the accused in this horrific act was five years old when the Premier came to office and when the Minister of Justice came to office. He has grown up under their system of justice. After six years of empty press releases, after six years of empty promises, condolences might be appreciated, but they are not enough. Why has this minister failed the victims of this family?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Mr. Speaker, it is certainly our hope and our best wishes to Kasey Richard that his injuries will not be permanent, and it is our hope that he will recover in a very timely way.

I remind members opposite that, according to those who measure violent youth crime, people from Ottawa, they told us that violent youth crime is going down in Manitoba by 5 percent, but one incident is too many.

One incident is too many, which is why we take violent youth crime very seriously, which is why as a government not only have we ushered in Canada's only program to deal with those who offend under age 12 and to provide help and consequences for those, but, Mr. Speaker, it is this government that has put in place 34 Lighthouses to provide hope and opportunities and a positive place for youth when they finish school for the day and on weekends. We want to expand that, and we have committed to expanding it. In fact, in this budget there are four more Lighthouses.

**Mr. Goertzen:** The Minister of Justice talks about hope, and he talks about opportunity, but what hope

and what opportunity are there now for this poor young 10-year-old victim who is in hospital? What hope and opportunity are there for other families?

Now we learn that the family of this poor victim say that they have to leave the city of Winnipeg because they are scared, because they are worried about bringing up their children in the city of Winnipeg because of the violence that has happened under this NDP government. If that is what the Minister of Justice calls hope, if that is what he calls opportunity, we all have a lot to be worried about. He has been in that office for six years. He has had the opportunity to address this issue. He has failed. We are looking for real hope and opportunity.

Why has he failed the victim? Why has he failed the families, and how many other victims will there have to be before he finally takes real action, Mr. Speaker?

\* (14:10)

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Mr. Speaker, we are interested in solutions not pointing fingers, which is why we are dealing with the youth court to shorten the time lines. We are dealing with cases there. I have talked about Turnabout. I have talked about Lighthouses. We now have a Fire Stop program for intervention for those who are engaged in fire lighting.

I want the members opposite to know and to think about this. You know, the answers to youth crime cannot be solved only at the courthouse as members opposite would want some people to think. Mr. Speaker, the answers to youth crime also engage Healthy Child Manitoba in helping young mothers. It involves working with parents to ensure that the Positive Parenting Program, a \$1.4-million investment, enables parents to better deal with their children. It is about historic investments in public education with the Minister of Education (Mr. Bjornson). It is about investments in healthy children.

I could go on, Mr. Speaker, but the point is this—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

#### **Crocus Fund Maple Leaf Distillers Investment**

**Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte):** Mr. Speaker, since its initial investment of \$1 million in 2000, the

investment by the Crocus Fund in Maple Leaf Distillers has grown to at least \$7.4 million that is reported on the audited statement of March 31, 2004, and it may be more by now. I spoke to the chair of the parent company of Maple Leaf. He indicated to me today that they are in the process of discussing with the Crocus Fund the possible buyback of this investment from Crocus. In addition to this, Maple Leaf has been the recipient of a \$1.5-million loan from the provincial government.

I would just ask the Minister of Industry if he would confirm today that Maple Leaf was in fact one of the companies that was being carried by Crocus at an inflated value, how much this company has been devalued on the Crocus books and what effect, if any, this will have on the government's ability to make good on their \$1.5-million loan.

**Hon. Jim Rondeau (Minister of Industry, Economic Development and Mines):** Mr. Speaker, I do not know if the member opposite is aware that there are issues regarding the Crocus Fund. What is happening now is that there were concerns about the fund so, therefore, independent third-party evaluators were going in to evaluate all of the funds and all of the investments of the Crocus Fund. So third-party investors are looking at the valuations of a number of companies within the Crocus Fund investments.

There is also an investigation by the Auditor General and the Manitoba Securities council that are investigating the management and the practices. As you know, we do not, Mr. Speaker, control any of the investments or any of the management or any of the operation of the fund. We continue not to operate this way. The board of directors and executive of the fund look after the daily operations. There are ongoing investigations and third-party evaluations for the new valuation.

**Mr. Loewen:** Mr. Speaker, the question involved what the government did with the \$1.5 million that they gave to Maple Leaf, but the minister does not want to answer that either. The issue is not the investment. It is whether or not Crocus's financial statements and their prospectus carried the investment at its true value.

Mr. Speaker, not only was Maple Leaf the recipient of funds, they were the recipient of glowing statements in a press release from the government of Manitoba, particularly the Premier (Mr. Doer). David

Wolinsky, the chair of the parent company, is quoted as saying, "the commitment of this government under the leadership of Premier Doer has been quite remarkable." The president of Maple Leaf Distillers—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. When addressing another member in the House, our rule is that the members should be addressed by the titles they hold or members by their constituencies. I ask the honourable member to maybe readdress that.

**Mr. Loewen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I apologize for that. I will reread the quote. The quote is from the chair of Protos, the parent company of Maple Leaf. "The commitment of this government under the leadership of the Premier has been quite remarkable." The president of Maple Leaf went on to say, "the unprecedented support and assistance that Maple Leaf Distillers has received from the Government of Manitoba, and in particular the Premier," and these are the types of statements that are in a government press release from a company that received a \$1.5-million loan.

I would ask the minister if he would indicate today what due diligence was undertaken by his department regarding this loan, or was it simply a suggestion of the Premier that they give them 1.5 million bucks.

**Mr. Rondeau:** Mr. Speaker, I do not know what the former government did but in this government what we do is we ensure that there is appropriate due diligence for the MIOP loans. What we have is we ensure that there are loans given to companies so that they expand in Manitoba so that they increase the employment levels in Manitoba.

Under the MIOP program, I have to inform the member that the Maple Leaf Distillers is current. The payments on the loan are current, and they have done well in this area. They have started in Winnipeg. They are an expanding business. We are pleased to have a company that is expanding in Manitoba and in Winnipeg. We hope that our entire industry and economic base expands. That is the purpose of venture capital. That is the purpose of the MIOP program, to expand business, to increase employment and to develop our province economically.

**Mr. Loewen:** Of course they are current in their loans. They are taking money from Crocus and using

it to pay back the government. It is not that complicated.

Mr. Speaker, over 33 000 Manitobans have seen their retirement savings shrink as Crocus concealed its losses that it had incurred and inflated its share value. In the meantime, this NDP government has co-invested with Crocus and companies like Maple Leaf and the MTS Centre and in other ventures that the government refuses to talk about. This minister has a responsibility to disclose to shareholders and to taxpayers the details of the investments that have led to these devaluations of over \$60 million. He has had the Auditor's Report for over two weeks. He has had the allegations from the Securities Commission.

I simply ask today if the minister is willing to make public the details of which Crocus investments have led to the devaluation of the fund.

**Mr. Rondeau:** I will explain three of the major failed investments which are over \$30 million worth of losses. This is Isobord, made under the previous government; Westsun, made under the eyes of the previous government and Winnport Logistics, made under the previous government. So when the previous government had oversight of the fund that fund lost \$35 million, set up by the previous government, designed by the previous government. Not only did the previous Premier and the Premier's Finance Minister take credit, they signed off on the original memo of understanding. You set it up. We are cleaning up your mess.

### **Air Pollution Reduction Strategy**

**Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield):** According to today's *Winnipeg Free Press*, Manitoba has the distinction of becoming North America's third-worst lead air polluter in 2002, which adds further credibility to the claim that the worst thing for the environment is this NDP government.

Can the minister tell this House what attempts his government has done to improve Manitoba's air quality?

**Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Conservation):** Certainly, Mr. Speaker, all jurisdictions including Manitoba take this problem very seriously. We are working in co-operation with the federal government and the industry and other partners, including

environmental groups and First Nations in the area, to make sure that we take action and take steps not only to test and monitor and get data so we can make good decisions, but also some improvements to the facilities which have produced a 62% reduction in the particulate matter that the Member for Springfield has brought forward here today.

Our commitment is that we are going to work very, very diligently to reduce those sources of particulate matter, whether that be SO<sub>3</sub>, or that be mercury, or whether that be other particulates that we are concerned about. This is an issue we take very seriously, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Schuler:** After that answer, no wonder we have a problem.

On February 3, 2004, this NDP government announced a letter of understanding with the Chicago Climate Exchange to create a climate trust. In the words of this Premier, this agreement reinforces Manitoba's position as a leader of innovations and taking action on climate change. Is it this NDP government's belief that being a leader is coming in third last?

\* (14:20)

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that this was the first government probably in North America to outline a climate change, climate reduction plan that has been recognized worldwide in terms of reductions of carbon and reductions of greenhouse gases. I only ask members opposite to look at the actions that have taken place: wind farm, up and running; coal plant at Selkirk, shut down; ethanol plant, on the way—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Just wait a little longer, Mr. Speaker, a few more sleeps for members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, I recognize in the Kyoto action plan is the most aggressive reduction targets to meet and exceed Kyoto reductions of any jurisdiction in the country.

**Mr. Schuler:** Perhaps this minister did not hear what I said in my first question but we are recognized

worldwide as North America's third-worst lead air polluter in 2002.

In February of 2004 this NDP government stated this climate trust agreement reinforces Manitoba's position as a leader of innovations in taking action on climate change. Instead of leading, we now find that Manitoba is almost dead last when it comes to air quality. Will this minister report back to the House what his government's plan is to live up to the Chicago climate trust and how much will it cost?

**Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Conservation):** Mr. Speaker, maybe the member opposite did not hear my answer the first time when he asked the question. We have a 62% reduction in the particular matter that he is bringing forward in the House today. That is a reduction. That is an improvement because we have improved, along with Hudson Bay Mining & Smelting and with INCO, the amount of particulate matter that is produced by those facilities and in fact released to the air.

We have been working on this problem and we have showed very definite improvements in the results that we have. As the minister has explained, we have closed down the coal-fired plant at Selkirk, something members opposite could have done when they had an opportunity when they were in power but for some reason refused to do. Mr. Speaker, we are taking this very seriously and I think it shows in the actions of this government.

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

Order.

#### Point of Order

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

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, I ask for leave to put my question.

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Leave.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**Mr. Speaker:** Leave has been denied.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Woman Entrepreneur of the Year Awards

**Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East):** Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of attending the Women Business Owners of Manitoba 2005 Woman Entrepreneur of the Year Awards banquet last Thursday. There were 24 finalists with 8 women receiving awards.

One entrepreneur, a constituent of mine and a friend, Jane Campbell, received the International Trade Award for her work at the Panache model and talent management and school. The criteria for this award include a woman who has developed a successful international business by using effective marketing strategies and creative solutions to any trade-related challenges. She has increased sales, profits and/or employment through increasing her international competitiveness.

Jane Campbell has not only met but exceeded these criteria. Opening Panache in 1991, she worked hard to provide a learning environment for young aspiring models while also teaching them the business side of the fashion industry. Her training not only develops skills and business sense in young people, but also builds self-esteem and allows young people to enter the workplace with confidence.

Over the years, Jane Campbell's work has also helped to build a positive image of the modelling and talent industry. Providing these services in Winnipeg has allowed many talented people to live with their families and attend school or work while pursuing their professional career paths. The young women and men Jane Campbell has taught and mentored have walked the runways in Milan, London, New York, Paris and Tokyo, to name but a few international fashion centres.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Jane Campbell and all of the finalists and award winners for their many hours of hard work, their commitment to excellence, and their contributions to our economy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### Entrepreneur of the Year Awards

**Ms. Marilyn Brick (St. Norbert):** Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to highlight an important

event that I attended on behalf of the Minister of Industry, Economic Development and Mines (Mr. Rondeau) on Thursday, May 19 at the Hotel Fort Garry. This event was the 2005 Best in Business Practice Awards ceremony, and the awarding of the 17th annual Entrepreneur of the Year Award by the *Manitoba Business Magazine*.

Mr. Speaker, the entrepreneurship shown by all award winners is a testament to the innovation and creativity of Manitoba's businesses. This year's award winners proved that by adapting to industry changes and capitalizing on opportunities, Manitoba businesses are providing leadership in their industry areas and are successfully contributing to our diversified economy.

Ms. Polly Craik, President and CEO of FineLine Solutions, was chosen to be this year's Entrepreneur of the Year. She is the first woman to be chosen for this award. Ms. Craik helped build FineLine Solutions into a global competitor in information management systems. The company specializes in call-centre technology systems, integrated voice response, Internet-based office support technologies and security lockbox systems for processing payments or donations received by companies. Major FineLine clients include the American Diabetes Association, the American Arthritis Foundation, the Salvation Army and several others. FineLine Solutions is based here in Winnipeg.

In addition to recognizing Ms. Craik, the awards ceremony also recognized several innovative Manitoba businesses for their exceptional business practices. These include North American Lumber, Man-Shield Construction, Inc., Crosier, Kilgour and Partners Ltd. and the R. G. Mazer Group.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate Ms. Polly Craik on being awarded *Manitoba Business Magazine's* 2005 Entrepreneur of the Year. I also want to congratulate all other award recipients and thank them for contributing to Manitoba's economy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### Woman Entrepreneur of the Year Awards

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** On Thursday, Mr. Speaker, several colleagues and I had the privilege of attending the 2005 Woman Entrepreneur of the Year Awards hosted by the Manitoba Women Business Owners. There were 24

finalists with eight women selected as award winners.

Sherrill Hershberg of Hartford Investments Ltd. received the Building Business Award for her development of I. J. Drummond Place.

The Impact on Local Economy Award went to Heather Boyd, owner and operator of Basics of Your Day Store located in Warren. Heather has built her business and now employs 20 people.

Jane Campbell of Panache Model and Talent Management and School was selected for the International Trade Award for her expansion from local to international fashion centres.

Priti Shah of PRAXIS Conflict Consulting participates as a volunteer and fundraiser with a number of community and charitable organizations. For these outstanding contributions Priti received the Contribution to the Community Award.

The Home Enterprise Award went to Kal Barteski, owner and operator of iDeaMonsters which provides artistic and graphic design services to a number of businesses and organizations.

Donna Warenko of Granite Internet Services Inc. received the Excellence in Service Award for her delivery of quality and personalized computer services to the Pinawa area.

Gladys Sarens of SunShade Products Ltd. built and expanded her family-based business over the past number of years. For these efforts Gladys received the Lifetime Achievement Award.

The overall excellence in Emerging Business Award went to Dallas Ballance of GoodwinBallance Communications. Dallas's recently established business provides marketing and event planning services.

Mr. Speaker, this was an incredible night to celebrate the entrepreneurial success that women have achieved, acknowledge the contributions these women have made to communities and recognize the economic impact they have on our province.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all of the nominees and award winners on their valuable contributions and the impact they

have on our province. Thank you also to the Women Business Owners of Manitoba for hosting this wonderful banquet. On behalf of all my colleagues, we just want to acknowledge all of the work of these phenomenal women. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

\* (14:30)

### **Aboriginal Awareness Week**

**Mr. Drew Caldwell (Brandon East):** I rise today to remind the House that May 24 to 27 is Aboriginal Awareness Week. This week of commemoration was introduced in 1992 to spread awareness of Aboriginal peoples among public service employees. The long-term objective of Aboriginal Awareness Week is to foster increased employment and greater retention in the workforce. This is particularly important in Manitoba as Aboriginals represent the fastest growing population in our province. With a population of over 120 000, Manitoba has the greatest proportion of Aboriginal people out of all 10 Canadian provinces.

Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to increasing the number of Aboriginal people employed in Manitoba's workforce. That is why last week we announced funding for a new Aboriginal employment strategy in the Central Manitoba Regional Health Authority. This funding builds upon several previous employment initiatives involving the RHA.

Since 2002, the Province has supported the development of Aboriginal employment strategies in the North Eastman, NOR-MAN, Brandon and Burntwood regional health authorities. To date, supported by my friend and RHA Aboriginal co-ordinator, John Mayer, the agreement with the Brandon Regional Health Authority has created employment for 78 Aboriginals in a number of job classifications. Aboriginal peoples have contributed greatly to the development of our province, and they will continue to play a vital role in the future.

I would like to commend this government for working to develop a labour force that is truly representative of the population it serves. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### **Legislative Assembly Sitting Days**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, the Manitoba Liberal Party has for many days talked

about the importance of democracy within this Chamber. In fact, we have argued that this Chamber does not sit enough days, whereas in 2003 we sat for 35 days and last year we sat for 55 days. One of the fundamental reasons why we feel that this government needs to be sitting more days is because we recognize the value of government accountability. The best way to get government accountability is to allow for the orderly fashion of a Question Period in which members of the opposition are given the opportunity to hold the government to account for the actions that it is taking and, in many cases, the inaction that it is taking.

We sense a little bit of frustration, I must say, Mr. Speaker, because we genuinely feel there is a need for all sides of this House to be heard and be heard in a fashion which is fair to all members of this Chamber. In fact, I believe, firmly believe, that it is in Manitobans' best interest that all sides of this House are adequately represented inside this Chamber through Question Period. Time and time again, we have seen Liberal leaders, whether it is Sharon Carstairs, Paul Edwards, others, we have seen independents within this Chamber, where we have seen one member, each and every time they have been given the courtesy of being able to ask a question during Question Period, each and every time.

You will find, Mr. Speaker, even some leaders as independents, by themselves, got more than one question in Question Period. I would suggest to you, I would highly recommend, that the Legislative Assembly needs to give more consideration to revising the rules in order to ensure the fundamental issue of accountability and affording members of this Chamber the opportunity to ask the questions that they feel are important to their political infrastructures is absolutely critical. If the Legislature is not prepared to do that, one has got to call into question just how effective and in the alternative—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, I believe there is an understanding to take until four o'clock with bills and then concurrence.

Would you call debate on second readings in the order they appear, to be followed by Bill 22? Then would you please call Supply at four o'clock?

Mr. Speaker, just after consultation, if we can just prioritize some of the bills on that list. Bill 36 can go first, then 30 and 2 in that order, and then the rest if there is time after that.

## DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

### Bill 36—The Courts Administration Improvement Act

**Mr. Speaker:** Resume debate on second reading, Bill 36, The Courts Administration Improvement Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck).

What is the will of the House? Stand?

**Some Honourable Members:** Stand.

**Mr. Speaker:** Agreement for it to remaining standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina?

**An Honourable Member:** No, we do not.

**An Honourable Member:** No, we want it standing.

**Mr. Speaker:** Okay, okay. Is it the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina?

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**Mr. Speaker:** No. That has been denied.

Okay, the honourable Member for Russell, to speak.

**Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell):** I welcome the opportunity to put a few remarks on this bill on the record, Mr. Speaker. Occasionally, when we get a chance to look at our court system and how it works, there is always time for us to improve how to ensure that matters that are taken by a judge hearing cases and all of a sudden that judge happens to have something go wrong and passes away or retires or whatever, sometimes things are left in limbo. This particular bill, as I understand it, does clarify a



process that can be undertaken if that kind of an issue occurs.

Mr. Speaker, it also, as I understand it, allows a municipality to appoint a screening officer to deal with certain by-law offences that are committed in that municipality's jurisdiction. The other thing that it does is it also increases fines and gives the registrar of motor vehicles the power to refuse to register a vehicle to a person who has an outstanding fine. So it empowers the courts to deal with people who have been flagrant in dealing with the law in a more definitive way.

\* (14:40)

Mr. Speaker, I think if we really look at where our justice system is going, there are some concerns we all have raised in our minds. One of the concerns, I think, is the whole issue of youth violence in our province and the escalation of not only youth violence but the nature of the violence as well. We have just seen over this past weekend what happens when youth, for one reason or another, decide to take their rage out on an individual. In this particular case we had a young fellow set on fire. In the course of my time in this Legislature, I have never seen anything like this, and it speaks to the attitudes and perhaps our societal values that we have, or started developing at the youth level. Somehow we have to address this, and we look to the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) to bring forward some form of regulation or legislation that will discourage this kind of action.

*Mr. Conrad Santos, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

Yes, educational programs are indeed very important to deter this kind of activity taking place, but when you have it taking place so many times as we have seen over the course of the last number of years in our province, it is starting to reach a crisis level. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it is time for the Minister of Justice to take a very hard and serious look at what programs we have to develop to try to stem this kind of activity.

Mr. Speaker, you reach out into the communities and find that schools are not able to deal with this matter. Our communities themselves cannot deal with these matters. The police on the streets cannot deal with these matters effectively either. It has to be a total effort. I think we have to develop a

partnership approach to some of these problems so that we involve parents, we involve the community, we involve schools and we involve our police officers.

I think there is an important element in terms of educating, I should not use the term "educating" but making sure that our judges can, in fact, deal with these types of situations far more effectively than they are given the latitude to deal with them now. Because these are minors, because they are under a certain age, judges and society are limited in what it can do. But I think if we really look at the situation in a practical way and if we develop programs that are going to try to curb this kind of an activity at an early age, those youngsters will be then more likely to succeed in their lives and not get into problems as they get older.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, those youngsters who get into problems at this age, if they are not given the tools to deal with their anger, to deal with their violent behaviour, those young people will probably re-offend at a later age. What that means is our penal system, our judicial system, will once again be taxed and challenged by those individuals reappearing for offences that would have reoccurred in their time.

Mr. Speaker, I believe very strongly that, although this bill amends the judicial act, The Courts Administration Improvement Act, I think we need to take a look at some of the events that have occurred over the last year or two, and we have to take some serious action in terms of where we go and the types of activities we are going to engage in to make sure that crime is deterred at the early age.

I do not know why, but we even find in small communities where students know each other very well. It is not as though they do not know one another in a small community, but you have these kinds of acts of violence and these misdemeanours, if you like, and these unfortunate behaviours occurring in these communities. One has to ask himself why. What is causing this in our society?

Teachers are throwing their hands up in frustration. They cannot deal with this in their schools because we have not allowed teachers to have the kind of power they once did in dealing with these kinds of behavioural issues. Not that we should condone teachers being able to use physical force, but there are time-outs that can be used. There are

ways to deal with these types of behaviours that perhaps we have to ensure the teachers are not only educated in that area, but, indeed, are empowered to do things that will deter this kind of behaviour.

Mr. Speaker, I think society is a bit frustrated today. I think people out in the communities are frustrated today because they do not know what to do. So they look towards government to show leadership. I think we as legislators here in this Chamber have a responsibility to challenge the people who work in the judicial system, to challenge the people who can develop these innovative programs, to challenge us to look at other jurisdictions that perhaps have had some success in dealing with these matters. I do not know where that could be, but I think we need to start collaborating with other jurisdictions. We need to start looking to where there have been some successes and start taking the things that might work for us in our society and implementing them for the benefit of the students that are involved and also society as a whole.

So, Mr. Speaker, although I would have to say that the minister has taken some action in dealing with some of the shortcomings in this legislation, I think there is much more that can be done, should be done and needs to be done in the future. This is a tiny step, perhaps, but a step that I think can be improved on greatly if we really put our minds together and address the problems that we see facing us daily, especially when it comes to some of the types of situations that have occurred in the last few weeks. With those few comments, I thank this Chamber for the time.

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** I want to thank the Member for Russell for the comments that he put on the record. Certainly, I know in working with my colleague from Russell, he takes issues of justice very seriously. I know he raises these issues often on behalf of his own constituents, that he is concerned about the safety of Manitobans, both in his community and, indeed, across the province, so I enjoyed hearing his comments. I appreciate the spirit from which they come forward.

On Bill 36, which is the bill that comes before us this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, I know, in looking over the legislation, there were a number of issues that came to mind. Certainly, I do not think that, on the premise of the legislation, which essentially has to do

with reworking the administration of the court system, there is great objection but there are certainly some issues that we do have concerns with as opposition.

I do note, first off, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the issue of long delays was brought forward by the Member for Russell. I think that that is very germane to this particular debate which is happening in the House this afternoon. I know that the Member for Russell touched on the extraordinarily long times that we have within our justice system. They might only be matched by the long waiting times we have in our health system. I do not think that is a good record for the NDP to have, to be trying to increase waiting times for court trials, to be trying to increase waiting times for those people who are desperately looking for medical attention.

We saw, I think, just a few months ago, how many people, we saw it in black and white, how many individuals, who have been accused and charged with a particular crime are waiting for the dispensation of their trial, were waiting to actually have their day in court, as it was. In fact, I believe, that there were over 2000 individuals who were waiting for more than two years to have their trial brought forward. So we can suppose that most of those individuals, as is the way of this government with bail proceedings, were not waiting in the Remand Centre across the street for their trial, but, of course, they were waiting in the communities for those trials. Two years, they were awaiting this trial.

I would say that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we talk about the justice system, that raises concerns from two perspectives. Certainly, on the one perspective, we know that each individual who is accused of an offence is, in fact, under our legal system innocent until proven guilty. To wait for two years for that trial, their individual trial, to come forward, I think, is absolutely wrong and is absolutely abysmal because, for those individuals, many of them, I am sure, certainly believe individually that they are innocent, that they are not guilty of that particular offence. To wait two years to try to defend their own name on that individual charge is, in fact, unacceptable. It is unacceptable to them as individuals, and it is unacceptable to their families.

\* (14:50)

In essence, when a person is charged with an offence much of their life is put on hold. Much of their normal life has to kind of cease to be until that issue is dealt with in a court. To wait for two years as the wheels of justice grind slowly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think is absolutely shameful and it is not acceptable to Manitobans.

Of course, the other side of that coin is we certainly know that many of the individuals, and in fact statistics would, I think, support me when I say that most of the individuals who are charged with an offence both here in Manitoba and across Canada, when their case is actually dispensed within a court of law, they are found to be guilty of the actual offence that they were charged with or some other offence, some lesser offence that might have come as a way of a plea bargain.

So we do know the vast majority of individuals who are charged with an offence in the province are, in fact, found to be guilty during trial or before trial. That leaves the question then about our safety when over 2000 individuals are waiting for trial for more than two years and they are waiting within our communities. We have to be left to wonder about the actual safety of our individual citizens who are living in communities, the neighbours to these individuals who are working with these individuals who, in fact, later will be found to have been guilty of committing this crime.

It also, of course, brings the question about bail proceedings, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about how it is that individuals are caught by the police. I give a lot of credit to the police in our province who do a fine job with the resources they have. Certainly, they are out there every day putting it on the line on the streets to get these individuals off the street. I hear the frustration in their voices when I speak with them, and I do speak with police officers in our province and around our province quite often. I do hear their frustration when they tell me they pick an individual up who, they suspect, has been guilty of a particular offence and bring them in for the charge, but before they can even get the paperwork done that individual is out the front door. They are not even able to get back on the street and the rest of their evening is finished.

That is the frustration, and it is compounded by the fact that when these individuals who are charged with offences go before a magistrate or a justice of

the peace or a judge in our province, they are released so often, time and time again, despite the long history that an individual might have. It almost becomes a news story these days, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when somebody is denied bail in our province. We know there now is almost a presumption of bail that an individual, regardless if this is their first, second or third offence, if they are standing before a judge or magistrate or a justice of the peace, we know there is almost a presumption they should be released from custody.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are certainly concerned with those long wait-times we see within our justice system because of not only the impact it might have on the accused, which we often do not speak much of, but of course the impact that it would have on individual citizens and their safety within the community. We are left to wonder if the catch-and-release system we have developed here in the province of Manitoba is simply because of an unwillingness by the NDP government to put the resources into the justice system. We know that—*[interjection]* Well, now I hear the Deputy Premier (Ms. Wowchuk) has awoken in her seat and wants to put some words on the record about justice. I had the opportunity to—*[interjection]* And now the Minister of Advanced Education (Ms. McGifford) has also awoken in her seat. I guess she is fresh off of raising tuition fees for young students.

I know that the Deputy Premier has—*[interjection]* I have had the opportunity to visit her riding not too long ago. I had the opportunity to visit the great constituency which she represents. In talking to constituents, it was interesting because the two issues that came up most often were the poor justice system that we have in the province and the long waiting times for hips and for knees. In fact, I individually sat with some of her constituents who are waiting for those long replacements. In fact, I think the individual whom I spoke with said she was waiting for two and a half years for a knee replacement. Also, there are individuals in our province who have been waiting two, or two and a half years to go to trial.

So it is almost as though they are trying to reach for the top on both of those waiting lists, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I do not think that is a record they should be proud of and looking forward to emulating any more.

We do have concerns that the lack of resources that are placed within our justice system is one of the reasons we are having so many bail releases in the province. We know that if bail was much stricter, if it was not such a presumption in terms of getting bail within the province, there would be more difficulty on the resource, and there would be more of a strain on those resources. Certainly, we on this side of the House understand what it is to live within a budget. I know that is difficult for members opposite to fully comprehend, but we know there are priorities that have to be placed on budgets, and there are priorities that have to be placed on spending. I would argue, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that putting those resources into justice and not giving kind of a presumptive bail would, in fact, give a safer society and would pay for itself over time. I know it might not be easy to measure in quantitative measures, and it might not be easy to put a dollar figure on it immediately, but I do believe that safety within our society would, in fact, help us with our economic growth.

I raised a question today in Question Period regarding a tragic incident which happened this weekend, and I know the parents of the young individual who was the victim said they were no longer planning to live in the city of Winnipeg, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because of this violent incident that happened to their son. One wonders when news like that filters out and other people hear that these parents are no longer prepared to raise their children in the city of Winnipeg or perhaps, indeed, in the province of Manitoba, what an impact that has on us as a community, what impact that has on our province on an economic basis.

Certainly, I know the government opposite and the Deputy Premier (Ms. Wowchuk) probably were sitting around the Cabinet table when it was approved, are going to be spending a half-million dollars on a New York ad agency to try to spruce up the image of Manitoba, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is difficult to try to balance the two off when you have parents who are in the paper saying, "We are going to leave the city of Winnipeg because we no longer feel it is a safe place to raise our children." and a half-million-dollar ad campaign to try to spruce up the image. I would say to the Deputy Premier and her colleagues in Cabinet that the way to give Manitoba and Winnipeg a strong image would be to clean up the streets, to clean up the violence we have in the province and the city. Yes, that might cost more than \$500,000, but I would say it will be money well

spent. It would be money that would come back to our province in spades over time, and I would encourage the government and members of the Cabinet to look at that particular provision.

I know when we talk about the administration of the courts, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is difficult to do that without speaking about police officers in the province because, in fact, they are really one of the same arm. We have the legal system and the police system which goes about apprehending those individuals who we believe are guilty of committing offence against one of the very statutes, provincial or federal, that we have here in Canada. We also know then that they go into the justice system.

I mentioned earlier the commendation I gave to the police in our province, the City of Winnipeg, municipal police forces and, of course, the RCMP, our national police force, but I think it is telling when we talk about The Courts Administration Improvement Act that you could administer the courts in the most efficient way which is not happening in Manitoba. Even if you did, if you did not give that funding to police officers on our streets, the most efficient court system would not provide a safe society for us as Manitobans to live in.

It is for that reason I have been disappointed, and I have raised this issue a number of times, why it is that we have the lowest number of police per offence in the country, Mr. Deputy Speaker, or one of the lowest number of police per offence. I believe we have one police officer for every 38 offences that happen within our borders of Manitoba. Certainly, I would hear from members of my caucus, and particularly in my rural caucus, who would come forward and say, "Well, one officer for 38 offences, in fact, our communities are much worse."

\*(15:00)

Indeed, I have talked to police officers around the province. I think the offence ratio in Portage is about one officer for every—[interjection] Mr. Deputy Speaker, 170. I almost did not believe my ears when the Member for Portage (Mr. Faurichou) said it to me, but, in fact, one officer for 170 offences. Again, I was mentioning to the Deputy Premier (Ms. Wowchuk) that I had been to the Dauphin area and a number of other areas where I have heard from those RCMP detachments that they

are dealing with about 140, 150 cases for every officer they have.

How is it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that these fine officers that are on our streets, how can they do their job when they are trying to balance off a caseload of 158 cases? We know that there is investigative work that goes with cases. We know, depending on the nature of those cases, that it is an extremely difficult, difficult thing to deal with. I hear time and time again that they are just simply overwhelmed.

Despite the spin that the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) tries to put out about more officers on the street, we know, when talking to officers both in the city of Winnipeg and other jurisdictions throughout Manitoba, that there are no new officers in place today, that they do not expect there to be any more officers today than there will be in the fall of this year because they simply cannot recruit them because they simply do not have the resources to put them in place.

In fact, what I hear from most detachments and from most municipal forces and the national force, our RCMP, is they fear there will in fact be less officers later on in the year because there just simply is not the graduation rate happening among officers. We know across Canada that it is a competitive field for officers. We wonder if the Minister of Justice has put the resources in place for these municipalities to be able to recruit officers on a basis—*[interjection]* I know I hear from the Member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu), who also is very concerned about justice issues and, I know, who raises them on a frequent basis to her community and within here in the Legislature, that many officers are going to other jurisdictions or going west.

I suppose that is very similar to a lot of things. It almost seems to be a pattern where we have graduates coming out of our universities who are going west. We have doctors who are graduating who are going west or who are going south. We have individuals who are coming out of our police programs who are going west. That certainly concerns all of us here in the Legislature and, indeed, throughout Manitoba.

I would say to the Minister of Justice that, yes, it is fine to kind of tinker around the edges to some extent with administration of courts, but what is it that you are really doing to ensure that people who

are committing crimes are coming off the streets by giving police the resources they need? That is, in fact, what justice is about. It is about ensuring that those individuals who are breaking the laws of our province and of our nation are, in fact, being held accountable for that.

*Mr. Speaker in the Chair*

So administration of courts, of course, is only one thing. It is only one piece of the puzzle, but there is, in fact, a broader agenda that needs to be brought forward if we are truly going to have a justice system that is going to make a difference.

I know that within Bill 36, Mr. Speaker, there is a provision to move two justices from the general division to the family division of court. I know, in speaking with friends of mine who practise family law, none of them would dispute the fact that there is a significant backlog within our family court division. They would not dispute for a second that there is a need for new judges in that area. What I think they would dispute is that there should be kind of this shuffling of chairs and moving the two from the general court into the family court division, that if you really wanted to make a difference, you would simply add the two additional judges to the family court without taking them out of the general court division. That, in fact, would help to speed up the process of justice.

**An Honourable Member:** Federal judges' fault.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Oh, now I hear the Member for Minto (Mr. Swan). It did not take him long. It did not take the Member for Minto long to pick up his colleague, the Minister of Justice's (Mr. Mackintosh) mantra about it is all the federal government's fault and we need to leave everything to the federal government. In fact, I do not think that everything is the federal government's fault in justice. I remember very clearly, in fact, and I might do this as an education for the Member for Minto, who I respect actually as a friend in this Legislature. So I do this out of the best intentions, Mr. Speaker.

I refer back to an interview, a radio interview that was done June 9 of 1999. The now-Minister of Justice, who was then the Justice critic, said that it was simply a diversion to try to point fingers at the federal government. I think that the federal government has a good a reason to ask Manitoba, "What are

you doing to provide leadership?" Those were good words from the now-Minister of Justice. Of course, he does not remember them or chooses not to remember them, I suppose, when he is often pointing criticism at the federal government when there is clearly responsibility within his own jurisdiction.

But I would ask the Minister of Justice to consider putting forward more resources within the Justice system to clear up those backlogs. You know, I spoke earlier about the backlog that we have within our court system, both in adult and in the youth side, spoke about the 2000 individuals from the adult court system who were waiting for over two years for their trial, waiting over two years to get that justice, either for themselves or to have justice delivered upon them. And I look, and I ask the Minister of Justice, why it is that he has forgotten some of his own words in the past.

I look at, again, it is from June 9 of 1999, the same interview with the Minister of Justice, he said that the swifter the consequences, the more effective the consequence when dealing with the court system. And he nods his head in affirmation now, and, of course, I think that we can all agree with that particular concept, but it means nothing when the Minister of Justice does not put forward the provisions that actually make it happen.

You know, the now-Premier (Mr. Doer) of this province, I also believe, is on record by using those kinds of quick quips that he often tries to be famous for, and he said that justice delayed is justice denied. Now, of course, he said that, I believe, at a time when he was sitting in opposition, so I guess it maybe was a little too convenient for him to say it. But, when we see that there are these long delays, and thousands, and I mean thousands literally, of people waiting for the court system to come forward and the court system to take action on their particular offence, I wonder where the Premier is, the same individual who said that justice delayed was justice denied.

I would challenge the Minister of Justice who, in 1999, said that we needed to stop pointing fingers at the federal government, that it is simply a diversion, and now I see the Minister of Justice nodding his head again. It is interesting because it was only an hour or two ago when he was pointing his finger at the federal government, and now he is agreeing with

his comments from 1999 that, in fact, there were things that we can do.

So this is an example of the duplicitous position that we often see from members of the New Democratic government and, in particular, this Minister of Justice, where it is convenient to issue a quote that points to the direction of the federal government, that tries to put that blame squarely on the federal government, but that is the convenient thing to do in interviews and it is a convenient way to try to get out of a difficult political situation but, in fact, that is not what he said when he was in opposition.

I tend to agree with the former Justice critic when he said that, in fact, there were things that he could do within his own provision. We know that the role of the Minister of Justice and Attorney General in our province is not a lobbying position. The Minister of Justice does not receive his individual stipend, or his additional stipend as a minister, just so he can simply go forward and lobby the federal government on issues. There must, surely, be powers within that are vested within that ministry, because if his only role in this province is to be that of a lobbyist, I would have to regrettably say that he is a very poor lobbyist and maybe it is time that there become a different person to take up that lobbying torch.

But, Mr. Speaker, I say that somewhat rhetorically because I know, in fact, that those are not the only powers that are given to the Minister of Justice, that he is not paid by the good people of our province just simply to lobby to the federal government on behalf of a number of issues. His role is far greater than that and the powers that are vested to the minister are much greater than simply flying off to Ottawa once every three months or so to go and knock on a couple of doors and talk to a couple of assistants about things that he would like to see changed within the Criminal Code or things that he would like to see changed regarding sentencing.

\*(15:10)

Mr. Speaker, we know that the minister, as he has acknowledged, that he acknowledged back in 1999, that he, in fact, had a number of different powers that are vested within his particular office, and that pointing the finger at the federal government in Ottawa was simply just a diversion. I read also the

quote from the minister in 1999, "It is not good enough for the provincial government to point fingers at the federal government in respect to children under the age of 12 when the provincial government has every right now and has for years the ability to deal with youth under the age of 12." The minister nods his head again in affirmation, but he simply forgets that he has been the minister for six years and that very little has been done that is making any impact on young offenders in our province.

We heard from the police spokesperson this weekend. I think it is a rare thing. It is not a very usual thing for the police to come forward and to make these kinds of statements. It must have made the minister quite disconcerted to hear the spokesperson for the Winnipeg Police come out and say that youth violence and the type of youth violence, the severity of it, was increasing in the province of Manitoba. I know that is not the kind of spin that the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) likes to put forward. It is not the kind of legacy that he wants to leave as a long-serving Minister of Justice in the province, but, unfortunately, it is what is happening. It is important that we as legislators deal with the reality of the situation, that we understand and recognize what is really happening in the province of Manitoba. It is not, simply, good enough just to put out news releases. I have a binder full of them here. If I chose to read through all of them that the minister has issued over the last six years, I would have to ask leave of the House to not only sit beyond this date but probably to sit much longer. That is the legacy that the Minister of Justice is leaving.

I have a great degree of sympathy for our police officers, specifically in Winnipeg, but, indeed, across all of Manitoba, who are having to deal with this increased violence, who are having to deal with the frustration of bringing people into the station and processing a charge only to see them walk out the door even before that paperwork is completed. I have a great deal of frustration for the remand culture that the Minister of Justice has developed here in the province. I have a great deal of frustration with and sympathy for the frustration that our police feel with the catch and release justice system that is going forward here in the province of Manitoba. Those are frustrations that I know the members opposite do not like to hear. It is not certainly the kind of image that they want to put forward as a party.

The Minister of Justice has done his very best. I will give him credit here. He has done his very best to try to put forward a perception of a very different kind of NDP justice system than what is really happening. He has done his best to try and leave an impression that a great deal is being done when, in fact, very little is being done. When we talk of the court backlogs, we know that there were 1319 adults and 158 youths that have been charged in the last year who had those charges outstanding for more than 18 months, that is 1319. As I mentioned, there were 2702 adults and 238 youth who had criminal charges outstanding for more than a year. The most egregious number, the one that I think came as the most shock to Manitobans, was that there were 1795 adults and 351 young people who have been charged with criminal offences who had those offences outstanding for more than two years. So that is 2000 individuals who have been waiting for two years. It is 1500 who have been waiting for 18 months or more, and it is 3000 who have been waiting for more than a year.

That is an awful lot of individuals who, ultimately, we know, will be found guilty of the particular criminal offence that they have been charged with who are living beside our friends and our relatives, Mr. Speaker, who might, in fact, and I suspect with those high numbers it would be impossible not to believe that they will not, go on, some of them, to commit offences when they are, in fact, back on the street waiting for their trial to come forward. So I share that frustration that the members of the police have brought forward to me as the Justice critic. I know that they brought it forward to the minister as well. Certainly, they have told me that they have met with the minister and expressed their concerns for a number of years in this regard and in many other regards.

I referred earlier in the day to comments that were made by the Premier (Mr. Doer) back in 1996. I believe he was having correspondence with a constituent of his and made note of the fact that he believed there needed to be a comprehensive review and a comprehensive way of how to deal with young offenders. I agree with that concept and with that premise. It is certainly one that I have repeated in the Legislature here before and within my own community but it is not enough just simply to go forward and say that you agree with something. In fact, you have to go forward and do it.

Mr. Speaker, we know that we are going to hear, perhaps, from other individuals in committee. I know my time is running short, so we do look forward to moving this bill forward into committee so that we can hear from some of the presenters on this system and the court system in general as well as the specifics of this particular bill.

With those comments, I want to thank all the members of my caucus who have been very supportive on justice systems and justice issues and feel there is not enough being done but much more could be done in the future and much more will be done when members of the Manitoba Progressive Conservatives return to government.

Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I look forward to seeing this bill move forward to committee.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?  
No.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, I too have a few words I would like to put on the record in regard to Bill 36.

I know many might suggest to you that this is a bill that is not as substantive as it actually is. I think there are some significant things that are occurring within Bill 36 that we do have to give very serious consideration to, and at the end of the day, the principle of the legislation is something which we can support and seeing it going to committee. As I have said on other bills in the past, it is always of interest to see what the public might have to say about bills. This is one of those bills, as I indicated, that does several things, and I want to be able to review some of those things.

Mr. Speaker, as I have done on other bills, I would like to give a sense in terms of what has actually taken place with regard to Bill 36 given that it was first brought into the House in first reading on April 26 and then in second reading on May 10 and now we have it before us today in expectation that the bill will actually go to committee.

Mr. Speaker, we see the benefits of all legislation ultimately being voted upon and going into a committee stage if in fact it succeeds in the vote. I think what is really important is that we at times reflect on some of the processes that allow it. We were somewhat concerned, as an example, Bill 36 is a bill that has just a huge impact, but there is

also a bill the government gave first reading to in regard to The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act earlier in Question Period and then they expect to see it passed. You look in terms of how much time we have as a Legislature to deal with the legislation itself. That is why I say we have concern and that concern is not only in regard to this bill but other bills that we see how they are brought forward, the overall management of government business or affairs within this Chamber.

I think this is one of those bills that it would have been nice to allow for a good period of time to go by, for example this summer, in order for us to ultimately see it come out in September, Mr. Speaker, for the committee to provide the summer for others to be able to provide comment on. I think far too often we are in too much of a rush to see bills actually being passed without allowing some sort of due process. I do think the government is a little bit rushed. When we look at it, when I say rushed, there are other responsibilities within this Chamber in terms of the concurrence. In one sense we are pleased the government is calling bills, but we are very concerned about the amount of hours that we are dealing with concurrence. We do not have very many days left.

If you do a rough calculation of hours in which we are going to be sitting inside the Chamber, you will find the number of hours for debate, unless, of course, the government approaches and says that now we want to be able to have leave in order to get the agenda dealt with, and we are always somewhat cautious to provide that, how are we going to manage the affairs of the province in an orderly fashion?

\* (15:20)

Bill 36 is a good example of that in the sense that the expectation is that a few will speak on it for the simple reason that we have other legislation that has to be debated, other legislation that ultimately has to go into the committee stage. I think at the end of the day that is a mistake. I believe that to be a mistake because, as we go into this bill, I think that what you will see is it is a bill of significance. That is why it is that I believe it would be most appropriate to have a more thorough debate on this bill, as there are other bills that are before us that we need to have that legitimacy of debate inside this Chamber prior to it going to committee.



Having said that, we are not in a position in which we want to prevent legislation from going into committee. I think we have been exceptionally supportive and encouraging for the government to do what is right in terms of bringing legislation in. We address the bills as they come before us, and we will continue to do that in the area of justice. That is why it is interesting we are talking about the courts administration office, and that deals with the whole issue of justice. The member from Steinbach, I think, expressed a lot of frustration about just what this particular Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) has been doing or has not been doing. I can say, Mr. Speaker, that I share in a lot of that frustration.

You know, the other day, I think it was Thursday last week, I was on the way down to our fine building. I stopped by the Provincial Courts building and I did a quick count. I counted six marked police cars. In addition to that, I noticed there were also unidentified cars or ghost cars or whatever terminology one wants to use, but the bottom line is that they were police cars. I have had opportunity, as I am sure other members have had opportunity, to talk to our Winnipeg's finest, and in fact, I should not even say Winnipeg's finest, all law enforcement officers, to try to get a better sense in terms of what is happening within our courts. There is a great deal of frustration in regard to how our courts are being run and the lack of real, tangible will from this government to address the issues that are facing our courts today.

I look at the types of things the government could be doing in order to bring in legislation that would really make a difference. What I see, Mr. Speaker, is legislation, once again, that really does not hit the mark to the degree in which it is going to have the type of impact that is going to be able to see less crime in our province. The Minister of Justice, today during Question Period we saw some of it. I know the Leader of the Manitoba Liberal Party was quite anxious to deal with some of these problems this morning, for example. We talked about the kid, the child that was set on fire by three other children. It is a very sad story. I listened to the one response that the Minister of Justice said. He said, you know, overall crime, or something of that nature, is down by 5 percent. Well, I do not get that sense.

You know, you and I and a number of others represent North End constituencies. Some of us are driving in that area on a daily basis, as I do. Whether

it is Burrows Avenue, which I live on, or Selkirk, there is a whole area of Winnipeg that has been sadly neglected, and neglected in a very real way. What we need to see is a government, in particular a Minister of Justice, that is going to bring forward ideas and legislation that is going to have a real, tangible impact. This is a Minister of Justice that has no shortage of words. He will talk about all the wonderful things he is doing in terms of being able to combat crime. I like to think of myself as an optimist, but, as I say, I drive in Winnipeg's North End every day and it is difficult to see how the minister has really improved things. I do not see what it is the minister is actually talking about.

A week and a half ago, going over the Salter bridge, I looked to the left and there was a garbage can in which an individual was murdered and dumped into, Mr. Speaker. I drive down the streets in which we see incidences of, in this case, over the weekend, a child that was burned by other children. I see people that are on dope. I see people that are in a situation in which, unless government becomes more progressive and proactive at dealing with these issues, they are not going to disappear.

You know, I had the opportunity to talk on radio this morning. The initial thought was we were going to talk about youth that are 16 and maybe what can be done in terms of enabling them to vote. The first caller that called in made reference to the real problem of young people in our justice system, what are we doing in regard to justice. He cited the kid that got burned. I think, you know, when Charles Adler asked the question, "Well, what would you do?" the individual was virtually at a loss in terms of, well, what is the answer. I do not look at that as a positive thing.

I look at these issues as very complicated. Sometimes it takes time in order to make a real difference. My response, and the essence of my response, is we have got to start looking at what is actually happening, the real situation. There are things that we can do that can make a difference. If you say, "Well, look, we are going to put a harbour house or a Lighthouse here. We are going to do some things in order to attract young people." I can tell you they can be exceptionally successful in the right circumstances.

I think, for example, I participate in a kids' club. Later on this evening, I am going to be involved with

a number of children at a local church, Mr. Speaker. I think that our churches provide all sorts of wonderful opportunities for our young people. In particular, I am going put some focus on that North End and providing programming. To what degree does government get involved in directly supporting every aspect of our society?

You know, I am a little bit disappointed in the sense that you would expect a New Democratic government to be a little more progressive in certain areas, having a bit stronger of a social conscience, but I have not witnessed that. I challenge the government to start looking at what its policies and, more importantly, what its policy statements through press releases are actually saying and what sort of results we are seeing.

So I can see, you know, the government in the future looking at this particular bill, Bill 36, and saying, "Well, you know what? We brought in The Courts Administration Improvement Act to improve our courts." And stand up there and say, "Hey, look, we brought in the legislation and we are making a positive difference." This is the type of thing which the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) would be saying. In reality, what sort of things could the Minister of Justice be doing, in a very tangible way, that are going to make a difference so that, at the end of the day, we are going to see less crime on the streets?

You know, they have what they call courtroom junkies, Mr. Speaker. They are individuals that kind of hang around the courts. Some of them are retired individuals. I know my father was one of those individuals at one point. They enjoy observing the legal process and seeing our courts in action. I have had an opportunity to discuss some issues with these individuals. You know, I would recommend to the Minister of Justice that he get more in tune with what is actually happening. There is a great deal of frustration in terms of the number of remands is an example, bail hearings, the types of things that are happening in our bail hearings.

\* (15:30)

I made reference to the number of police cruiser cars in front of our courts. Do you know how frustrating it has got to be if you are the man in charge of allocating out resources? I will use the Winnipeg Police department as the example. That

particular individual, whoever he or she might be, has a very finite amount of real, tangible dollars to use, and those dollars are in fact being used. *[interjection]* I have not got to that yet. Those real, tangible dollars are a finite amount, and have to be used in a way which is going to try to alleviate the concern the public has in regard to crime on our streets.

Imagine the frustration of sending six cruiser cars, and quite often you are talking about two individuals in each cruiser car. You are talking anywhere from a half dozen to 12 or 15, 16 police officers to courthouse for one morning and the actual cost of that, the amount of pressure on that individual in terms of not being able to pay overtime. What we do is we see a lot of our police officers tied up in our courts when the public does not want to see them there. Where they want to see them is on the street. They want to see them biking around in some of our inner-city communities. They want to see them in our community police offices. They want to see them cruising down the many different streets and beautiful communities that we have in our city, not sitting outside the court waiting for yet another remand.

We make reference to the catch-and-release policy or mentality which this Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) appears to be supporting. These are the types of things that could really make a difference, but instead, the Minister of Justice will do things at times, that, yes, they are okay. There is nothing wrong with them, and, as I say, if I do not get the chance to go through them this afternoon, I am sure I will during third reading, to talk about more specifics, some of the things that this bill is actually doing.

There are so many things that as a Minister of Justice he could be doing, and he is intentionally choosing not to do so and at great cost. If you take a look at all his press releases—one day in Question Period, I clearly demonstrated just a handful. It was a handful of press releases issued by this Minister of Justice. If you look at that, it is unfortunate. If I only had the resources to do all the clippings and find all the media attention given to those press releases, and you are to give that a splash over, let us see, a one-week time span, you would think that Manitoba has no crime. After all the actions taken by this government, you would think there is no crime, but nothing could be further from that statement. At the

end of the day, Manitoba is not doing any better today in dealing with crime than it was back in 1999. There is a valid argument to be made that, in fact, we are doing a whole lot worse under this administration.

I think the time has come that this Minister of Justice resign. I do not believe this Minister of Justice has done the type of job he could have and should have done as the Minister of Justice. I am disappointed in the Premier (Mr. Doer) of this province by not recognizing that fact. How long is he going to continue to sit back and do nothing while the issue of crime continues to grow in our province?

I do not think the government really has an appreciation of what impact crime is having on our citizenry. When I knock on doors, people will tell me, "Health care is important. It is really the No. 1 issue." Then, I will have other people say, "Education is really important, the No. 1 issue." "The economy is really important, the No. 1 issue." They want to remain focussed on having dialogue on those issues.

One of the issues that I find kind of crosses over so, if it is not No. 1, it is very close to it, is the issue of crime. The issue of crime is an issue which virtually anyone and everyone will talk about. They all have opinions on the issue of crime, and I truly believe the government is not addressing that issue. What they are doing is they put the finger up in the wind and say, "What are the populous types of things to say as Minister of Justice? What can the Department of Justice do from within in order to try to portray the impression that we as a government are getting tough on crime in our province?" Then this stuff starts to come to the top.

Some legislation is more challenging than others in terms of being able to support or not support. A good example of that is the legislation I was just talking on the other day in terms of the children, like bills. This is not the only bill that the minister has brought forward this session. The other day, I was talking about the drunk driver, and now you are going to get additional fines if, in fact, you are caught drinking and driving and you have a child in your car.

Well, Mr. Speaker, children are very vulnerable, I will acknowledge that, but there are others that are vulnerable, equally vulnerable, that enter into that

vehicle. To what degree is the government going to be open to amendments to that degree? Maybe what we should be doing is making that legislation better. Maybe there are some things that we could do to make it better, but I do not believe that that meets the objective of what it is that this government is really trying to do.

I think, like Bill 36, they have legislation that comes before us, in which the Minister of Justice uses it as a way in which he can stand on a pedestal and say that we are getting tough on crime. I think that the Minister of Justice really needs to review in terms of how it is that he is manipulating the public. You know, the provincial auditor, when it came down, and I cite as an example about the province's deficit, the Province, if you talk to members of the government and so forth, they will tell you we had a \$13-million surplus. The provincial auditor says, "Well, we have a \$600-million-plus deficit," and the auditor, in essence, not only takes legitimate shots at the government, but I think, if you read between the lines, you will see that there are even shots in terms of members of the opposition, in terms of that we have not made the public aware of reality. Well, I think that is the case here.

I think that the government has been very successful at portraying to the public a false image of a government that is tough on crime. So, if you take a look at some of the things that this particular bill does, what happens when a judge is hearing a case and retires or dies? It is a decent issue to be dealt with in legislation. I think many people would have the curiosity to know. It is important that, because if a judge unexpectedly retires or unfortunately passes away and there are cases that are on his docket, some of them quite complicated, we have a sense, in legislation, that you do not have to start the process all over again, because we know how long the process can actually be.

I have had opportunity to talk to some real victims, Mr. Speaker. I, unfortunately, have known very close friends that have had children murdered, not one family, but a couple of families. I can tell you the devastation within the family and the impact that it has had on the individuals is just phenomenal and what they want to see is that they want to be able to see justice in a quick fashion, in an orderly fashion. If I was to speak out against something of this nature, I think they would be quite upset, because you do not want, when you get these

complicated cases, you do not want anything to go wrong if a judge prematurely, for whatever reasons, was to die.

So it is out of respect for those individuals and others that this is a part of the legislation which is quite positive. It enables our Chief Justice to accept a judge, to appoint a judge, from outside of our province. At times, it might dictate that justice would be best served if, in fact, we had someone from the outside coming in to our province. Again, I do not know to what degree that might actually happen today or if it has really happened in the past in a formal way but, again, it is something that makes a whole lot of sense. One would expect something of that nature. We are pleased to see that being brought into the legislation.

\* (15:40)

This is something that is really worthy of note, Mr. Speaker, that the registrar of motor vehicles will be enabled to deny a person from being able to register a vehicle as a result of having outstanding fines. Well, that is a fairly significant consequence. I had a constituent of mine who came to me—and we all hate drinking and driving; I made reference to the legislation earlier. A number of years ago he made the stupid decision to drink and drive, got caught, and he had his driver's licence suspended. The individual himself acknowledges it was a stupid thing to do. Having said that, another stupid thing he did is within that year he drove again, and he was not supposed to drive. As a result, it is a long drawn-out process, but at the end of the day now it is a five-year suspension and the hardships that are going to have to be incurred as a result. He was not caught drinking and driving for the second time; he was caught driving without a licence. The impact is very, very real. When we deny the opportunity of a person to be able to drive, it has a very serious and real impact.

I do not know, and we need to find out more details as to why it is the government feels this is a necessary thing to be doing. Maybe it is the answer. It was interesting that not only does it do that, it also increases the fines. What is the primary purpose for increasing the fines? We know in Manitoba the government increased the fines on seat belts. The number of users for seat belts did not go up. We know this government has an endless appetite for additional revenue coming into the province. To what degree is it to deal with that appetite? We have

a government that has spent in excess of \$2 billion more since it has taken office. It has got to be very close to a record in North America in terms of per capita increase. I would look to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) to indicate very clearly are there other jurisdictions in North America that have higher per capita increases.

It designates municipalities to be able to appoint a screening officer in dealing with specific by-law offences where an offence occurs, of course, typically within their jurisdiction. Mr. Speaker, it was not that long ago in which there was a question mark in terms of the government did something in regard to some tickets that were issued, and as a result of government incompetence, a lot of these tickets were thrown out. In most part, we see this particular aspect of the legislation as a positive thing. We recognize there is a role for some of our municipalities to be able to take advantage of a change of this nature.

So I think that, when we look at this overall as a piece of legislation, it is, in most part, good legislation, good legislation that deserves the opportunity at the very least to go into the committee stage. But at the beginning when I was talking about the management and how the government manages bills through the process, this is where I would then have a bit of a problem. To what degree did the government, as an example, confer with the different municipalities? Do they have the issue of the tickets that went astray? I believe it was about a year ago where a number of them were thrown out. Was that issue dealt with to the satisfaction of municipalities? To what degree is this going to be accepted by the municipalities?

Is there going to be other legislation that is going to have to follow? Quite often, what we have witnessed with this government is legislation that is brought in virtually at the last minute in expectation that opposition members will just buy hook, line, and sinker what it is the minister at the time is saying and allow that legislation to ultimately pass, because in such and such a rule it says that if a bill is introduced by such and such a time, everything has got to come to a question, whether or not members have had adequate time to debate the bill or consult, Mr. Speaker. I think there is a very high need for us to be a little bit more serious with the way in which bills are coming forward. As I indicated, we have a lot riding on this particular bill and other justice issues

because by its passage the Minister of Justice is going to be going out there saying how tough he is. He is going to cite the types of bills he is passing.

To what degree is the Minister of Justice actually missing the boat? To what degree is the Minister of Justice using legislation that he brings forward to give a false impression to Manitobans? To what degree is the Minister of Justice dealing with the real issues, some of those issues that I talked about? This is a bill dealing with the administration of our courts. Well, there are other aspects to the administration, Mr. Speaker, that are equally, if not even more important.

I see that my time has expired, so, with those few words, we are prepared to see it go to committee.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

**Mr. Speaker:** The question before the House is second reading of Bill 36, The Courts Administration Improvement Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

### **Bill 30—The Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation Act**

**Mr. Speaker:** Bill 30, The Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler).

Is it the will of the House for it to remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Lakeside? Stand? *[Agreed]*

It is also standing in the name of the honourable Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings), who has 24 minutes remaining. Stand?

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Mr. Speaker:** It has been denied.

**Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie):** I appreciate the opportunity to rise and engage in debate on a very historic bill as I view it, Bill 30, which takes two very long-standing, very important

entities in Manitoba agriculture and brings them together under one statute of this House.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 30, as I said, is very substantive in that it is legislation that guides the merger of the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation and the Manitoba Crop Insurance Corporation. This merger is taking place through this legislation. I will say that I have been very supportive of the concept for a number of years. In fact, I knew the previous chief executive officer of Manitoba Crop Insurance Corporation, Mr. Brian Manning, very well. Mr. Brian Manning was supportive and did promote the advantages of having the two corporations under one roof providing those services out of one office, which I believe all of us as clients would appreciate. Mr. Manning was known to support this concept and, in fact, was hired by the Alberta government to travel out to Edmonton to oversee the merger of their credit corporation and their insurance corporation. It was done under his guise, very successfully I might add.

I do appreciate the legislation coming before the Chamber merging these two very important corporations. I will say that they have played a very vital role in agriculture here in the province of Manitoba. In 1960, the Agricultural Crop Insurance Corporation was founded. Right from the very beginning, our family was engaged with the crop insurance. We were very supportive of the legislation coming forward, and do appreciate the Conservative administration for bringing forward the legislation that founded the Manitoba Crop Insurance Corporation and that has provided a valuable service to agriculture here in the province of Manitoba. It has been very successfully done.

\* (15:50)

There has been prudence shown in the management of the Crop Insurance Corporation, and it has amassed significant reserve funds. I will say that, even though the 2004 crop year has strained the corporation and, in fact, drawn out the greatest sum of claims in the Crop Insurance's 45-year history, more than \$190 million has already been paid out. We understand that this figure could top \$200 million in payments to producers in the province of Manitoba this year. Without those payments, I will say that many, many producers would not be planting this year.

The corporation personnel should be commended on their hard work, dedication and commitment to agricultural producers, as we have seen evident in the number of claims and the amount of monies paid out in the course of the last year. I know the corporation in itself has a number of vacancies and the existing personnel just bore down and dedicated themselves to making certain that they processed producers' claims in the most effective and cost-effective time frame. I will say that included the producers, not just on behalf of the corporation. They recognized that the producers needed to see their claims processed quickly because the obligations that producers have with very slim margins these days, and that was greatly, greatly appreciated, although I will say that there are a number of claims that remained outstanding for a number of months with the provision that the crop had yet to be either harvested or destroyed, while one only had to look at the quality of the crop that was left in the field knowing full well that there was no value to it, and only needed to be turned under and disposed of in some fashion in the spring time, yet the producers that were unable to see claim monies forwarded to them and had to sustain, as most producers do, their loans, and incurred greater interest because of this requirement. I know I mentioned it to the minister in Estimates, and I know that she did ask that the corporation process all claims possible that were in that position, waiting for crop disposition.

Mr. Speaker, I also will say that the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation provides a very valuable contribution to producers in the province of Manitoba. I, for one, was a recipient of loan monies from Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation as a young farmer just getting started in the time of high inflation and high interest rates. The Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation and the Young Farmer Program saved myself thousands upon thousands of dollars in interest payments because of the opportunity to borrow monies to purchase property through MACC.

I know that that corporation has seen significant changes in the last number of years to become much more user-friendly and adopting the forms of application that are consistent with the rest of industry. I know that it was not so many years ago that many lawyers lamented that the forms that needed to be filled out using the MACC would not fit in the fax machine. They were too wide. It showed that it needed to be revamped. Sometimes,

obviously, government does not lead and sometimes, really, in their role of following, the industry is a long way behind. I know that has now changed and the Agricultural Credit Corporation has very much improved its user-friendliness. It bodes well for the corporation because I do not know what was borrowed last year, but in the year previous to that almost \$200 million was placed in the hands of producers across Manitoba by MACC, and that is a testament to success of MACC.

Now the legislation we are looking to passage through the Assembly is extensive. I have read with interest to see the provision of two vice-chairpersons of the board that will govern the new corporation. I believe each chairman will be tasked with, vice-chair, sorry, will be tasked with one element of this legislation being either credit or insurance and one chairperson overseeing a board of five and as many as nine directors.

I will say that the participation of the Government of Canada, and I have been assured by the minister that this legislation does not encumber or prevent or perhaps dissuade the Government of Canada from full participation, currently supports 50 percent of the administrative costs, I understand, of the Crop Insurance Corporation and does also participate in re-insurance losses and also wildlife damage and administrative costs to both those programs, to my understanding. So I see it does continue to do that.

I would like to say, though, there has been talk that because of the merger, there will be less need for as large a reserve as the Crop Insurance Corporation is now blessed with. But I want to caution the minister. I know she is listening to debate this afternoon. We have just experienced the greatest payout in Crop Insurance Corporation history, which has demanded that a great portion of the reserve be drawn down. Although we do not know what 2005 is going to bring as far as weather to producers in Manitoba, this year is starting out very similar to 2004. My only hope is it does not end up like 2004, but we have to prepare as if it could possibly be that way.

So I stress to the minister that we do not be too quick to reduce our reserves in the Manitoba Crop Insurance Corporation because ultimately it may be short-sighted to do so in reducing premiums at present but in the long run having to significantly

increase premiums because our reserves have been depleted or totally exhausted.

So, Mr. Speaker, I know that there is much more I would like to speak on in regard to Bill 30, but I know there are some agreements within the House so—

**An Honourable Member:** Keep going. You have two minutes.

\* (16:00)

**Mr. Faurschou:** I would like just to leave, though, the last remaining couple of minutes that I do have and speak about what I believe has the potential to be appreciated by producers in not only the convenience of one-stop shopping, but, hopefully, it will result in a more cost-effective delivery of services to Manitoba producers. I know, currently, if I am looking for Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation services I have to go downtown to 25 Tupper Street North in Portage la Prairie, and if I want to engage crop insurance, I have to travel to 2400 Saskatchewan Avenue West to the Manitoba Crop Insurance Corporation office. I would totally appreciate if both agents were housed in one office. Then it would save running around and be able to communicate perhaps just once to the persons who are deciding on my insurance requirements as well as my borrowing requirements. I appreciate having that opportunity to do so. I do want to say that we do not want to see Crop Insurance Corporation premiums subsidizing interest rates. I want to see that we have stand-alone types of entities that truly deliver the services at cost. I think that Manitoba Crop Insurance Corporation does so.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have 15 minutes remaining, and it will also remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler).

As previously agreed, it is now four o'clock, so we will now resolve into Committee of Supply.

## COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

### Concurrence Motion

**Mr. Chairperson (Conrad Santos):** The Committee of Supply has before it, for our consideration, the

motion concurring in all Supply resolutions relating to the Estimates of Expenditure for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2006.

The floor is now open for questions.

**Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield):** I have an important issue I want to raise to the minister's attention, in particular when it comes to her Department of Immigration. Since we met in Estimates, I have had an opportunity to meet a lot of concerned individuals across Manitoba who involve themselves quite a bit in immigration, and over the weekend I have had an opportunity to meet with a lot of different individuals that have immigrated and live in the immigrant community.

One of the issues that has come up, and this is something I would not necessarily expect the minister to have experience or have a lot of working knowledge about, has to do with immigration clusters. I just want to bring the minister back to a more personal historic perspective, that being my personal history.

Often when individuals come to a country like Canada, there is a certain intimidation factor, clearly the language being one, the culture being somewhat different, the way we do things, and there is a lot of comfort in coming to Canada in a cluster, whether that be three or four, up to six families. We find that that is where the sponsoring of family for family reunification is very important in making new immigrants feel very welcome to this country.

I can remember as a child being told the stories because, of course, by the time I was born, the big immigration wave was over, but the stories were often told how, after World War II, the trains would come from the east and they would arrive here on Main Street and Broadway. On a Saturday afternoon, when everybody had time off, and Sundays, when the trains would come in, evidently hundreds of people would be standing at the train station to see if they recognized anybody on the train, and those people on the trains would then look out the windows. Actually, if they saw somebody, they would get off the train and make this their home. Even though they were meant to go further, this is where they would settle down, because they recognized somebody they saw.

Settling down as an immigrant, someone who has come from a country that is clearly different in a

lot of respects to Canada, coming with a group makes the experience a lot better. It makes it a lot easier, and just makes the coming to Canada a decision that you get to much quicker. I know for a fact, having attended a church where everybody was basically an immigrant except for us, who were born first-generation Canadians, even when you talk to older people in the community, and I have noticed those immigrants are starting to get up in years, they always talked about so-and-so when they came over, there was the settlement camp in Europe, and then how they applied. They would apply in clusters; then it was who got to go where, and who got settled where.

Taking an example, the Philippine community, the reason why Winnipeg is such a hub for the Philippine community is because it has such a great cluster. It just makes it so much more comfortable. Family so-and-so came here and so-and-so from that village came here and so-and-so from that area came to Winnipeg. Clearly, it is a great place to come to.

\* (16:10)

I have heard that there is a hesitancy on the part of the minister's department to look at clusters. I know that individuals that are working in the entire immigration field are a little bit concerned that there does not seem to be that understanding or that need for clusters. I can tell the minister I could sit here, and I could take days and days and explain to her how important it is, how much of a relief it is to know that you are going where there is somebody who has already immigrated, or you are going to immigrate somewhere where you are going with others, other families. So I was wondering if the minister could address that issue and just let the committee know sort of her feelings on it. Is it something she would be prepared to speak to her department about, the importance of looking at clusters?

Winnipeg is an easy one, but this is for individuals who are looking at other areas. I think Gimli was one example where there was a cluster prepared to move into the Gimli area. I know Gimli is looking at working with the minister's department. Is it possible that some sensitivity could be raised with the department in looking at clusters coming over and being settled in Manitoba?

**Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Labour and Immigration):** I would just like to let the member from Springfield know that we have done a lot of work in Manitoba with our immigration strategy in regard to moving newcomers into rural Manitoba. In fact, we are the only jurisdiction in Canada with our Provincial Nominee Program that does have people that are going into the rural community.

Some of the communities that I know the member will be familiar with are the Winkler-Morden area and the Steinbach area that have had very successful community partnerships where we have had real success in having the German community move into an area and feel welcomed. There are settlement and service programs structured there so we can really have an economic benefit not just to the Winnipeg area but the rural area as well.

One of the other things we have in our department that has been very successful is the community support agreements. Those are particular agreements that are set up with—one perfect example of a community support agreement is the Jewish Federation. They have been very, very successful in developing a partnership with the Jewish community in Argentina and bringing people over to Manitoba from Argentina. In fact, they just met with me two weeks ago to talk to me about how we could continue on in regard to expanding that effort and making sure that, quite frankly, we are growing our immigration strategy here in Manitoba, but also we are attracting Jewish people to Manitoba.

I have never had anyone in my office come and express the concerns the member is talking about in regard to a particular community or a cluster of people that wanted to come and they are concerned. If the member wants to at any time give me any kinds of details around anything like that, we are always looking for, our immigration strategy is responsive and it is innovative. We are always looking for opportunities to look at how we can expand our immigration strategy and if it makes sense. We have a very excellent team of people in the Immigration branch that work on these kinds of opportunities.

If the member opposite would like to bring forward any particular details and if could work on something, I am sure we would be more than open to it.



**Mr. Schuler:** The minister raises a good point in that she talks about the southeast corner of Manitoba and the southern-central part of Manitoba. I understand, for instance, in Oakbank there is a group of immigrants have bought some houses. I know in the honourable Member for Russell's (Mr. Derkach), there has been some in that area. I think, again, it is important.

Those of us who were born here or have been here for a long time, we tend to forget how intimidating it can be to immigrate to Canada. We seem to think we are just not intimidating. In fact, I would argue we are not, but when you are a newcomer, there is that intimidation factor. That is why they like to come in groups and they like to settle in areas. I know Gimli is one of those areas that is working on it. Certainly, if I have specific cases, I will bring them to the minister's attention, but I just wanted to make sure that we had touched on that issue because I think it is very important.

I think it is important that we not just settle the southeast and south central part of the province and not just the city of Winnipeg, but that we move around the province and look at bringing individuals and keep the population balance in the province. I know the minister feels strongly about this, and I feel incredibly blessed to be sitting not just next to the former Minister of Immigration who started the nominee program, but the current minister who has seen to its expansion to heights that we have not seen before. I did have another question. In 2004, can the minister confirm, were there some 2000-plus openings left on the table for 2004?

**Ms. Allan:** Could I ask the member to clarify the question? When you meant 2000-plus openings, I am curious as to what he means by that. I would like him to clarify the question.

**Mr. Schuler:** An immigration goal was set by the province in 2004, and it was not achieved. They were slightly under by 2000. Is that correct?

**Ms. Allan:** No. We have set a goal of 10 000, and we are at almost 7500 in 2004. We were very happy with the increases in the year 2003 and 2004. Our immigration program is growing at a record rate, and we are very pleased with the progress we have made on our immigration strategy in growing the number of newcomers who come to Manitoba. I am not exactly sure where the member might have got that

information, but I will certainly clarify if there is any misunderstanding or any figures that I have incorrect. I would certainly clarify that with the member.

**Mr. Schuler:** I guess what it was, the target and then what was achieved. I think there were 2000 openings left. Anyway, I will leave it at that. The minister is usually really good at getting that information afterward.

I want to move on to the third issue that I wanted to talk to the minister about in immigration. It is a concern that was raised to me. There are those individuals who apply themselves. There are those companies that look for individuals to come over, and then there are, as we know, consultants who also work on bringing over immigrants. They do the paperwork. They do charge some money, but they do help, that the forms are properly filled out, and they help bridge the language barrier and, in a lot of instances, are working with businesses and communities. There is a feeling that the submissions by consultants are held back. There seems to be a systemic holding back within the Department of Immigration here in Manitoba. Is the minister aware of that? Has that ever been brought to her attention?

**Ms. Allan:** No. No one has ever brought that matter to my attention. We have a rigid system in the department and, in fact, as the member knows, last April we reassessed the criteria for our Provincial Nominee Program so that we could get newcomers into the province sooner and link them to labour market demand, and certainly my department is committed. This is a movement of people. They take they take their jobs very seriously, and they would never play politics with provincial nominee applications. They hold the privilege of working in that department in highest esteem, and I have never had anyone raise that particular matter of concern with me.

\* (16:20)

**Mr. Schuler:** It is an issue that was raised with me, and I think it is serious. I think the program is a good one. I think it brings a lot to the province, and as the program develops, grows and moves on, we will see things develop within it that perhaps have to be looked at.

It seems to be that there is an inherent negative feeling toward immigration consultants where, on the

federal level, they seem to have very little difficulty with it. There seems to be a systemic problem within the department here in the province of Manitoba. I am glad to hear that the minister is clearly indicating that she is not aware of it. I am glad that she does not support that kind of a thing, and again, everybody has an important part to play.

We all do things differently. For instance, my mother, who came here on a displaced person's pass. I, as a born Canadian, would probably view that more as ideal slave labour. They were forced to work two years on the farm and work very hard at it to supposedly pay off their boat ride over from Europe, but that is the way it was, and that is what you did to get here. You worked two years for free on a farm to get here. I do not think anybody is advocating that kind of thing. I think we have gotten a lot more progressive. We have gotten a lot more modern in the way we bring individuals over to Canada, and the program in front of us is an outstanding program.

I think that immigration consultants do have a part to play, especially for individuals who feel that they have a strong language barrier, who want it done right, want it done properly the first time, and that is why they are willing to pay for the service. I know of one individual who has decided to go to one, a bright young individual, and I certainly hope he gets in. Again, these are individuals from Russia, Ukraine, Poland, all of Europe. I just would be horrified if there was systemically a stand taken against somebody who applied by using a consultant.

**Ms. Allan:** I do want to inform the member that there has been some considerable work done in the particular area of immigration consultants. A lot of that work has been done by the federal government. They brought in by regulation, I believe regulation not legislation, that immigration consultants either have to be a member of the Law Society in their home jurisdiction or they have to be a member of CSIC, the Canadian Society of Immigration Consultants. Those regulations were brought in by the federal government about, I believe, a year and a half ago.

I think the reason that that work was done was because they did feel that there was a role for immigration consultants to play, particularly when you have people that are trying to come from countries that are very, very far away. There is no question sometimes, quite often, there are language

barriers, and there is a role for them to play. Those are the rules that we live by here in Manitoba, in our jurisdiction.

Of course, as the member knows, in lieu of the work that had been done by the federal government, we had a code of conduct. The code of conduct was there to provide some security for the newcomer that was coming here to make sure that they were receiving services in good faith, but there is no question, absolutely, there is room for immigration consultants. We have quite a few immigration consultants here in Manitoba that are doing good work, not just with individuals, but also, as the MLA was speaking about, with some of the cluster newcomers. So it is certainly something that has not been raised with me. There was some work done by the federal government. We supported that work and worked with them on it.

**Mr. Schuler:** Again, the federal government seems to be 100 percent on board. They actually like the fact that when immigration consultants work on the case all the documents are in place and the documents are filled out. It is not there that is the problem. I will just read one sentence from the concern that I got. It reads, "As well, our people and employers frequently report being treated in a challenging and unprofessional manner when they have to deal with these officials." Now, that is dealing with provincial immigration officials in the minister's department. So, again, it is a concern. I will ask these individuals if, perhaps, they would get together and ask for a meeting with the minister.

I just raise these issues again on the clusters. I cannot tell the minister strongly enough how big of a deal this is, in that a ceiling of 10 000 might be seen as being little vision in the sense that we could possibly be looking at 20 000 and 30 000, but there has to be that comfort. I would point out to the minister there was a survey done in Holland in which, and I do not have the exact numbers so I will not quote it, the amount of people who would like to emigrate out of Holland is astronomical. They view Canada as being one of the places, if not first, second on their list. Again, they will come as clusters. They will come as a couple of neighbours and from there others will join, and then the program—I doubt the 10 000 will even be enough, it might be at the 20 000 range because that is how this works. I can tell the minister I know this first-hand from having sat at the kitchen table of an immigrant family and hearing

how this was done. I hear about it every time we get together and every time there is something, it is about we came over and how it was done. It was about the family. It was about the church. It is about the community and that kind of thing. So I wanted to mention to the minister about clusters. I did want to talk to her about the consultants.

There is a little bit of a feeling that the process is sometimes a little slow here in the province. I know there is only so much that can be done, but I do want to end and this will be my last comment to the minister to conclude, everyone that I have spoken to speaks very, very highly about the program. They speak incredibly highly about the program and what good it has done. They also mention that Gerald Clement, the assistant deputy minister, is top-notch. By no means are any of the concerns directed at personalities. It is directed at systemic, it is a feeling out there.

I think it is not bad to look at our systems once in awhile and say, "Are we building an in-built bias against something when maybe that is not to the best of the program?" I know companies do this all the time. I know that organizations do this all the time. I had the opportunity to meet the Addictions Foundation. They mentioned they do that all the time, you know, "Are we on the right track? You know, "Have we built in something systemic that could be seen as a problem or could develop as a problem?"

That is why I raise these issues with the minister. I know she has a big heart for this. I just tell the minister, on the weekend, I know of a family and I found out that they had brought their bicycles for their children over with them when they immigrated, not understanding that things are a little different here. The bicycles have all been stolen. They are absolutely devastated. Now, there is a whole group of us who will do a collection together and buy them bicycles. It is just a real different experience for them, but they love Canada.

\*(16:30)

I met one young man who worked on a site and cut four of his five fingers off and proudly showed me his fingers. He said, "You know it happened in April, and by August, I was back working again." I cannot believe it. They have their own business already. They are building on barns, I think, is they build barns. Just unbelievable, the gusto.

I might point out they do have a lot of children, and one more beautiful than the next and more well-behaved kids. I always nudge my kids and I tell them, "Look at them. Look how good they can sit." Because these kids are just beautiful families, and what unbelievable additions to this province.

I do not know how much the minister gets out into these communities. Just unbelievable, the kids. And the parents will say, you know, because these parents might have originated in Russia, and the kids come home from Grade 1 and start telling their parents how they have to run things in their household, and say, "Wow, that is interesting. You, at six and seven years old, know better than Mom and Dad who came all the way from Russia." But hence that is the way it is.

We certainly wish every one of them well and certainly the department. Keep up the good work. If there are some systemic things that have to be dealt with, please let us deal with them and let us keep up the good work. That concludes my questions.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** I have a few questions that I would like to ask the minister. There are six different streams, as the minister is quite well aware. The first five, when we had the press conference just over a year ago, it was indicated it takes approximately three months to go through and the general stream which is the last low-priority stream. At the time, the minister had indicated at the press conference that it was eight months. I was wondering if the minister can give an indication to the House what sort of time anticipation there is today with the different streams.

**Ms. Allan:** My understanding is that the average wait times are between three and six months for the Provincial Nominee Program, that they have been shortened since we introduced the redesign of the streams.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** At the time, the first five streams, there was a commitment from the government to keep it within three months. I will use the example of the family support stream, which is a priority stream. It is safe to say that we are really talking about three to six months for that particular stream.

The only problem with when she gives me the average, as she has done, is are you taking into consideration the general stream. I just say it more so

for information purposes so that I can pass it on to the appropriate people, as we deal quite a bit in this program.

**Ms. Allan:** I know that the MLA asks this question because of the diversity he has in his constituency. If he does not mind, what we will do is get him an update in regard to waiting times on those individual streams. I think that will be helpful for him.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Wonderful. That would be very much appreciated. I thank the minister for that.

The last time I had the opportunity—and sometimes it is important just to agree that we will disagree on certain aspects of the Provincial Nominee Program—the minister will recall, I had made the suggestion, and I know we are revamping it and some of the wording and so forth, but, in reality, there is this restricted list in which, in order to get recognized as a nurse in Manitoba, you would have to get certification, and if you got that certification, my understanding is then you would be able to be qualified for the Provincial Nominee Program.

I have one individual, and if the minister wants, I can share with her the letter. It is someone that seems to me has been recognized by the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Manitoba as someone that has, in fact, qualified. In fact, if I just quickly quote the memorandum, or the letter that was sent. If she wants, I guess I can table it. I have talked to the individual in question, but my preference would be to give her the letter so it is not necessarily a tabled document. In essence, and this is on the letterhead from the college, "Congratulations on successfully passing the Canadian Practical Nurse Registration Examination. You are now eligible to apply to have your name entered on the register as a practising licensed practical nurse with the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Manitoba." In essence, it continues, it would appear that the particular individual does have her credentials recognized. Having said that, we did put in the application through the PNP, and I would reiterate the comments from the former questioner that the staff over at the office are really phenomenal. They do a wonderful job.

It is one of those issues in which I just wanted to get clarification from the minister on. We know there is that restricted list; I am not too sure exactly what it is called now. The nurse was on that restricted list.

Because this one has the credentials recognized by the Province, is it just a question then of time, and as long as other things go reasonably well, this individual would be issued a certificate?

**Ms. Allan:** The new name for the list is the occupational requirements list, and it replaces what was previously known as the restricted and enhanced occupational list. What that particular list does is it reflects Manitoba's current labour market conditions and facilitates the future employability of potential newcomers. This list was developed through extensive consultation with my department, with the Settlement and Labour Market Services Branch, and with the professional regulatory bodies and Advanced Education and Training. It provides the widest range of eligible occupations of any nominee or skilled worker program in Canada.

The member can check the list if he wants, but once again I just want to remind the member that we have a bilateral agreement with the federal government for our Provincial Nominee Program. That bilateral agreement is an agreement; it is an economic program linked to labour market demand. So that is what the occupational requirements list does. It lists the occupational demand in Manitoba. If there is an individual that is trained and they have had their credentials recognized and they are on the list, then I am quite sure that officials in my department would work with the applicant to determine whether or not they can come to Manitoba.

I would prefer that the member did not give me any particular information about any particular individual. I am very careful when I am in the community that I do not engage in any conversation or dialogue or activity with any individuals in regard to them immigrating to Manitoba because I do not want them to think there is a perceived conflict of interest, or if there is a conflict of interest I do not want to be involved. I think we have an excellent system in the department, and we have excellent people that are running the Department of Immigration. I would really prefer that if the member has any concerns about any particular individual that feels they have the accreditation and there should be an opportunity for them to come here, that they work with the assistant deputy minister of Immigration. As the MLA for Springfield said (Mr. Schuler), he is highly regarded in the community.

If there are any concerns around any specific case, I am sure the member and I know the member

feels exactly the same way about Gerry Clement. You know, we might have to build a statue to him one of these days. He is very accommodating and always very open with people when they have concerns. It is a tricky business, you know, because it is the movement of people, and people are quite often passionate about bringing their family members here. So, if there is any particular concern, I am quite sure Mr. Clement would be prepared to meet with the member about it.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I appreciate the answer from the minister. I agree with her assessment in terms of the individuals directly appealing to you as minister. I would actually commend you on that thought; I think it is a positive statement that you are making. In regard to Mr. Clement, as others have recognized, he does do a wonderful job and he makes a point in terms of responding. I do truly appreciate that.

The occupational requirements list, is that now a list that is available that we would be able to get a copy of?

\* (16:40)

**Ms. Allan:** Absolutely. In fact, I believe it is on the Immigration Web site. Unfortunately, I do not have a lot of time to go on my own Web site, but if it is not on the Web site, we will definitely make sure the member gets a copy of that list. I am absolutely positive it is on the Web site. I believe it is [www.immigratemanitoba.com](http://www.immigratemanitoba.com).

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, we had a relatively well-produced booklet, the Provincial Nominee Program. In fact, what I have done to try to assist applicants is taken parts of that booklet and make people aware that the booklet did exist. Can the minister indicate whether or not, because when we changed the restricted list to an occupational requirement list that would have changed the content of the booklet, there is a more recent booklet that is available or would everything now be accessible through the Internet?

**Ms. Allan:** It is my understanding that the Web site has been updated as of April, 2005 so just recently, and also it is my understanding that some new kits were printed at the same time, so I am pretty sure that there would be new information available.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** What I am going to do is I am going to request from the minister if I could be provided a couple of copies of that book. It would be very much valued and appreciated.

**Ms. Allan:** I just want to confirm with the member, are you talking about the application booklet? If that is what he is talking about, absolutely we will look into getting that to the member.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** I appreciate that. Today, under the Provincial Nominee Program, there are affidavits of support that have to be filled out and my understanding is, through the program, that—and I think it is a positive thing that commissioners can sign off on that, and with the changes, is the government looking at changing that at all? I, for one, feel that the commissioners as a whole have done reasonably well, that they should not have to be obligated to go out to a lawyer. Is the minister aware of any change in policy on that, or just reaffirm that that is in fact the case?

**Ms. Allan:** My understanding is there has been no change to that particular policy and, certainly, I am sure if there was, Mr. Clement would have a dialogue with me about it, but I am pretty sure there is absolutely no change in that regard. We will make sure we clarify that with you.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** That would be appreciated. I know from my own constituency office, as a service, I now have employees that actually went out and got their commissions so that they can provide that service. It is done at no cost, obviously, for the client that comes forward because it is just a service that I choose to offer.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am wondering if the minister can indicate to what degree there is ongoing dialogue with her and the federal minister in regard to the program. A big concern that I have, and I am sure she shares, is the importance of trying to retain those that come to our province through this program, retaining them in the province. It seems to me that the future success of this program is going to hinge on the ability of Manitoba to be able to keep the nominee that is coming here. I just look to her to see if she has any comment on that issue.

**Ms. Allan:** I was actually in on an FPT meeting in, I can tell you exactly when off the top of my head actually, about November 13, 14 and 15 in Ottawa. It

was an excellent meeting because at that FPT meeting, and the minister at the time was Minister Judy Sgro, there was an announcement made about the fact that what we wanted to really see is a national immigration framework, because I think the federal government takes immigration just as seriously as we do here in Manitoba. They understand that, by the year 2025, we are going to be depending solely on immigration for population growth because of the declining birth rate and the aging population.

The framework will assist Citizenship and Immigration Canada and its partners to take a proactive approach to immigration. What we would really like to see across the country is equitable distribution of immigrants among provinces and regions, because there is some disparity, certainly, with other jurisdictions, effective and efficient immigration delivery system. We would like to see a sustainable funding model. We would like to have better outcomes for immigrants and stronger partnerships. We really see that as the basis and the foundation for a strong immigration strategy in Canada, and then effectively that would help us here in Manitoba.

We are very fortunate, by the way, that Gerry Clement is the co-chair of the bureaucratic working table that is putting together the framework. We were supposed to get together in June to sign off on that framework. Unfortunately, there have been a few changes, but I still think that is a very serious priority. I think we really want to see a framework that will assist us in having a system that works better.

The federal government understands, and they have made some recent announcements that I know the member is aware of around some changes to family sponsorship. They certainly understand they have some difficulties with the number of applications they have in the queue, and they are looking quite frankly at Manitoba because we have been so successful, particularly in redesigning our system and shortening the waiting times. We will continue to work with them and I would really like to see that framework because I think it would benefit not just Manitoba but all of Canada.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** The minister recently came out with an announcement in regard to farmers. I am not

familiar with the actual announcement. I understand it is an attempt to get more farmers to come under the Provincial Nominee Program. I wonder if she could just comment on that.

**Ms. Allan:** Yes. I am actually not the lead department on that. The lead department, I believe, if my memory serves me, is the Minister for Industry (Mr. Rondeau). It falls under his department. It is an important program because in rural areas there are a lot of family farms that do not have a succession plan, and there are a lot of farmers that want to come to Canada. They want an opportunity to come and farm in Manitoba.

If my memory serves me correctly, what it did was it dropped the initial investment that the farmer had to make if they were going to come to Manitoba. There was an initial investment of, I believe, \$75,000, and I believe it dropped that initial investment. It has also changed the criteria of the program so that the spouse can work off the farm to give the newcomers that were coming to Manitoba an opportunity to not just work on the farm, but also off the farm.

I certainly know, from being born and raised in MacGregor, my sister and my brother-in-law, that has certainly been beneficial to them when they had their farm for many years. There were a couple of changes to try to make the program more successful for newcomers that were coming here to farm in Manitoba.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Can the minister indicate if the Minister of Industry is actually also responsible for that small business component of the program and now with the farmers? I think that is probably an appropriate place to actually have it. Initially, I was thinking Agriculture, but Industry seems to make more sense.

Does the minister provide a certain number, or is it more so open to whatever number they want to be able to bring in? If it is opened, is it something you can just get a sense of what those numbers are? I would welcome the Minister of Industry to comment on it if he feels it is appropriate to do so.

**Ms. Allan:** Those numbers are open. There is not a directive for my department per se in regard to a target. That is not how the program is run. It is run

on an open process in regard to trying to get businesses to come here.

\* (16:50)

**Mr. Lamoureux:** I know I can appreciate the farmers' component is fairly new. The only thing I would suggest to the minister that she or her colleague might want to take into consideration is that I believe that Saskatchewan is fairly aggressive in terms of the provincial nominee on the farmers. I think that we have got to keep competitive with the province of Saskatchewan, so I think it is worth our while in terms of just looking at what Saskatchewan might be doing. In regard to the industry component, I would be interested in just getting a sense of numbers on that issue.

Having said that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is the questions that I have for this afternoon.

**Ms. Allan:** I know that the Minister of Industry (Mr. Rondeau) would be more than delighted to get any numbers for the MLA.

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa):** I have a few questions for the Minister of Advanced Education (Ms. McGifford) regarding the information that was—

**An Honourable Member:** Mr. Speaker, I cannot hear her.

**Mrs. Rowat:** Cannot hear me?

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Chairperson:** Point of order.

**Ms. Allan:** Are we finished with the Department of Labour and Immigration, because it appears that we are now moving to the Department of Advanced Education?

**Mr. Chairperson:** So it is agreed, it is done?  
*[Agreed]*

\* \* \*

**Mrs. Rowat:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have a few questions to ask of the Minister of Advanced Education and Training and to determine, I guess, the process that the government will be following in addressing the percentages of increases that have

recently been imposed on students through the universities for fees other than tuition.

I just wanted to ask the minister if she could share with the House some of the plans that she may have developed over the last few days regarding post-secondary funding. I am concerned, based on what I have been reading and what I have been learning from students and faculty members of the universities and colleges, that there does not seem to be a plan. They are quite concerned with where this whole process may be leading.

**Hon. Diane McGifford (Minister of Advanced Education and Training):** It was a week ago today that we sent letters to three provincial universities, the University of Winnipeg, the University of Manitoba and Brandon University. In that letter, we requested specific information of the presidents, and we requested that we be sent information that included all the options that were brought to the boards in the two institutions that have already completed their budget processes.

In other words, we wanted to see some evidence that the board members had some options when they voted and that the board members were not merely told, "Here is a budget and say yes or no." We also wanted specific information on the so-called ancillary fees, and that information would include why they were levied, where they would be used, what were the costs that were incurred to make those ancillary fees necessary.

I take this opportunity to point out that it is quite unusual to write and ask for this kind of information because universities are self-governing institutions with the appointed board members. Some of the appointments are OIC. The University of Winnipeg is slightly different. It is a very large board. So it is very unusual to ask for this information. Those packages of information should be delivered very soon. I have also asked each of the presidents to come and visit me. The basis of our conversations during those meetings will be the materials they have sent, and I will certainly be asking for some justifications and options, et cetera, about what the board saw. So those meetings are forthcoming, Mr. Chair.

**Mrs. Rowat:** I would like to ask the minister, she has indicated very soon in regard to time lines and will be meeting in regard to receiving information or

asking for the information from the universities regarding their budgetary decision making regarding ancillary fees and other decisions regarding funding issues or challenges within the university. Can the minister indicate to me what she means by very soon? Is there a time line that she wanted this information back from the universities?

**Ms. McGifford:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, there was a time line.

**Mrs. Rowat:** Can the minister indicate to me what that time line is, the date specifically?

**Ms. McGifford:** The time line was one week. The material we expect late today or tomorrow, the long weekend having perhaps made a difference in the mailings, but that is our expectation.

**Mrs. Rowat:** Can the minister also indicate to me the time lines she has indicated in meeting with the presidents of the universities regarding this information, if a date has been set to meet with the presidents?

**Ms. McGifford:** I am not quite sure what the member means.

**Mrs. Rowat:** I would like to know if a meeting date has been set for the minister to meet with the university representatives regarding the package of information she will receive sometime this week.

**Ms. McGifford:** Yes, Mr. Chair, we have set meeting dates with three presidents.

**Mrs. Rowat:** Can the minister indicate to me specifically what date that will be?

**Ms. McGifford:** The dates are we are meeting with President Axworthy, I believe it is Thursday morning. It may be Thursday afternoon but it is Thursday. We are meeting with President Szathmáry on Friday afternoon, and the president of Brandon University on, I believe it is Monday, the 30th of May.

**Mrs. Rowat:** It is my understanding that the president of the University of Manitoba and, I believe, the other university presidents have also done similar, but specific to the University of Manitoba, it is my understanding the president has sent a letter or an e-mail to the Premier (Mr. Doer)

asking or sharing, I guess, the challenges that her specific institution is facing and the reasoning or rationale for the increases. It also has provided some comparisons between peer universities. I was wondering if the minister can indicate to me if she has received the same e-mail the Premier has received.

**Ms. McGifford:** Mr. Speaker, I am having a great deal of difficulty hearing. I wonder if you could—

\* (17:00)

**Mr. Chairperson:** Order, please.

**Ms. McGifford:** Well, or quit talking, but I could not hear the member opposite. I understand her to have asked me if I received the same e-mail that was sent to the Premier. I do not know what e-mail the Premier receives, and I have not received an e-mail from President Szathmáry.

**Mrs. Rowat:** To clarify, has the minister received a six-page e-mail from the president of the University of Manitoba indicating the challenges that her institution has faced with the current government's decision to impose a tuition freeze?

**Ms. McGifford:** Mr. Speaker, I have received many e-mails from various people. As to whether I received a six-page e-mail from Doctor Szathmáry which recorded the difficulties that her institution faces, I do not know specifically, but I can tell the member that most of the communications between the universities do not emanate from my office. I should take this opportunity to correct, on the record, that the letters to the presidents of the universities were not signed by me. They were signed by the executive director of the Council on Post-Secondary Education because the Council on Post-Secondary Education is the government body that deals directly with the universities and colleges. They may have received a six-page e-mail from Doctor Szathmáry, and I could find out about that.

**Mrs. Rowat:** I would like the minister to share, if she can, some of the options she is considering or has considered in working with the universities regarding the ancillary fees or the operating grant issue. If the minister could provide some background on options that she is considering or that are available to her.

**Ms. McGifford:** Well, Mr. Speaker, what I am doing right now is meeting to have discussions with



the presidents. I have asked that they forward the financial information which I described earlier, or pardon me, the Council on Post-Secondary Education has asked that that material come to me, and I am going to have discussions with the presidents. Obviously, we will be exploring any options they have within the confines of the materials they present to me.

**Mrs. Rowat:** In reviewing information on ancillary fees, prior to this year's increase of between 12 to 15% increases in ancillary fees, Manitoba had received, between 1999-2000 to 2004-2005, a 58.3% increase in ancillary fees, making it the second highest province in raises to those fees. The increase that is being considered or supported by the universities at this point would actually move Manitoba, I believe, to the highest ancillary fees increases.

Can the minister indicate to me if she is satisfied with these numbers? I believe that there should have been some concern at one point that Manitoba's increases of 58.3 percent would have been a red flag or a signal to this government that imposing a tuition freeze without adequately funding the universities' operating grants would have seen such an increase and would have possibly seen an additional increase this year.

**Ms. McGifford:** Mr. Chair, clearly I am not satisfied with the decisions that have been made at two of our universities, and that is the reason that I took the unusual step of requesting more detailed information about the budgetary process and the options, et cetera, that were presented to boards. That is why I am planning to meet with the presidents.

**Mrs. Rowat:** I guess my concern would be back to when Brandon indicated that they would be looking at ancillary fee increases, and were quite clear that this was a very serious consideration. Based on the information that the province has, over the past six years, seen a 58.3% increase in ancillary fees, I am little surprised that the minister would not have maybe at least considered discussions with the university president after their budgetary deliberations to determine whether there might have been another solution, instead of increasing student fees by such an enormous rate.

**Ms. McGifford:** I did not hear a question, Mr. Chairperson.

**Mrs. Rowat:** I am a little concerned that there does not seem to be any type of a plan in place, especially with the red flag of a 58.3% increase in ancillary fees over the last six years. I am a little bit concerned, or more than a little concerned, that this government has not done its homework in working at developing a long-term strategy for post-secondary funding, especially with the understanding that tuition freezes are usually a short-term solution, and that there would be some type of a fall-out from holding the line on tuition freezes, especially with tuition freezes being in place and ancillary fees going up 58 percent. I just wanted to know if the minister can provide any details on the options that she is considering, whether it be legislation, something to show that this government has proactively been looking at this and has been tracking the ramifications of a freeze.

**Ms. McGifford:** The member quite rightly points out that there has been a freeze in tuition which began in September 2000. In September of 2005, that tuition freeze will continue. The tuition freeze has been successful in increasing university enrolment by 33 percent, university and college enrolment. The interesting part of that, or one of the interesting parts of that I think, is quite an important measure in its own right, Mr. Chair, because I think we all recognize the importance of post-secondary education to planning life and planning career. I think we all recognize its importance when it comes to community participation, good health, earning an income that most people would envy when it comes to supporting their families. So we have increased post-secondary education enrolment.

One of the side benefits to the system of increasing the numbers has been a huge increase in tuition revenue so that, for example, the total increase in university revenue over the years that the freeze has prevailed has been 40.7 percent. That is millions of dollars. The total increase in college revenue has been 39.7 percent. So the freeze has had a benefit to the students. It has also been beneficial to the universities because of the increased tuition revenue.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, we have been no slouches when it comes to increasing operating grants. Operating grants under our regime to universities over five budgets, the increase in operating has been 30.3, whereas the increase in operating to colleges, and this is because of the College Expansion Initiative, has been 63.6 percent. So I

think that the universities have benefited from increased operating, from the increased money they get from tuition because of the numbers, so that the actual individual tuition of a student has been lower, but the tuition revenue pot, if I may call it that, has been considerably higher.

\* (17:10)

**Mrs. Rowat:** I think we have had this discussion before regarding enrolments. Enrolment is up across the country regardless of the tuition fee levels. Enrolment is even up at universities where tuition fees have skyrocketed.

The minister had indicated in discussions outside of the House that there seems to be, once we discussed the Saskatchewan situation of 6.-some percent increase with the tuition freeze in place, she has indicated that her government has provided—whoops, I have lost the thought on that.

There is a trend in university funding. I just wanted to know from the minister what she means by a trend in operating grant funding when it is obvious that the university is receiving less funding at this point than in the past.

**Ms. McGifford:** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to deal with the question of enrolment because it is true. The member is quite right that enrolment at educational institutions across the country has increased. I was just looking for my table, which I cannot locate at this moment, but, indeed, the enrolment at University of Manitoba or at Manitoba universities has been dramatically—well, now, it looks like I just found my table.

Yes, for example, the enrolment from 2002 to 2004, we do not have 2005, but Manitoba universities is up 33 percent, as I have said. In British Columbia, it is 14.4; at Alberta, it is 30 percent; in Saskatchewan, it is 21 percent. In Ontario, it is quite high, but, then, that is because of the double cohort, the change in Ontario a couple of years ago. In Québec, it is 3 percent; Nova Scotia, 3 percent; New Brunswick, 12 percent; P.E.I., 23 percent; and Newfoundland, 12 percent. So the member is quite right when she says that enrolment has increased across the country, but it has not increased as much as it has at University of Manitoba.

Now the member, I believe, said that Manitoba universities are getting paid, I believe she said, or,

pardon me, their operating grants have decreased, but that is just absolutely, there is not even any, that is just factually wrong. Operating grants to Manitoba universities have increased enormously over the years. For example, the approved vote in '05-06 for total public institutions, that is universities alone, is 282.8 million. If I were to get that figure for 1999, it would be vastly less, Mr. Speaker, so I am not quite sure what the member means when she says that there is less money for universities. There is definitely much more money for universities.

**Mrs. Rowat:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am looking at equalization payments that the government has received from the federal government over the past several years. I am looking back to 1998-99, and it looks, based on the numbers I have in front of me, that education and training received an allocation of \$61.6 million from the federal government for education and training. In the year 2005-2006, the estimated revenue or transfer payment will be \$78.8 million. That is an increase of \$11.2 million in transfer payments. Looking at those numbers, I was wondering if the minister would be able to provide for me how much of that revenue that she is saying provides a 33% increase of revenue to universities operating is really federal dollars, and how much of it is actually provincial dollars.

**Ms. McGifford:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I am not quite sure what the member opposite means when she talks about equalization for post-secondary education, but I do have before me an article from the *National Post*, as a matter of fact, in which it is pointed out that every year since 1995 the transfer payments to the provinces related to post-secondary education have decreased by \$1.7 billion. Indeed, if this decrease had not occurred, the Province of Manitoba would probably have \$62 million more each year for post-secondary education. So I do not quite understand what the member is referring to when she talks about federal transfer payments to the Department of Advanced Education and Training. I really do not know what she is talking about.

**Mrs. Rowat:** The numbers are quite clear and they are in black and white. It is indicating the revenue for 1998-99 Education and Training is \$61,669,000 and in the year 2005-2006 the revenue received will be \$78,816,000. So it is black and white. I am just wanting the minister to clarify and provide a breakdown of the provincial dollars that are

contributed toward post-secondary and the federal dollars that are contributed towards post-secondary.

**Ms. McGifford:** Well, I cannot answer that question today, Mr. Chair, and I suggest that the member table the information that she has. I will have staff examine it and respond to her.

**Mrs. Rowat:** These are budgetary documents. She has them in her office. They are the Estimates publication from 1999 and also through to 2005.

What I would like the minister to indicate to me is the breakdown if she does have those numbers, all of what provincially and what federally. There must be a split or breakdown of some sort of the dollars that are contributed towards post-secondary.

**Ms. McGifford:** Again, I am not quite sure what the member is referring to. My understanding is that the Province is responsible for post-secondary education, other than we have an agreement with the federal government on a labour market development agreement. I do not know if she is talking about the Labour Market Development Agreement, but I cannot provide the member with that information. I will simply have to refer the matter to staff.

**Mrs. Rowat:** Well, again, I guess I will write to the minister and hope that I do get a response on those breakdowns.

A question for the minister is this. The colleges are right now in the process of doing their budgets, having their meetings, discussing how they will be funding, looking at their budgets for this year. I wanted to know if the minister has met with the college presidents to talk about the financial challenges they may be facing. I do know that they are watching the ancillary fee issue unfold. I just wanted to know what the status is of her meeting with the college presidents regarding this issue.

**Ms. McGifford:** I did think I made the point that the body of communication with the universities and colleges is the Council on Post-secondary Education. If a president requests a meeting with me to discuss his or her financial issues, I, of course, respond to it, but I have not had a request from the presidents of the colleges to discuss their financial issues.

Now, having said that, I did meet with the presidents of the colleges as a group, the presidents

and chairs. It may have been about the beginning of April, and we did discuss a range of topics. I cannot particularly remember that difficulties with budgets were an issue.

\* (17:20)

**Mrs. Rowat:** Was the potential option of ancillary fee increases discussed with either of the colleges?

**Ms. McGifford:** No. There is the University College of the North as well. I have not had that discussion with either of the presidents, which does not mean to say that officials in the Council on Post-Secondary Education have not had that discussion.

**Mrs. Rowat:** Can the minister provide an update on what is happening with the BMHC proposals, and if she can provide a status report on where the deliberations are at this point?

**Ms. McGifford:** No, I cannot. That is not the responsibility of my department.

**Mrs. Rowat:** If there is a proposal that has been provided, I think, out of the five or six, and the colleges considered as a component of part of the proposal, when would the minister be a part of the decision making, or be aware of the opportunities for the college to potentially utilize some of the space at BMHC?

**Ms. McGifford:** Well, these are hypothetical questions, so I cannot really answer them. I do understand there was a process by which submissions for consideration as to the development of the Brandon Mental Health Centre site were due, I believe, towards the end of April, but, as I said, I am not the lead minister on this issue. I cannot really answer those questions. I think somebody else will have to do that.

**Mrs. Rowat:** Another question regarding dual credits in technical-vocational education programming. Can the minister provide to me some background of any initiatives that this government is going to be moving on in the next year regarding these two areas?

I do know that there are several schools, especially in rural Manitoba, and possibly in northern Manitoba that would really be interested in providing the opportunity for students to explore

these career advantages. Being able to do a dual credit would certainly help the shortage of skilled trades' individuals looking for employment, and also to the employers as well.

**Ms. McGifford:** Decisions about dual credits in public schools are not the responsibility of Advanced Education. Having said that, I do point out that the colleges and, specifically, the colleges are very interested in dual credits, but the discussions there take place between the school, presumably the school division and the college because it is an academic matter, not one over which the minister or even the council has any say.

I do want to say that I think the member and I agree here. We think that dual credits are extremely important. They are extremely important for students. So that a student has an advanced placement when a student enters a university or a college, it saves the student time, it saves the student money, and it saves government money in the long run too. We in my department encourage the development of dual credits whenever we can in our conversations with the colleges, and I know that the colleges are very keen on it.

I think we all realize the importance of life-long learning and a seamless approach to education, and, certainly, dual credits are helpful in both those endeavours.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** I have a few questions of the minister in regard to post-secondary education. The government made a commitment back in the late nineties that, if it were in government—eventually, it became government—that it would institute a tuition freeze, thereby making universities that much more affordable for the population. I wonder if the minister can just reaffirm that that is, in fact, the case.

**Ms. McGifford:** I do not believe we made a commitment whilst in opposition. I think we made a commitment in the '99 election. We made a commitment then to a tuition freeze.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Even during the '99 election, when that commitment was made, you would have been in opposition at the time. So the idea is that a commitment to have a tuition freeze was made back then. I am wondering if the Minister of Education can indicate, has the Cabinet, or the Premier in

particular, given any indication as to how long they would see that this tuition freeze would stay in place. Is it a permanent fixture, or do we see some sort of a date when it would actually come to an end?

**Ms. McGifford:** I think I want to correct the Member for Inkster. During an election there is not an opposition because none of us are MLAs anymore. We are all candidates. So, strictly speaking, a commitment was made by a party that was running for elections.

**An Honourable Member:** Point of order. You are an MLA until the election day.

**An Honourable Member:** Even after that.

**Ms. McGifford:** Mr. Chair, there seem to be a number of people who want to get their remarks on the record, but perhaps I could respond to the—

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Chairperson:** Point of order.

**Mr. Leonard Derkach (Official Opposition House Leader):** On a point of order, Mr. Chair. The minister knows she is wrong.

**An Honourable Member:** No, she does not.

**Mr. Derkach:** Well, then, maybe she should do a little bit more research and find out that she is wrong because an MLA is an MLA until such time that the writ is held and then there is a transition period, Mr. Chair. It is not when the election is called. This is not a dispute over the facts. The minister is clearly wrong.

**Mr. Chairperson:** A dispute over the facts is not a point of order.

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**Ms. McGifford:** If he wants me to be wrong, if in fact I erred, then I erred. I see nothing wrong with making a mistake. I am very sorry.

If I could get back to the question that the member from Inkster asked me. Yes, in the '99 election, when I was probably an MLA still, although I do not know if I was an MLA because I was the MLA for Osborne and there was no Osborne

anymore, but anyway maybe I was an MLA, maybe I was not. Our party made a commitment to a tuition freeze. That is the point that the Member for Inkster was making. Now he wants to know how long that tuition freeze will last. My answer to him is that the Premier has always been clear that the tuition freeze will not last forever.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Please, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I can seek clarification. I really do appreciate the attempt to answer the question, but you definitely did not give any clarity to it. The question put simply is how appropriate is it for someone beginning university to hear a response like that from the minister of post-secondary education. Yes, we have a tuition freeze today, but sometime in the future it will change. I think that she owes it more to our university students to give a better sense. If I am starting a four-year program today, can I anticipate that my tuition will not increase?

**Ms. McGifford:** There are two points I would like to make in my response. First of all, the only province in Canada that actually has predicted the increases in its tuition is Nova Scotia. It has given a three-year forecast. Of course, that would be maybe subject to if there is a new government anything can happen. What I want to tell the member opposite, and perhaps this is not what he wants to hear, is that we have always been clear that, if and when there is a tuition increase, it will not be anything that the students describe as sticker shock. It will be phased in slowly over a number of years. So perhaps that would be more comfortable for the member.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** In one sense, it does provide some comfort. So the government is not committed to a

tuition freeze in the sense that, whenever it does decide, it will be minor increases. I would suggest to you that those minor increases would likely be, what, less than the rate of inflation, at the very least, or possibly 1 percent. Some better definition on that would be good.

Having said that, the universities have all sorts of different fees, as we are all aware. There have been substantial increases in fees for universities, and a number of fees that are being charged. Does the department have any sense, for example, if I were to take a basic four-year degree, intro courses in the first year, what it would cost back in '99, an actual cost versus what it would cost today, once you factor in all the other fees outside of the actual tuition? Has the minister done any sort of a tally?

**Mr. Chairperson:** Quick. Twenty seconds.

**Ms. McGifford:** I think that I need to point out that I do not know whether the member is talking about art, science, architecture. There are a variety of faculties, and there is a great deal of difference between the cost of tuition in any faculties. Basically, tuition was 10 percent more in 1999 than it will be in 2005.

**Mr. Chairperson:** The hour being 5:30 p.m., Committee of Supply will rise.

Call in the Speaker.

#### IN SESSION

**Mr. Speaker:** The hour being 5:30 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday).

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 24, 2005

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