



First Session - Thirty-Seventh Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Seventh Legislature

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 13, 2000

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING REPORTS BY
STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Committee of Supply

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

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

Motion agreed to.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): I am pleased to table a Supplementary Information for Legislative Review year 2000-2001.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, could you please rise and indicate which department it is for.

Mr. Lemieux: Sorry, Mr. Speaker. For Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 34—The Statute Law
Amendment Act, 2000

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), that leave be given to introduce Bill 34, The Statute Law Amendment Act, 2000; Loi de 2000 modifiant

diverses dispositions législatives, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, this bill corrects minor errors in the statutes and makes amendments required as a result of changes to the names of various government departments.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 35—The Planning Amendment Act

Hon. Jean Friesen (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), that leave be given to introduce Bill 35, The Planning Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion presented.

Ms. Friesen: The main purpose of this bill is to deal with applications for conditional uses that relate to proposed livestock operations beyond a certain size. The Bill requires an application received by a municipal council to be reviewed by a technical review committee appointed by the Minister and requires the council to make the report of the committee available to the public.

The Bill contains a number of additional requirements relating to such applications, including the manner in which the council is to fix a hearing date and to give notice of it. It also prohibits any development until all approvals are obtained.

Motion agreed to.

* (13:35)

Introduction of Guests

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

the gallery where we have with us from Mason School 19 kindergarten to Grade 6 students under the direction of Mrs. Renee Klassen. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck).

Also with us from J.R. Walkof Elementary School are 49 Grade 5 students under the direction of Mr. Gerald Letkeman. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Pembina.

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Fiscal Stabilization Fund Agricultural Disaster Assistance

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (Interim Leader of the Official Opposition): My question is for the Premier. Yesterday we know that the Premier and the Prime Minister had an opportunity to meet and discuss the aid package for Manitoba farmers and their families who were devastated by the flooding last year. Unfortunately, it appears that the requests by the Province fell on deaf ears. I know that all members of this House are extremely disappointed that the federal government and the Prime Minister do not seem to be listening to Manitoba farmers.

But, given the comments by the Prime Minister yesterday that all but shut the door on helping farmers and their families recover from a terrible natural disaster, can the Premier please inform the House if he is giving any consideration to using the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, or the rainy day fund, so that producers and their families can at least get some assistance?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): The Member raises a number of issues in her preamble to her question. The Prime Minister and I did meet on a number of issues yesterday. Certainly the issue of the disaster assistance arose at the meeting. At the press conference later when the issue was raised again, it was confirmed that we did raise it and we are not satisfied with the federal government's response to this.

The Prime Minister in fact said that the federal government did not consider this a matter to be covered under the federal disaster assistance plan. Regrettably, that is in error, because I have a letter dated February 16, which I will table in this House, which basically—from the federal minister, Mr. Eggleton—points out that not only has Manitoba been deemed to be covered under the disaster assistance for financial assistance purposes, but we have the Order-in-Council, the Privy Council note that basically says and confirms in both languages, in fact, the province should be treated under the Provincial Emergency Financial Assistance Order. Order No. 35.

So, Mr. Speaker, I have written to the Prime Minister today, and I will table that letter—I should keep a copy of it actually, but I have tabled that letter—and here is the great confusion we have at all times lately on this issue. In February we hear this confirmation. We hear the other federal ministers and members of the federal Liberal caucus say, yes, they are now eligible, so the matter should then appear to be what is the difference of opinion on 90-10 versus 50-50. Then, a couple of weeks later, we get a reversal, and a couple of weeks later, we get from the Prime Minister that it was never considered by the federal Cabinet when in fact we have a letter to the opposite.

So we are going back again to the federal government because we believe that a disaster in Québec and Ontario in the ice storm, a disaster in the Red River Valley, and a disaster in southwest Manitoba should be treated in the same way. That is why we are going to go back at it again. I do not believe the Prime Minister was given accurate information by his officials, and we are going to go back at it, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Premier for those comments in sharing with us the information that does really tell us that the federal government has absolutely neglected its responsibility to Manitoba farmers and rejected, in several different ways, support for our Manitoba farmers. Obviously the federal government does not believe that they are important enough in the overall bigger picture in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I again would like to ask the Premier, given that there has been over a year that has passed since farmers and their families were so devastated by the flood, whether, you know, we sort of stopped talking about blame but show some compassion and look to the Fiscal Stabilization Fund or the rainy day fund to ensure that farmers get some form of assistance.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, we honoured the payment made out of the Fiscal Stabilization Fund last year by the previous government, and we corrected what we considered to be an error on the part of the previous government by not having long-term crop insurance in place for unseeded acreage based on moisture.

Mr. Speaker, we want to design programs—

* (13:40)

Some Honourable Members: Oh. oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: The best compassion this Legislature can have is having long-term programs in place to give farmers and producers and farm families predictability before an incident takes place, before a disaster takes place. That is why we amended, with co-operation from the federal government, the Crop Insurance Program. Long-term compassion means long-term programs to provide long-term predictability, and that is what we have done.

We have taken some of the uncertainty out of the situation for unseeded acreage. That is the way we want to act in government is long-term programs for long-term predictability to deal with the unpredictability of weather.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, but the Premier certainly, with that answer, has not taken the uncertainty away from those families that today are having to put food on the table and look after their immediate needs. That answer does absolutely nothing to address the issue that is facing those farm families in Manitoba that were devastated by the flood last year.

Again, Mr. Speaker, we all know that the federal government has shirked its responsibility

in this respect, and we can all condemn them for that, but I ask, again, the Premier, the First Minister of this province whether he would look very seriously at using the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, not to contribute to farm families what the federal government should be contributing, but the 50-cent dollars that the province has responsibility for under programs like JERI that were provided during the 1997 flood that could be available to Manitoba farmers that were devastated in 1999. Will he put those 50-cent dollars on the table and show some compassion to those farm families in Manitoba today?

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, this Legislature has put in 100-cent dollars when it put in \$70 million last year. They put in 100-cent dollars for the purposes of putting that forward with the previous government, and that money in essence, if it had not been paid out last summer, would be there in the Fiscal Stabilization Fund.

Manitoba, through two different governments, has already exceeded way beyond any national disaster assistance program. The real issue here is are we as a province now going to assume total responsibility for 100-cent dollars in Manitoba and allow Québec and Ontario to be 90-10 on an ice storm or the Saguenay to be 90-10 on a flooding or some other project, the Red River Valley, to be 90-10 and 50-50?

We cannot, Mr. Speaker, in our view, budget on the basis of, oh, if the federal government does not meet their federal obligations, we are going to go from 70 million to 80 million to 90 million. I would like to say though that we believe the people in southwest Manitoba have been—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): The Premier is putting incorrect information on the record. The Premier knows full well that there was an agreement that part of the payment that was made to farmers last spring would come out of the AIDA program through the federal government. That was the federal government's portion, and it was an agreed-to program between the federal and provincial governments.

Part of it, 50 percent of it, would come directly out of the provincial Fiscal Stabilization Fund, 50 percent of it would come through the AIDA program, and thereby the federal contribution would be recognized.

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

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker. We lament that interruption, because I believe just in the last day or so you reminded members what a point of order is. I believe that one of the appendices in the rule book of the Assembly, page 65, was put there for the purpose of reminding members what a point of order is for.

It says: "Points of Order are questions raised with the view of calling attention to any departure from the Standing Orders or the customary modes of proceeding in debate or in the conduct of legislative business." It goes on to say: "If a Point of Order consists of putting a question to the Member speaking, if it is a mere interruption, or if it is defective for other reasons, the Speaker will rule it out."

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if you could remind the Member to obey not only the written rules but the spirit of the rules and not interrupt members when they speak on a matter of debate. A point of order must be to draw the attention of the House to departure from the rules of proceeding. Thank you.

* (13:45)

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised, the Honourable Member does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Doer: I also recall being in Melita last June, and the former Minister of Agriculture I believe said: We will go \$50 an acre, \$60 an acre, \$70 an acre, \$90 an acre if we have to.

Mr. Speaker, I think everybody in this House understands and supports the fact that the people in southwest Manitoba have been treated

in a very un-Canadian way relative to the people in the Red River Valley, the Saguenay, the Québec and Ontario situations. The fact that the Prime Minister thought yesterday that it was not eligible for disaster assistance and the fact that his federal Minister of Defence said in a letter that it was, means that we are going to keep going at it, but we believe in a national disaster assistance program, not just a provincial program.

Flooding Agricultural Disaster Assistance

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Well, Mr. Speaker, we know, farmers know out there that we need a long-term safety-net solution, and for the Premier to indicate that crop insurance is a long-term solution shows his lack of understanding of the agricultural industry. Crop insurance is an annual program that comes forward on an annual basis to deal with annual concerns. We need a long-term solution to agriculture's problems.

But, Mr. Speaker, yesterday's attempts to secure flood aid with the Prime Minister seemed to have been a complete failure. This does not change the fact that there is still land in southwest Manitoba that even yet has not been seeded because of the 1999 flood.

Point of Order

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Two or three weeks ago, the Opposition House Leader rose on a point of order when a question was being posed from this side of the House and I made a point that we strongly agreed with, and that is that a preamble should consist of no more than one carefully drawn sentence. Given this concurrence across the House, given the rules in the book and in *Beauchesne's*, Mr. Speaker, would you please direct the Member to put his question.

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

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, rules have been written in this House for one reason, and that is to see that we respect the views of all Manitobans. The

Member has risen today to put forward his position and a question to the Minister on an important issue to Manitobans, an issue that the federal Liberals will not respond to and do not care and show their disrespect for all Manitobans.

All this member is doing is attempting to put across his point to the First Minister (Mr. Doer) to see if he recognizes the importance of this issue to southwestern Manitoba. I do believe that it is important that he get across how important it is to the people within his constituency.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Government House Leader does have a point of order. May I remind the Honourable Member that according to *Beauchesne's* Citation 409(2): A preamble should not exceed one carefully drawn sentence.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: I would ask the Honourable Member to please put his question.

Mr. Maguire: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will try to be more to the point, but it is a serious issue, as our House Leader has just pointed out.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Premier: Given the fact that there is still land out there that has not been seeded since the '99 flood, even in this year 2000, and the fact that there has been no change from the fact that there has not been one thin dime spent by this government because of that disaster region, my question is: Did the Premier offer any new money yesterday as part of that shared aid package before the Prime Minister said no to the flood aid?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): We have in this House and before and at other meetings, with all sorts of representatives of the federal government, offered our money as part of the 90-10, and the portion that would be 50-50 we have also offered that as part of the solution.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly support the representation of the Member opposite, and I understand how serious it is, but I am surprised that he is opposed to the crop insurance changes that we made in January this year. I thought they were an improvement, and I am disappointed the

Member opposite does not support those changes.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

* (13:50)

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

Mr. Maguire: Clearly the Premier is putting false information on the record again. Nowhere did I ever say that we did not support the Crop Insurance program, and we do support the fact—we are glad to see his government actually implemented the program that the former Minister of Agriculture was going to put forward in regard to crop insurance.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

I would like to take this opportunity to draw to the attention of all honourable members the purpose of points of order. A point of order is to be used to draw to the Speaker's attention any departure from the rules or practices of the House, or to raise concerns about unparliamentary language. A point of order should not be used to ask a question, to dispute the accuracy of facts, to clarify remarks which have been misquoted or misunderstood, to move a motion, to raise a point of order on a point of order. I would ask the co-operation of all honourable members.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Would the Honourable Member for Arthur-Virden, please put your question.

Mr. Maguire: Mr. Speaker, given that in the 1997 flood of the Red River Valley the lost inputs clearly were under a 50-50 cost-shared mechanism with the federal government, will the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), as she indicated in Estimates yesterday, confirm that she still has the support of her Cabinet to provide financial aid to the victims of the Manitoba 1999 flood?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Highways and Government Services): Mr. Speaker, I think it is really important for the Member opposite—I appreciate he is raising concerns on behalf of his constituents—to recognize that this Province, by the way, supported by all parties, has put \$70 million on the table, \$20 million of which is stand alone, 100% provincial dollars, not creditable under AIDA. In terms of other assistance, there is approximately \$23 million which we will be getting under 90-10.

To put it in contrast, in the Red River, under the JERI program, the Province at that time put in \$11.3 million. So this province has already put more money in, in this case hundred cent dollars, than were put up under the JERI program before. We called on the federal government to match this province's commitment. That offer still stands, and we say to the federal government there is still time for them to get back to the table and deal with the Province of Manitoba, which has been in there and has been providing support to southwest Manitoba.

Mr. Maguire: Well, Mr. Speaker, given the fact that the farmers of southwest Manitoba were lobbying for \$85 million to start with and that the provincial government has come forward with the idea of \$43 million, will the Premier now put new money on the table, the new needed money on the table, and be prepared to negotiate the federal share, as Alberta Premier Ralph Klein is successfully doing with the disaster relief program that was put on under the CMAP mechanism?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): As I understand it, the Alberta Premier is taking crop insurance surpluses and allocating it to a disaster assistance program and trying to get agreement from the federal government. Again, I do not think the Member opposite is suggesting we take money from the Crop Insurance fund and allocate it to disaster assistance, unless I am mistaken, because we understand from producers, the advice we received is that is not the best way to proceed with money in a crop insurance fund. I may be wrong, and please correct me if I am.

Having said that, I said to the Prime Minister, the Minister said to the federal Defence Minister, our Agriculture Minister said

to the federal Agriculture Minister, every member on this side has said to every member of the Liberal caucus, our money is there for a 90-10 program, and our money is there for a 50-50 program, and we reiterated that again yesterday.

* (13:55)

Teaching Profession Collective Bargaining Legislation

Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in Estimates I asked the Minister of Labour (Ms. Barrett) about the NDP's hasty scrapping of Bill 72. I made the Minister aware of a number of organizations and individuals who believe that the NDP are rushing through these changes to legislation that will significantly impact every Manitoban in terms of their property tax bill.

When will the Minister of Education provide Manitobans with an opportunity to see his legislation, given that he wants all teacher collective bargaining after June 30 to fall under this new legislation?

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Education and Training): As the Member knows, there has been extensive consultation for a number of months now with the Manitoba Association of School Trustees and the Manitoba Teachers' Society, and in due course legislation will be tabled in this Legislature.

Mrs. Smith: Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Education if he will commit today to more broad-based public consultation, which the public is demanding, before he passes this legislation in this House this year.

Mr. Caldwell: Mr. Speaker, the degree of consultation between the interested parties in this particular case has been quite extensive. It has been going on since January. I know that all members of the Legislature have had dialogue with a variety of groups that are interested in the legislation, and I expect that consultation in this matter will take place up until it achieves royal assent.

Mrs. Smith: Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that there is a public outcry about the lack of

consultation across Manitoba, I would ask the Minister of Education if he would commit today to a more broad-based consultation before this goes any further.

Mr. Caldwell: Mr. Speaker, the Member knows well that this was an election commitment that was made in 1996, in fact, when this side of the House was in opposition. The consultation that has taken place in this matter has been extensive with the parties that are interested. Manitobans know that, over the course of the last decade, the extraordinary cuts to public education made by the members opposite have been the driver of the extraordinary property tax increases that all Manitobans have been confronted with over the last decade. Manitobans also know that in this year's budget this government provided the single largest injection of funds into the public school system in decades. Manitobans also know that we provided for property tax credit this budget, so we need no lecture from the members opposite.

Education System Standards Testing—Grade 3

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): Manitoba teachers and parents are well aware of the NDP's Grade 3 guarantee election promise. What they do not know, however, are the specifics of this promise and how it will be carried out. Since students are going to be breaking for the summer in a few weeks, it is time the Minister of Education provide parents and teachers with specifics on this guarantee.

Mr. Speaker, can the First Minister (Mr. Doer) explain what he meant when he said that it would be a policy of the Department of Education and Training that students will be writing and reading fluently by the end of their Grade 3 year?

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Education and Training): Of course, members opposite might not be familiar—they should be familiar, but they may not be familiar with the fact that over 10 000 consultation documents were given to the field about 6 weeks ago. We are still awaiting the full total reply from those consultative documents from teachers, parents and school divisions on the Grade 3 skills

assessment that will be implemented in the fall of 2000. We are committed to our commitment to the Grade 3 guarantee that students will be fluent, literate in Grade 3, and if they are not—this is a phrase that is conveniently forgotten by the members opposite all the time—a program of action will be put into place to assist those students.

Mr. Dyck: Mr. Speaker, will the Minister tell parents today if their child will have to repeat Grade 3 if that child is not able to fluently read and write by the end of their Grade 3 year?

Mr. Caldwell: As I indicated in my first answer, a program will be developed, in consultation with the field, with teachers and parents.

Mr. Dyck: Mr. Speaker, what province-wide assessment tool will teachers be using to ensure that students will be reading and writing fluently after Grade 3?

Mr. Caldwell: Of course, Mr. Speaker, the Member did not pay attention to my first answer. There will be a number of protocols available. The consultation process is underway right now.

* (14:00)

Education System Standards Testing—Grade 3

Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, we and Manitoba teachers and parents are fully aware of the consultation process. This is the 10 000 reading and writing educator consultation documents that have gone out. There is grave concern all across the province because now there are numerous questions from teachers, from parents and from taxpayers across this province about the validity of this document. Can the Minister tell Manitobans if each teacher across Manitoba is responsible for designing his or her own assessment tests or if there will be a standard, province-wide assessment test designed by Manitoba Education and Training?

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Education and Training): Of course, Mr. Speaker, as the Member may be aware, when you have a consultation, you have an exchange of ideas and a dialogue that often involves—

An Honourable Member: A novel idea.

Mr. Caldwell: As the Member is no doubt aware, a dialogue is underway with the teachers and parents of the province of Manitoba with regard to the Grade 3 skills assessment. The purpose of the assessment: to enhance children's literacy skills in the province of Manitoba; the purpose of this assessment: not to have an end-of-year exit test with no opportunity for remediation and skills development but rather a beginning-of-the-year assessment whereby teachers and parents can work with children in the province of Manitoba to enhance literacy skills. A novel idea.

Mrs. Smith: Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that the teachers are obviously expected to be responsible not only for designing, administering and analyzing their own student assessments, can the Minister explain to teachers across Manitoba how they are expected to accomplish this feat and follow up with individual student learning plans on top of it and accomplish it between September and November of this coming school year?

Mr. Caldwell: Of course, the Member's preamble is factually incorrect, I suppose, to be polite about it. The assessment of the protocol is underway right now. We are in the middle of the consultation process with teachers, parents and educators in the province of Manitoba geared around designing an appropriate skills assessment regime for the beginning of the school year. In due course, once that consultation process is completed, there will be protocols that will be made public and in this House.

Mrs. Smith: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister, in view of the fact that he is talking about a consultation process on one hand that involves teachers and a consultation process on the other hand that guarantees that parents will have a full accountable report—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): The Member is raising her second supplementary question and has an extensive

preamble. *Beauchesne's* Citation 409 says the preamble need not exceed one carefully drawn sentence; 410 says supplementary questions require no preamble.

Mr. Speaker, would you please direct the Member to formulate a question and put her question.

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

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, it was clear that this was a question. The Honourable Member for Fort Garry started her question with will the Minister confirm. I think it was important that the information that she was asking confirmation of be explained to the Member. We would not want him to answer incorrectly as usual.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised, the Honourable Member does have a point of order. *Beauchesne's* Citation 409(2) advises that a supplementary question should not require a preamble.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: I would ask the Honourable Member for Fort Garry to please put your question.

Mrs. Smith: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister advise Manitobans and Manitoba teachers what additional resources will be put in place to ensure that the front-line teaching staff will not be forced to neglect classroom time while they develop and implement all these individual learning plans following all the test design analysis?

Mr. Caldwell: Well, Mr. Speaker, all of the individual misconceptions of the Honourable Member opposite, it is very entertaining in the House of course, but as I mentioned in my first, I guess, few responses, an active consultation process is underway with educators in the province of Manitoba right now. That consultation process will be concluded in the future. The results of that consultation process will be something that revolves around skills

development for young Manitobans in this province.

The Government on this side of the House is committed to the children of Manitoba. We are committed to excellence in education. As for resources provided, this year's budget announcement for public school alone was \$4 million—in the last four years combined. So the members opposite have nothing to offer us in terms of suggestions for providing resources to the public school system.

Sustainable Development Strategy Legislative Requirements

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): First I want to compliment the Premier for his vigorous "yes" in response to my asking him to provide the assurance that he will be ready with the Government's full strategy on sustainable development by July 1, and to compliment him for his expanding, yesterday, on some of the elements of the Government's strategy and his commitment to recharge the environmental commission.

My question for the Premier: Will the Premier confirm today that he will release publicly the Government's sustainable development strategy by July 1 of this year?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): I believe the previous government passed an act on the sustainable development in Manitoba, and I believe that the two-year period expires July 1, 2000, as indicated by the Member opposite, and therefore we have had the stewardship of this file for the last number of months since taking office. We have been working very hard on the COSDI response, the committee on Sustainable Development Implementation. We have been working very hard on that, and I do expect we will have not only the response but the general principles of our sustainable development policy in government.

J. M. Schneider Inc. Environmental Assessment

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I am encouraged by the Premier's response. I note yesterday he talked about his approach to

environmental assessment at the Schneider's plant. I was out there this morning, and there was some earth moving.

I would ask: Has the environmental assessment been done, or what is happening with this construction?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): As I recall it, there was some earth that was moved, and when we were alerted to that a couple of months ago, I believe, at least two months ago, if I recall, the Department of Conservation did indicate that even the earth moving could not proceed without a licence and that work was stopped.

Stop-Work Order

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): My supplementary to the Premier: Does he think a stop-work order is sufficient or does there need to be a stronger message to people in this province that the environmental laws of this province will be enforced?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): One would be tempted to comment on earth moving, but I will be very careful. I think it is important. We supported the Maple Leaf development—well, we had one criticism of it. We thought the extraction of water in the sewage treatment operation should have proceeded to public licensing. We made that statement publicly before the plant.

We tried then, in dealing with Schneider's, to follow through on our comments in the past, and we did, in requiring, as a condition of the agreement that was released by Schneider's in January, by the City of Winnipeg and ourselves, that it have an environmental licence.

We also promised at that point, Mr. Speaker, to proceed with a public strategy on livestock industry, which report we prepared and released last week. We promised to amend the planning regulations because we said, and I said yesterday in the Chamber, that we believe the technical treatment of the sewage and its impact on water, those technical findings, in other words, the issue of our environment in terms of the back end of a barn should be dealt with at the front end of the approval process. The Minister today indicated in the introduction of the Bill—I think it

is Bill 35—that we are going to amend the planning process to make sure the Bill components are part of the Manitoba decision making in the future.

**Letter to the Prime Minister
Tabling Request**

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (Interim Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I believe that in one of the Premier's answers to questions, he indicated he would be tabling a letter that he has written to the Prime Minister. I have not, as yet, received a copy of that. I was just wondering if he might indicate to me when that might be tabled and when I might receive that.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Yes, we have, and I have drafted a letter this morning which we have sent or are sending to the Prime Minister. I said I would table the letter that we had received from Mr. Eggleton on being confirmed on disaster assistance.

I would like, as a matter of protocol, for the Prime Minister to receive the letter first, and I would like to pursue his comment with his senior staff. The letter will say—no big surprise—you said this, this is what your minister said, is there a way to get this resolved. So that is the essence of the letter.

* (14:10)

**First Nations Casinos
Alternate Proposals**

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Speaker, First Nations people throughout our province, who are not part of the select few, have been left with a feeling of frustration and despair with regard to the Native casino expansion and the sharing of revenues. Recently in *The Brandon Sun*, *The Brandon Sun* reported, and I quote: Gaming minister Ron Lemieux did not rule out replacing any failed casino proposal. As well, government officials have told the chief of Waywayseecappo not to abandon his casino plan.

Can the Minister advise Manitobans if his government has created a short list of alternative First Nations casino proposals if any of the

current ones should fail to receive government approval?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister charged with the administration of The Gaming Control Act): Mr. Speaker, thank you for the question from the Member for Russell. I am really pleased to see that they are in favour. I think he said they were in favour of First Nations casinos and gaming. Thank you. But this is consistent with their statements before. There was certainly a committee from Cabinet; Mr. Newman and others recommended that they thought that it was very important to create jobs and economic development. So I thank the Member opposite for supporting casinos.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, the twisting and turning of ministers of this government is absolutely appalling to people who are trying to get some information from them.

My question to the Minister was: Is there an alternative list of First Nations proposals that will be put forward should any of the ones that have been selected not be approved? Will the Minister please answer that question?

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Speaker, the five recommendations or proponents that have been recommended to the Government are certainly going to be looked at, and an implementation committee will certainly be in place to look at that and make sure that they address all the conditions for success. Those five, as we made a promise in the election that we would certainly look up and use Bostrom to look at up to five First Nations casinos, and that is certainly what we are going to look at.

Mr. Derkach: Well, Mr. Speaker, has the Minister responsible for gambling or gaming in this province given any information to First Nations people, besides Waywayseecappo, that should any of the approved proposals not go ahead, their proposals will be considered as proposals for additional casinos in the province of Manitoba?

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Speaker, I would just like to correct the Member opposite. He stated that I spoke to Waywayseecappo in some way. I certainly did not speak to Waywayseecappo.

Secondly, I would like to try to address the question that the simple answer is no, absolutely clear no. We are looking at the five recommended proponents or proposals, and that is what we are looking at. So the answer to his question is no.

First Nations Casinos Gaming Legislation Compliance

Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale): Mr. Speaker, in the last published report of the First Nations Native Gaming Agreement Compliance Report, 12 of the 29 First Nations were not in compliance of reporting to the Manitoba Gaming Commission. The RFP clearly states the proponents must be in compliance with The Gaming Control Act and its regulations.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of gaming: Are all the First Nations proponents in compliance with the current gaming agreements?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister charged with the administration of The Gaming Control Act): The Member opposite is certainly correct in what the RFP stated, and that was one of the criteria that was there. All proponents, before they receive a go-ahead to proceed with their casino project, certainly must satisfy all the regulatory and compliance requirements of the Manitoba Gaming Control Commission.

Mr. Reimer: Mr. Speaker, further to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. He is quoting the conditions of now, but with the selection committee, they had to be in compliance at that time.

My question to the Minister is: Those who made submissions to the selection committee, were they in compliance with the Manitoba Gaming Commission regulations, when the submission was made at the selection committee?

Mr. Lemieux: The Manitoba Gaming Control Commission will continue to be responsible and has the responsibility to regulate gaming in the province, including First Nations casinos. The same laws of the land will apply to First Nations casinos as well as they do to Regent and McPhillips and other gaming.

Mr. Reimer: Mr. Speaker, then maybe I will ask the First Minister (Mr. Doer): To the best of his knowledge, were all the applications that were put forth to the selection committee in compliance with the Manitoba Gaming Commission for their rules and regulations and their admissions of audited statements?

Mr. Lemieux: I thank the Member opposite for the supplementary. The Gaming Control Commission, as I had mentioned before, is responsible to make sure that all gaming is certainly within the regulations prescribed.

I think that something that really is being missed here is the economic and employment opportunities that lay ahead for First Nations proponents. It is no secret that the unemployment rates in First Nations communities are much higher than other communities, as much as 50 percent or more, and levels of income are as low as \$7,000 or so a year.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is important that we join together, and I want members opposite to join together with us. We want to share with First Nations people and give them an opportunity to be successful, as anyone else in this Chamber would be with regard to their family and members of their family.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

Mr. Reimer: Mr. Speaker, I know that it is very hard for that government to answer questions. If the Member would like, I will make it a very short question so they understand it. Were the selection committee, the ones that put forth their proposals, in compliance?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Honourable Government House Leader, on the same point of order.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Well, I do not know if it is a point of order, Mr. Speaker. We could ask you to rule on that. Is it a point of order? Is it a question? What

does the Member want? We are confused on this side now.

* (14:20)

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised, the Honourable Member does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable Member have a question? Question Period is still going.

Mr. Reimer: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. On a new question. I will continue that line of questioning to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs because I think it is very important. One of the things that was required was a compliance and an audited statement put forth with the applications for consideration for the casinos. I want to ask the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs whether the submissions were in total compliance and that audited statements were included in the application.

Mr. Lemieux: I just want to state, in my quote on page 9, item 1: The proponent and any participants must be in compliance with all gaming laws and regulations, including the Criminal Code of Canada, The Gaming Control Act, and The Manitoba Lotteries Corporation Act in order to be considered for selection.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Back 40 Folk Music Festival

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): On Sunday, I had the great pleasure of going to the Back 40 Folk Festival in Morden. The daylong event featured a dozen very talented acts that performed a wide variety of musical styles. Jazz, blues, folk and traditional dance were among the featured venues.

All of the performers were home-grown talent, with several from the Winkler area as well as entrants from Winnipeg and Carman.

The festival was a real showcase of Manitoba excellence, displaying the unique and refined talents of acts like Mark Reeves, the J. P. LePage Blues Band, Richard Moody, and Winkler's own Sonia Marie, whose musicianship and song writing has won national acclaim.

As a music lover, I want to say how impressed I was with the performances I took in and extend warm compliments to each of the performers. Folk music festivals like the Back 40 are held in a number of communities across the province and are a great opportunity for musicians and fans.

I encourage all of you who have similar events in your area this summer to go out and enjoy the great talent Manitoba has to offer. Not only do these festivals give budding musicians a chance to show off their skills, they also help build community spirit and pride. Thank you very much.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. It is very difficult to hear the Honourable Member. Very, very difficult. I would ask the honourable members. if you want to carry on a conversation, to please do it in the loges.

Ness Middle School

Mr. Jim Rondeau (Assiniboia): Good day, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to bring the attention of the House to a wonderful extracurricular program that is being operated in Ness Middle School. This program, which involves the choir and choral groups, is run by Charles Mitterndorfer, who is the band teacher, and Ed Reynolds, who is the choral teacher.

These gentlemen took a group of Grade 7s and 8s to Minneapolis, U.S.A. There were 25 kids in the Grade 7 jazz band and 60 kids in the Grades 7 and 8 concert band. This festival had kids from all over the U.S. competing from May 5 to 8. This school brought a total of 120 kids, counting the band kids and the choral people. There were eight chaperones involved, and I am pleased to say that they won gold medals in both the band competition and the choral competition.

In the adjudicated festival, they won the best performance in the festival.

Anyhow, their mission project involves students who practise at lunch and before school. So does the other program. The Project and Mission kids practise before school. They donate their time all the time.

The kids also competed in the Optimist Music Festival in March and won gold medals for band and choral and are invited to compete in the nationals in Ottawa next May.

These kids are outstanding in the performing arts. They are committed very heavily. The parents are committed very heavily, and I would like to commend the administration, the staff, the students and the people who commit the hundreds and hundreds of hours of volunteer time to make this program possible. I would like to congratulate everyone—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Walkathon Fundraising Events

Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale): Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to the House's attention three important events that took place in Winnipeg on June 11, Sunday. Hundreds of Manitobans participated in three different walkathons for charity last Sunday, braving the cool rainy weather to mingle with their community, get some great exercise and raise money for very important Manitoba charities.

More than 800 people took part in the annual Walk For The Cure in support of juvenile diabetes. Manitobans raised about \$60,000 for diabetes research. The Juvenile Diabetes Foundation of Canada was hoping to raise \$6 million nationally through their annual Walk For The Cure. This event has helped raise money for research towards a cure for juvenile diabetes while also raising public awareness about this disease.

The Rehabilitation Centre for Children also held a walkathon last Sunday. Participants walked, ran, cycled, skated and wheelchaired from the Centre to Assiniboine Park and back to raise money for the purchase of special

equipment for children with special needs. Many Manitobans participated in the walkathon and helped the Rehabilitation Centre for Children come closer to making this goal a reality.

As well, the Friends of the Winnipeg Humane Society held its fifth annual Pace Your Pooch Day Walk on June 11. Through this walkathon, money was raised to go towards the purchase of a newly outfitted van for the Humane Society's cruelty inspector.

All of these charities do fantastic work for all Manitobans, and I congratulate all Manitobans who participated in these three events and who donated to these charities. By supporting Manitoba charities, we help improve our province and help the life of all Manitobans. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

India School of Dance Music and Theatre

Ms. Nancy Allan (St. Vital): I had the pleasure of attending the India School of Dance Music and Theatre's 20th anniversary year-end recital on Sunday, June 11.

Their mandate is to promote the East Indian visual and performing arts in Manitoba. From a small beginning of only 25 students, this school now accommodates well over 150 students. This school provides instruction in bharata natyam, Hindustani vocal music/harmonium, Hindustani flute, sitar, tabla and carnatic vocal music.

I would like to congratulate Pam Rebello, the executive director of the school, who received the Order of Manitoba for her commitment and dedication to the India School of Dance.

I would like to recognize the contribution she and the students have made in sharing their culture and traditions with Manitobans. This sharing of traditions, customs and beliefs truly embodies the spirit of multiculturalism. Manitoba's unique mix of cultures brings home the realization that people coming from many places can live together in harmony and peace and pursue their dreams and a brighter future for all. Thank you.

Virden CP Railway Station

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to the attention of all members the efforts made by the Virden Community Arts Council to restore the hundred-year-old Canadian Pacific railway station in Virden. After 15 years of planning and hard work, the restoration has just recently been completed and the new tenants, including the Virden Community Arts Council, have moved into their new home.

* (14:30)

This restoration was Virden's millennium project. More than \$300,000 was raised in order to restore the CP station to its former glory, and all the work that was done was in keeping with a heritage building. The Town of Virden owns the station, purchasing it following the station's designation as a heritage site in 1988. The Canadian Pacific Heritage Fund donated \$32,000 in the form of a grant to help with the work on the station. This in itself is impressive, since Virden's grant was one of only 20 approved out of 192 applications as first-ever recipients of the Canadian Pacific Heritage Fund grants.

The Virden Community Arts Council also implemented a Buy a Stone fundraising campaign to raise funds for the project. As well, other funds came from the Virden Area Foundation, the Town of Virden, Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism, the Canadian Millennium Partnership Fund, and donations from the Virden Lions Club.

Not only has the Virden Community Arts Council restored the building to its original glory, they have also added a new boardwalk around the station, and gardens are in the planning. Through their hard work, this council has provided the citizens of Virden with a new tourist attraction and focal point for the community. The grand opening of the station is planned for July 19 of this year. I commend all the members of the Virden Community Arts Council who worked so diligently to protect and restore one of Virden's landmarks, and I wish them all the best in their future endeavours. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

CULTURE, HERITAGE AND TOURISM

* (14:40)

Mr. Chairperson (Harry Schellenberg): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will be considering the Estimates of the Department of Culture, Heritage and Tourism.

Does the Honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism have an opening statement?

Hon. Diane McGifford (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism): Yes, Mr. Chair.

Today it is my privilege to submit Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism's Estimates for 2000-2001 to this committee for review. Last fall, when the Department was reorganized and renamed, its mandate changed. The Citizenship and Multiculturalism Division was transferred to Manitoba Labour, and the Tourism Division moved from Industry, Trade and Tourism to join Culture and Heritage. This mandate has further broadened with the recent addition of the Manitoba Seniors Directorate.

Included in my department's mandate is the responsibility for support to Manitoba's culture community, arts funding, the operation of Manitoba's public libraries, the management of the Government's Web site, the preservation of our province's historic resources, film and video classification, the promotion of recreation and wellness opportunities, provision of access to

government's archival library resources and numerous tourist initiatives.

Each of the department's many programs and services contributes to the quality of life Manitobans enjoy, to our sense of place and our identity, to the health and well-being of Manitobans and to the richness of our cultural heritage. The Department comprises the following divisions: Administration and Finance; Culture, Heritage and Recreation Programs; Information Resources; Provincial Services and Tourism, as well as the Manitoba Seniors Directorate.

I am going to begin by talking about the Cultural, Heritage and Recreation Programs Division. My department works in partnership with the community and other funding agencies and levels of government to play a supporting role on the cultural stage. Since assuming my portfolio, I have met with close to a hundred groups and organizations from Manitoba's cultural and heritage communities. These sectors continue to make tremendous social, cultural and economic contributions to Manitoba in every corner of the province. We celebrate the community's achievements.

I would like to begin by sharing with my colleagues in the Legislature some recent achievements of my department's clients. Manitoba Theatre for Young People opened its new theatre on October 13, 1999; the Canwest Global Performing Arts Centre, a \$5.1-million facility, is the company's new home at The Forks. The Manitoba Chamber Orchestra travelled to Italy for a successful two-week performing tour in August of 1999. Maestro Bramwell Tovey, artistic director of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, was one of 19 winners of the 1999 Chalmers Awards for artistic direction and one of the first recipients of the Order of Manitoba. The Chalmers Awards recognize excellence in theatre, dance, music, visual arts, documentary, film and video, artistic direction and arts administration.

The first Prairie Music Awards Gala was held on October 17, 1999, during Prairie Music Week. The awards recognized the work of musicians from Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Winnipeg author, Alissa York won

the 1999 Bronwen Wallace Award for her first book, *Any Given Power*, a collection of short stories. I might add, parenthetically, that Bronwen Wallace was one of my favourite poets, and I was pleased to be a member of a poetry collective that published Bronwen Wallace for the first time in Canada.

The Winnipeg International Writers' Festival attracted record crowds to their October 1999 festival. Over 6500 people attended a variety of book readings by local and national authors. The Manitoba Association of Playwrights celebrated their 20th anniversary by inviting drama tour groups from across the country to work with Manitoba playwrights Dale Lakefold, Elise Moore, Michael Bell, Henry Ritou and James Durham. Cercle Molière celebrated its 75th anniversary with the year of Artistic Renewal for Francophone Theatre and Culture in Manitoba.

On November 27, 1999, the Centre Culturel franco-manitobain celebrated its 25th anniversary with the official opening of the Culturel Centre's Hall of Fame. The CBC has recently announced that they will produce a new series based on Manitoba playwright Ian Ross's character show from Winnipeg. Manitoba-born artist, Robert Houle, a professor of Aboriginal art at the Ontario College of Art held exhibits in the Pool of the Black Star and the Winnipeg Art Gallery to commemorate the Pan Am Games.

Recently I had the opportunity to participate in the opening of the Hudson's Bay Collection Gallery at the Manitoba Museum. It is a stunning new facility that houses a fascinating collection of artifacts. This collection, in conjunction with the Hudson's Bay's gift to the Manitoba Archives, will catapult the museum and Manitoba into the limelight as a leading tourism attraction and international research centre. I encourage you to visit both sites.

* (14:50)

These events are just a sampling of activities that reflect the diversity in Manitoba's arts and cultural community. Manitoba is recognized as a leader in Canada for our quality of cultural activity and for our high level of participation in the arts. I am pleased to advise you that our government is maintaining its operating funding

for Manitoba's major arts and cultural institutions. We recognize that a stable fiscal environment will allow the cultural sector to continue to operate at the highest levels. My department is again providing a special award to the Manitoba Arts Council. In 1999-2000, the Council established a special fund known as Bridges which has awarded 23 grants to individual artists and arts organizations in Manitoba for special projects designed to stabilize, promote and further artistic efforts.

In partnership with the Manitoba Arts Council, the Department is working closely with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra and the Manitoba Opera on strategies to ensure the long-term financial health of these important organizations. Since the demands for capital repairs and constructions place significant strains on the province's resources, my department intends to continue to place a high priority on the maintenance of the capital infrastructure for Manitoba's cultural and heritage communities.

Capital projects for 2000-2001 include major roof repairs to Le Centre Culturel franco-manitobain, replacement of the freon-based chiller system at the Winnipeg Art Gallery with a system which meets current environmental standards, completion of cladding repairs at the Manitoba Museum and upgrades to the Centennial Concert Hall, Manitoba Theatre Centre and Manitoba Theatre Centre Warehouse.

I would like now to highlight other activities my department's Arts branch will undertake in 2000-2001. Community-based arts activity is continuing to grow throughout Manitoba. My department is responding to this growth with increased support for programs that enable rural community arts councils and provincial arts development organizations such as the Manitoba Band Association and Dance Manitoba to continue their work. Our support to these and other community arts organizations will result in the annual delivery of over 800 000 student hours of community-based arts instruction throughout our province and over 800 performances and exhibits in rural Manitoba alone.

We are particularly pleased to assist the Manitoba Arts Network sponsorship of a tour by

local professional musicians to 16 northern and remote Manitoba communities this fall. The tour is also sponsored by the Performers Trust Fund in New York.

In 2000-2001, my department will continue to assist the arts and cultural industries' growing contribution to the economic well-being of our province. We will support innovative marketing initiatives by local art galleries. We are pleased to increase our annual commitment to the Manitoba Crafts Council to assist its exceptional work in promoting and developing Manitoba artisans and craft people.

Our ongoing support to the Manitoba Film and Sound Recording Development Corporation, the National Screen Institute and the Manitoba Motion Picture Industries Association will increase Manitoba's potential as an important film production centre in western Canada. The Manitoba Film and Video Production Tax Credit program provides necessary resources and incentives for increased production by Manitoba film companies. It is estimated that in 2000-2001 the tax credit program will return approximately \$5 million to Manitoba film production companies for reinvestment in future projects.

Through the tax credit, Manitobans have access to film training opportunities provided by the most qualified training staff and mentors. My department is also working to ensure that the Francophone segment of Manitoba's film and video industry is well positioned for growth. In April, I had the pleasure of announcing the province's support to a new IMAX project currently in development by la Société de communication du Manitoba. The film *Voyageurs: Legend of the Paddle* is a \$7.2-million film that will begin shooting this summer.

Manitoba's literary arts sector is another positive contributor to our cultural industries and to Manitoba's unique cultural identity. Book publishing is firmly established as a \$3-million industry, and the sector continues to grow. My department's book publisher support programs help Manitoba book publishers expand marketing, improve operations and develop new product lines.

Recently, at the annual literary and publishing awards gala, Brave New Words, I had the honour of announcing two new provincially sponsored annual book awards, the Margaret Laurence Award for the best work in fiction, and the Alexander Kennedy Isbister Award for the best work in nonfiction. These awards offer tangible evidence of the government's respect for Manitoba's wealth of literary talent.

Manitobans value their libraries as community centres that support the open communication of ideas and information. Libraries provide materials and services for all, imaginative story books for the youngest child, literacy materials for adults seeking to change their lives, Internet access to an incalculable range of information worldwide and practical information that helps people make good choices in their everyday lives.

Our Public Library Services branch works to strengthen the delivery of library services through the Province. I would like to tell you about some of their recent activities and accomplishments.

Public Library Services successfully negotiated with the Bill and Melinda Gates Learning Foundation and secured a grant of \$1.14 million for computer equipment, software, training and technical support to enhance public access to the Internet. Forty-six Manitoba public library branches met the eligibility requirements for the program which began implementation on April 1, 2000. Installation will be complete by September of this year.

The Manitoba Public Libraries Information Network known as MAPLIN is now accessible via the Internet to all 52 of Manitoba's municipal and regional public libraries—open shelf, books by mail, clients and the general public. Public Libraries Services staff recently developed a program called Cataloguing Robot that searches the Internet for library cataloguing records. This program is expected to produce considerable cataloguing cost saving for Manitoba's public libraries.

Public Library Services and the Winnipeg Public Library have developed an electronic link that will allow them to share resources and

reduce cataloguing costs. I am very proud to say that Public Library Services was awarded Industry Canada's Literary Net Best Practices 1999 award for innovative use of the Internet by the Canadian public libraries. My department, through the Public Library Services branch, is taking a leading role in developing programs and technology that will facilitate the implementation of the Manitoba library, a province-wide library resource-sharing network.

Now to Historic Resources, the Historic Resources branch. The citizens of Manitoba are keenly interested in their heritage. They demonstrate their commitment daily through volunteer work, educational pursuits, donations, and through the organizations and institutions that safeguard and promote the province's rich legacy. There is a unifying belief that heritage can be a source of pride for all people, irrespective of race, religion, language or social position. By sharing our achievements, we build community pride and provincial cultural identity. We also provide a firm base for sharing with visitors and celebrating with one another Manitoba's unique quality and character.

Receiving support from my ~~department~~ for their conservation and heritage awareness work are over 15 municipal heritage advisory committees established under The Heritage Resources Act, over a hundred community museums and more than 200 active heritage organizations in Manitoba. My staff offer technical services to community groups and individuals undertaking heritage projects ranging from architectural restoration to historical research, archaeological assessments, legal protection of sites, commemorative celebrations as well as museum conservation and heritage awareness activities.

* (15:00)

On Manitoba Day, May 12, I was pleased to launch the Historic Resources branch Web site, which makes information about our provincially and municipally protected heritage sites available to the world. The heritage site also includes useful how-to information for many individuals and organizations involved in identifying, protecting and interpreting our province's heritage.

Shortly, archaeological staff from my department will begin the fifth year of the Department's current five-year agreement with Manitoba Hydro. The agreement is to assess the effects of flooding along the Churchill River diversion system where fluctuating water levels have a severe impact on archaeological and gravesites.

I am pleased to report that the work of the tripartite committee on the Exchange District in Winnipeg is progressing well. The unique commemorative qualities of Manitoba's only nationally recognized historic district have been identified to guide future development decisions. Currently under discussion is the sharing of data base information on specific buildings, funding and interpretive programming. We are also exploring potential world heritage site designation.

Another significant opportunity for heritage conservation and development is Manitoba's Red River Valley where there is the highest concentration of earliest authentic heritage resources from the fur trade, early European and Métis agriculture settlement area in Manitoba, western Canada and the northwestern United States. These resources create an opportunity for a unique tourism marketing destination: the Red River corridor river cities linking communities from Emerson to Lake Winnipeg.

My staff is working with other departments, the City of Winnipeg, as well as federal and local governments to develop this exciting concept into a reality. We will support heritage organizations funded by the Department to develop leadership and identify opportunities for co-operative action. We will encourage sustainability for all heritage projects undertaken by provincial agencies or cost-shared with other levels of government and partnerships with the heritage community.

Heritage is a shared responsibility involving individuals, organizations, communities, and all levels of government. My department through the Historic Resources branch seeks to integrate heritage planning and good conservation practices into economic development and quality of life objectives pursued by the public and private sectors.

Another active component of the Department this year has been a Recreation and Wellness Promotion Branch. I have had the opportunity to meet with representatives of provincial recreation and fitness organizations, recreation practitioners and community leaders. They have discussed with me the benefits of healthy, active lifestyles and their positive impact on individual Manitobans and on communities. They have also emphasized the importance of maintaining and developing recreational facilities. Active involvement in recreation and community activity helps people live longer and better. In addition, it contributes significantly to the development of leadership skills and self-esteem on the part of young people, while reducing self-destructive behaviour and negative social activity, such as smoking, substance abuse, gang activity, crime, teenage pregnancy, and suicide.

With the benefit of recreation in mind, my department remains committed to reducing the numbers of physically inactive Manitobans, a goal shared by my colleagues across this country.

In February 2000, winter active events were held at The Forks in Winnipeg, highlighting winter activities, demonstrations, and exhibits. During SummerActive 2000, approximately 1500 children participated in various recreation activities at the Harbour View Recreation Complex in Winnipeg.

A major component of Summer, Winter-Active is the distribution of information to community organizations and schools throughout Manitoba. These resources encourage organizations and leaders to organize events and activities that promote healthy, active living. Young people are a high priority of my department. A workshop resource kit entitled "Workshop Resources on Children and Youth" was developed and distributed to all recreation directors in rural and northern Manitoba. The kit encourages the delivery of many different workshops including some on the issues of at-risk children and youth.

The prevention of harassment and abuse in sport and recreation is also a vital concern. My department is committed to safe, welcoming

environments for participation in recreational opportunities. We are working with a collective of concerned agencies and government departments to address this issue and will be involved in a series of regional workshops on this topic over the coming months.

Barriers to recreation opportunities for Aboriginal people are a serious concern. My department supports the Manitoba Aboriginal Sport and Recreation Council's efforts to address issues in recreation and sport for Aboriginal people in Manitoba. As we celebrate the new millennium, my department is working closely with the Manitoba Recreational Trails Association and local trail associations on a project that will see the completion of the Trans-Canada Trail in Manitoba. We have provided a millennium grant of \$2.125 million to the trails association towards the development of pavilions, trail markers, interpretive materials, signage, and to assist in the monumental task of developing trails. A component of this project will develop multipurpose trails that are not a part of the Trans-Canada Trail.

Tourism Division. Our province's tourism industry is very successful largely due to Manitoba's cultural assets, natural beauty, and Manitobans' welcoming spirit. The industry currently provides more than 57 000 jobs annually, or approximately 3000 full-time equivalent positions, and brings in an estimated \$990 million in tourist dollars. This industry generates over \$350 million in taxes annually for the three levels of government. Tourism is also one of Manitoba's strong export industries insofar as over \$400 million in annual tourism expenditures come from outside the province. A growing number of visitors are travelling to and within Manitoba each year. The Division is committed to encouraging even more visitors to come to the province to explore Manitoba's eight tourism regions.

I would now like to highlight some recent accomplishments of our tourism industry. On April 28, 2000, two Manitoba tourism attractions were national winners at the Attractions Canada Awards 2000. Oak Hammock Marsh was chosen as a national award recipient in the outdoor site category and Aseissippi Ski Hill and Winter Park was the national award recipient in the new

attractions category. Attractions Canada Awards recognize and promote the unique character of Canada's many attractions. Manitobans will play host to a number of major events this year. These include the AT&T Canada Senior Golf Open in August 2000. This is the only foreign national golf championship on the Senior PGA Tour. It will be held here in Winnipeg at the St. Charles Golf and Country Club.

Over 50 teams from across Canada will compete in the Aboriginal Sport and Recreation softball tournament in July. As well, Winnipeg will host the AAA Senior Softball World Championships in August.

The Division continues to work with Manitoba's tourism industry to promote Manitoba as a four season destination, encourage new and improved tourist product development and provide timely information to our visitors. Tourism is a priority area for economic development, with a focus on the areas of ecotourism, outdoor adventure, Aboriginal tourism, major events, culture heritage attractions, and agritourism.

Adventure, travel and ecotourism have been identified as primary growth areas in the next century by the World Tourism Organization. Manitoba is developing an adventure travel and ecotourism policy framework strategy in consultation with an interdepartmental working group. This strategy will enhance tourism opportunities from the Red River Valley to the Churchill basin.

* (15:10)

We are also working with local communities to develop a network of trail initiatives to develop opportunities for ecotourism. These projects will expand opportunities for hiking and cycling in the summer, and skiing and snowmobiling in the winter. Work is well underway on a provincial trails policy to address all matters related to trail development, including acquisition, maintenance, conversion of rails to trails, and liability insurance.

The abundance of wildlife in natural areas in Manitoba creates opportunities to promote environmental education and appreciation for the

variety of species and habitat found in the province. Ecologically sensitive wildlife corridor tours showcasing mule deer, bison, and other wildlife would also meet these objectives.

Opportunities to experience Aboriginal culture are also plentiful in the province. Working with First Nations organizations, such as the Manitoba Aboriginal Tourism Association, we will help expand this promising sector.

Efforts in tourism and research will be expanded to gain further insight into market demands and travel trends. We want to ensure that our marketing efforts and product development activities reflect growth opportunities in the marketplace. The Tourism Development branch leads and co-ordinates tourism development in the province. Branch consultants assist the industry in planning new and expanding tourism facilities, accommodations, attractions and services, and in ensuring quality service standards and improved marketing strategies.

The Tourism Product Development Program provides grant support to Manitoba's tourism industry for new capital and market development projects, strategic studies, and regional development. Financial support is available to help foster tourism development, focussing on increasing the number and type of viable tourism experiences available, based on Manitoba's assets of regional and/or community strengths and evolving markets, generating new tourism revenues for the province, communities and local businesses, and creating long-term tourism job opportunities, and ensuring that Manitoba's tourism products are of a standard and quality to compete effectively in the world marketplace.

A regional tourism program has been established to stimulate tourism growth in Manitoba's rural and northern tourism regions. The program provides for 50% matching funds for rural initiatives that result in new partnerships, stimulate local investment, and support strategic planning and marketing activities. The marketing branch of the Tourism Division, known by the industry as Travel Manitoba, will continue to promote Manitoba aggressively in our primary and secondary markets in partnership with the tourism industry and other government departments.

A strong multimedia advertising campaign focusses on a call to action by using the 1-800 toll free number and the Travel Manitoba Web site address. Travel Manitoba's Web site www.travelmanitoba.com has become a major marketing tool, reflecting the new consumer preference for on-line travel information. The site will be strengthened to offer a guided tour to Manitoba's tourism sites, festivals, and natural and historic corridors, and to encourage visitors to come to our province and prolong their stays, as well as to provide a direct service to visitors to the site.

The Travel Manitoba site has also established links to hundreds of tourism operators' sites, successfully directing visitors to Manitoba businesses. With site traffic exceeding 100 000 hits per month, Travel Manitoba's Internet presence has further enhanced ongoing support of the tourism sector.

We have also initiated a major research study of our primary markets of Minnesota and North Dakota in the U.S. and of Saskatchewan and Ontario in Canada. The aim is to get better information on visitors and potential consumers from those markets, including their product attraction, destination and activity preferences, likes and dislikes, modes of travel. This will help us better target our future marketing campaigns in those markets as well as in our market development activities. In addition to advertising, Travel Manitoba undertakes a number of other marketing activities. These include the media tour program, which brings in over \$6.61 million worth of advertising value a year. Media tours focus on all facets of Manitoba's tourism industry, including hunting and fishing destinations, Churchill, Winnipeg, festivals and events, parks and outdoor adventure.

Trade shows. Travel Manitoba participates in over 50 trade shows across Canada and the United States each year.

Fam tours. In co-operation with industry partners, Travel Manitoba hosts travel/trade familiarization tours which generate hundreds of trade leads and facilitate the development of new package tours.

Master Angler Program. Manitoba's world-famous Master Angler Program keeps anglers coming back year after year to catch and release one of 28 qualifying fish species. Approximately 12 000 anglers register with the program each year. Travel Values program, offered in partnership with tourism operators, Imperial Oil, Esso, and Travel Manitoba involves distribution of an annual coupon book offering visitors savings on accommodations, attractions, and dining. In addition, the Tourism Division operates three year-round and four seasonal visitor information centres at major points of entry to the province, including our flagship, Explore Manitoba centre, at The Forks. As well, the Division operates a toll-free telephone centre and fulfilment centre that distributes 1.3 million pieces of tourism marketing material each year.

Information Resources Division. I would like to address the work of the department's Information Resources Division. Information Resources continues to work with the government departments to manage government communications, budgets effectively. It continues to reduce cost by blanket tendering for standard printing services and annual media rate contracts. The Division also offsets the cost of government publications by including paid advertising and sponsorships where appropriate. The Information Resources Division works with the Office of Information Technology to manage the content of the Government of Manitoba Web site. The site has grown in popularity and size during the past year, receiving over ten million hits, and making over 30 000 pages of on-line public information available to Manitobans.

The Division has also worked with all government departments to implement a new Web design that is formatted by topic rather than by department. The new design allows Web browsers to find government information more quickly. The new design has portals that feature government Web pages in five basic themes: Travel and Immigration, Business, Government, Living in Manitoba, and Working in Manitoba. As the number of people using the World Wide Web continues to grow, the expectation for more on-line government services also increases. IRD is working with the Office of Information Technology and all government departments to

increase the on-line services available on the Manitoba Web site.

This past year several new on-line services have been introduced, including new map sales, campsite reservations, on-line access to the Statutes of Manitoba, and distribution of other government publications. Further expansion of on-line services is planned for the coming year. I am pleased that my department is a strong participant in the current on-line service offerings through statutory publications, Travel Manitoba, the government news release site, and the wealth of information provided by the Provincial Archives.

* (15:20)

Provincial Services. The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act now applies to all public bodies in Manitoba. The City of Winnipeg came under the Act at the end of August 1998, and all municipalities, school divisions, health authorities, and other designated public bodies on April 3, 2000. Departmental staff travelled throughout the province to deliver information sessions or training workshops to more than 4000 elected and appointed officials prior to proclamation. Extending The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act to all public bodies has made it possible for Manitobans to access information held by local governments, school, and health authorities, and to know that their personal information is protected by these same authorities.

Having established these basic principles within local public bodies in Manitoba, we have recently announced that we will be undertaking a legislative review of the Act. We want to hear from Manitobans to understand from their perspective what these principles mean to them, and how in their view this legislation supports those principles.

As part of its responsibility to manage corporate records, the Provincial Archives is addressing the issue of how to identify, capture, and preserve documents created or received by government offices in electronic formats. With the Office of Information Technology, the Archives is currently leading a pilot in my

department that will contribute to the definition of government policy on managing electronic records. This work is at the forefront of concern in many public jurisdictions, as day-to-day business transactions are carried out using computer technology.

In June of this year more than a hundred international librarians, archivists, and circum-polar scholars will attend a week in Winnipeg as part of the 18th biennial meeting of the Polar Libraries Colloquy. In fact, it began yesterday and will continue this week.

This year the Hudson Bay Company's Archives will host the colloquy where research opportunities for studying life in polar regions will be explored. The company archives, which have been in Winnipeg since 1974 and owned by Manitoba since 1994, is a rich resource of historical information on northern lands since the late 17th century.

Culture, Heritage and Tourism continues to pursue initiatives that respond to the recommendations of the Cartier report on French Language Services. Productions of translated materials reached a record level last year. Manitoba's Francophones are increasingly accessing service in the official language of their choice through translations of public information and government Web sites as well as educational materials. They are able to view with optimism the progress being made in government's response to their needs.

The Film Classification Board classifies films and videos in order to make information available on the viewing choices available to parents and their families. The Board has been working closely with other jurisdictions to develop standard classification categories that are the same or very similar from province to province. As well, the Board has been developing an Internet Web site that will allow Manitobans using a public access or home computer to search the title of a film or video to find its Manitoba classification and other information that the Board provides about its content.

Next I would like to turn attention to the Manitoba Seniors Directorate, my department's

newest member. The number of Manitoba seniors is now over 156 000 and is expected to increase dramatically in the years to come. By 2021 our seniors population is projected to increase to 231 200. Due to this increase it is important to provide more information and education to seniors and the community regarding their changing needs and expectations. As the Minister responsible for Seniors, I feel that now more than ever before it is important that seniors issues be discussed and taken into account at the Cabinet table.

The Seniors Directorate works closely with seniors in the community as well as government departments to ensure that policies and programs reflect changing individual and societal needs.

The Seniors Directorate activities take many forms. The Seniors Information Line continues to be well used by Manitoba seniors and their families, who view it as a convenient way to access information and assistance. Last year there were 5500 calls from seniors and their families.

Directorate staff support the Manitoba Council on Aging and its function as an advisory body to the Minister responsible for Seniors. The Council is a vital link between older Manitobans and government. The Council has been reviewing such important issues as telemarketing fraud, medicine use, housing and caregiving.

The Directorate continues to take the lead in addressing elder abuse. To date our Elder Abuse line has received 119 calls. It has provided confidential information and referral not only to victims but to families and professionals. Our elder abuse consultant continues to work with regional health authorities and the community in order to provide education and training to both seniors and service providers. Thus far, 49 communities, including Winnipeg, have met to look at possible elder abuse strategies. Abuse of the elderly is a multifaceted problem which we will continue to work on within our communities.

The Directorate continues to provide Through Other Eyes, a training workshop designed to foster increased interaction between generations and to promote a better under-

standing of the needs of older people. We have delivered workshops to retail banking and government departments who have identified extensive interaction with seniors. This two-hour workshop has recently been adopted for use in training health care students and high school students who work with seniors in the community.

As part of its education mandate, the Seniors Directorate offers training, workshops and presentations. Money Matters is a training session designed by seniors and personnel of financial institutions regarding the financial abuse of older seniors. The Directorate is working with the Canadian Bankers Association to provide training to financial institution personnel that serve a high number of senior clientele. This new initiative is targeted to provide direct financial service providers with information to assess, plan, and intervene on behalf of senior clients. A safety and security workshop for seniors raises their awareness about safety issues such as cons and frauds, elder and financial abuse, and safety in the home, car, and on the street. Another workshop, Older Workers in the Workplace, deals with the value of older workers and the issues they face. It is facilitated for employers, older workers, professionals interested in an aging work force, and also unions.

The Directorate also provides workshops on options for retirement and positive aging. Older and Wiser Driver workshops are being given in co-operation with the Division of Driver and Vehicle Licencing at senior centres and senior housing throughout Manitoba. The Directorate develops and distributes educational materials in both official languages about services, resources, and issues identified as important by seniors, their families, seniors organizations, and the community. These include such publications, videos, workshops, and conferences designed for seniors and service providers as the *Manitoba Seniors Guide*, *Legal Information Guide for Seniors*, *Safety and Security guide for seniors*, *Questions to Ask Your Doctor & Pharmacist*, *Older and Wiser Driver*, *Respect for Seniors*, *Seniors Source Newsletter*; fact sheets including Powers of Attorney, Manitoba's Council on Aging, Apartment Security, Replacing Lost I.D. Cards, Seniors and Active Living; a biannual

update of the seniors programs and policy data base; bimonthly and monthly ministerial newspaper columns in the *MSOS Journal* and *Prime Time*; educational initiatives for school-age students, for example, *Seniors Are Cool*; and video training to financial institutional personnel that serve a high number of seniors.

June is seniors month. It gives an opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of older Manitobans, and to recognize the extent to which their contributions have shaped our lives. My columns in *Prime Time* and the *MSOS Journal* continue to receive positive responses from seniors, who tell me they find these articles a good way to obtain information about programs and initiatives. In celebration of the International Year of the Older Person, a special edition of the *Seniors Guide* was produced. Over 30 000 copies were distributed. The \$125,000 in grant funding provided in recognition of the International Year of the Older Person was used for projects such as international workshops, seminars, forums and conferences, self-help, peer-support, and lifestyle projects, and celebration activities. There were 274 applications submitted, and 204 Manitoban communities benefited from this initiative. The projects were varied with many leaving a lasting legacy for future generations. People all over the world celebrated and promoted the independence, participation, care, self-fulfilment, and dignity of older persons.

In September 1999, a community-based committee known as Active Living Coalition for Older Adults in Manitoba hosted the Active Living summit. The purpose was to develop a model to promote healthy, active living for older adults in Manitoba. More than 150 key provincial seniors leaders expressed an interest in practising and promoting healthy activity living in their areas.

* (15:30)

One of the projects, which promotes intergenerational respect and support, is the Council on Aging's video, *Seniors Are Cool*. It is aimed at students Grades 5-8. It tackles four of the most prevalent myths about aging: (1) Older people are slow, boring, and, most of all, helpless; (2) all older people retire at 65; (3)

older people are too old to contribute to the community; and (4) older people are grouchy and do not like children. Through the use of this video, students have gained more insight and respect for older people.

Through federal, provincial, territorial initiatives, the Seniors Directorate tries to ensure that national policies and programs meet the needs of our seniors. The Directorate has an active role on the following federal, provincial and territorial policy and review development committees: technology, International Year of the Older Person, safety and security, older women, national framework on aging, and telemarketing fraud. Additional initiatives are required to help ensure a better quality of life for older women, those who are over 75 years of age, more than likely widowed, and on a limited income. We see more frail, elderly women with more complex health problems at these lower income levels, who need assistance to improve the quality of their lives.

Aging is a normal part of the life process. A number of factors, such as social-economic status, biological and genetic facts, and lifestyle determine health status. Over 50 percent of Manitoba seniors report that their health status is good or excellent. On the other hand, about the same percentage have chronic health problems that are not necessarily life threatening. Conditions such as arthritis, hearing loss, back problems and cataracts limit the quality of life. The Seniors Directorate continues to play an important role in helping seniors maintain their independence and quality of life.

In conclusion, I hope you can see from the examples I have presented today that Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism plays a vital role in the lives of Manitobans and makes an enormous contribution to their quality of life. I am proud of my department's ability to produce positive results by working in partnership with so many different members of the community. We will continue to do so in the years to come and well beyond, so we can remain proud of our province's rich and diverse culture, our historic resources, our public library system, tourism opportunities and programs and services offered to seniors. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism for those comments.

Does the Official Opposition critic, the Honourable Member for Seine River, have any opening comments?

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Seine River): Yes, Mr. Chair, I do. I do have some opening remarks that I would like to place on the record, and I would like to thank the Minister responsible for Culture, Heritage and Tourism, as well as the Seniors Directorate and Status of Women for her opening comments.

The Department of Culture, Heritage and Tourism, as the Minister has alluded, provides a broad range of services to Manitobans. Some of them include: funding of the arts, the provision of the Community Places Program, film classification, protecting and preserving our heritage resources, supporting our diverse cultural community and promoting recreation and wellness opportunities. It is a department that is responsible for enhancing the high quality of life we often take for granted as Manitobans.

There are a number of issues that I am looking forward to touching upon during the Estimates process. Some of these include: the preservation of our considerable historic resources such as the Exchange District, the issue of development at The Forks, the creation of the Trans-Canada Trail and other millennium projects, the continuation of the Community Places Program, expanding tourism opportunities throughout the province, and promoting our arts and cultural communities.

During the 1999 election, the new NDP party made a number of promises in the areas of culture, heritage and tourism. Some of them included promoting Winnipeg as a main tourism designation, as well as new ventures in ecotourism, Aboriginal tourism, snowmobile tourism, wildlife tourism and strengthening the tourism industry overall with dedicated new college spaces for tourism training.

To date, I have heard little from this government in terms of how it intends to fulfil all of these promises. As an example, some of

the things I will be questioning are: What measures has this government taken in the areas of wildlife tourism or ecotourism?

I commend this government for announcing the creation of two new literature awards, but I would also like to hear some announcements about how this government intends to stimulate tourism opportunities for Aboriginal peoples beyond the creation of casinos. The Passport to Adventure 1999 Tourism Conference was held in Winnipeg in November, but I have heard virtually nothing about how this government intends to build on the many creative ideas put forward at this conference.

The Minister has also made changes to the membership of a number of organizations including: the Manitoba Heritage Council, the Film Classification Board, and the Women's Advisory Council. Whether these changes were needed is certainly open to debate, given the high calibre of people who had worked on these boards and councils in years past.

June is the time of the year when funding is announced for the Community Places Program. This initiative supports facility renewal and development initiatives of community organizations, and I know the program has proven to be very beneficial in the past. I am hopeful that this government will recognize the strengths of this program and continue to support it. Community Places Program projects provide not only long-term cultural, recreation and social benefits, but they also stimulate the economy through direct job creation.

Our former government was proud to support the province's vibrant arts and cultural communities. The achievements of individual Manitobans and cultural organizations over the years has earned our province a global reputation for excellence in many disciplines. This diverse field also contributes significantly to Manitoba's strong economy at the local, the regional and the provincial levels. I am certain that this government recognizes the importance of this and will be developing new initiatives to increase this sector's viability.

Manitoba has a rich artistic and cultural life. The province's art community continues to

demonstrate its tremendous social, cultural and economic value to the citizens of our province. It is critical that this government work in conjunction with community institutions to ensure the continuation of this vibrant legacy well into the 21st century. I trust this government will find ways to help our arts and cultural institutions take their product to Manitobans whether they live in Winnipeg, Waskada, or Wabowden.

You will also need to cultivate a good working relationship with the federal government on issues related to arts, culture and heritage. Manitoba is home to a number of unique attractions that are of interest both at home and at a national level. For example, the historic elevator row in Inglis comes to mind. Oak Hammock Marsh also has a reputation for attracting birders from afar. So too does the presence of the polar bears in Churchill draw visitors from around the world. It is important that we not only protect these resources but that we find sustainable ways to share them with other Canadians.

Government assistance to the arts and cultural industries has paid dividends in recent years. Programs aimed at stimulating the growth and development of the film and sound industry have been particularly successful. I am pleased that this government recognize the importance of the Manitoba Film And Video Production Tax Credit, but I would caution this government to be vigilant. Manitoba has much to offer film producers, but other provinces are also looking for their share of the burgeoning film production industry.

*(15:40)

The recent concern over the filming of the movie *Ogopogo* and New Brunswick's attempts to court this production certainly points out the highly competitive nature of this industry. Manitoba may have prevailed, and I say "may have" after reading today's article in the *Winnipeg Free Press*; however, the industry and the province must be prepared to adjust accordingly.

I am looking forward to a discussion of the province's historic resources. Manitoba com-

munities certainly recognize the exciting potential of these assets as a resource of sustainable tourism development and economic growth. There has been considerable debate in recent months about the best ways to develop areas such as the Exchange District and The Forks, to mention only two. I am interested to hear what this government plans to do to preserve these resources for future generations.

I was pleased to see the announcement regarding the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation regarding the province's library system. The installation of additional public Internet computers within public libraries serving lower-income areas will certainly prove beneficial. It is important that government continue to explore partnerships such as these to ensure that information technology is made available to all Manitobans, regardless of where they are geographically situated.

I also recognize that the Government is continuing to provide support to Recreation and Wellness initiatives such as WinterActive and SummerActive. The promotion of healthy and active lifestyles provides immeasurable benefits to both individuals and to our society as a whole. We know that physical activity is one of the simplest and most cost-effective ways of improving the health of Manitobans, and government can play a very important role in promoting health and wellness initiatives.

We are now a half-year into the new millennium. The dawning of the 21st century creates a tremendous opportunity for Manitobans to celebrate our unique achievements to honour the pioneers past and present who have made this province such a rich and dynamic place to live.

All around the province, Manitobans continue to plan diverse and broad-ranging millennium projects. Manitobans have devoted a considerable degree of energy to these projects, and they do deserve recognition. I look forward to discussing millennium projects and this government's involvement in them. Government support for these valuable projects is not transpiring as was originally planned under the previous administration, and I am sure this

government will be able to explain the rationale for the changes.

In years past we heard a lot from the Opposition about The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act or FIPPA. This legislation was designed to address the concerns of Manitobans about the privacy and protection of personal information held by government or other public bodies. It was also designed to provide a balance between the right of individuals to have their privacy respected and the right to access information held by government and other public bodies.

In recent months we have heard from a number of groups that the legislation is not being administered by this government as was intended by the previous administration. This no doubt will be an interesting area for discussion as well during these Estimates process.

I have briefly outlined with these opening remarks that there are many areas to explore in the Department of Culture, Heritage and Tourism. I look forward to a thoughtful discussion of the Estimates of the Department of Culture, Heritage and Tourism, and I would like to thank the Minister in advance for her co-operation. I would also like to thank the departmental officials who will be called upon to supply their expertise to these discussions.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the Critic of the Official Opposition for those remarks. Under Manitoba practice, debate of the Minister's salary is traditionally the last item considered for the Estimates of a department. Accordingly, we shall defer consideration of this item and now proceed with the consideration of the next line.

Before we do that, we invite the Minister's staff to join us at the table, and we ask that the Minister introduce her staff present.

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, I am pleased to introduce the staff who have joined us at the table. First of all, on my immediate left Tom Carson, who is the Deputy Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism, and on Tom's left, Dave Patton, who is the Executive Director of Administration and Finance.

An Honourable Member: Hear, hear.

Ms. McGifford: Exactly. Hear, hear.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the Minister for those introductions. We will now proceed to line 14.1. Administration and Finance (b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$463,100 on page 51 of the Main Estimates book. Shall the item pass?

Mrs. Dacquay: We are on subappropriation 14.

Mr. Chairperson: We said page 51. We follow the Main Estimates book. The Supplementary book is for information only. Line 1.(b).

Mrs. Dacquay: I am not the only one who is going to be wanting to ask questions on some of these areas from the Opposition. So my preference would be, if everybody is in agreement, that I would like to speak and ask my questions on certain topics and then maybe defer to my colleagues before I actually pass those lines. I honestly do not know how in-depth their questions are going to be, and I just wonder if the Minister would be willing. I mean, I will go through the way they are listed here, but I would prefer not to pass them in case some of my colleagues have questions on those same lines.

Mr. Chairperson: Is it the will of the committee to do a global discussion on these topics and then pass all lines in Estimates at the end?

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, we would prefer to go through the materials in the order in which it is listed. I can assure the Member that I will agree to answer questions after a line has been passed. One of the problems with going willy-nilly is we do not have all our staff here, as you can understand. So I think we are here in the spirit of co-operation, and we will try our best to answer our needs and your needs. Okay?

* (15:50)

Mrs. Dacquay: All right, and I will try to communicate with my colleagues to see specifically what areas, because I recognize that you do not have specific staff for each component of the Department here until that part appears in the supplementary report. So I would

just ask if the Minister would today give me a little bit of latitude, so I can speak to my colleagues who I know want to ask questions so that I do not do anything untoward. This is a whole new experience for me, as well.

Ms. McGifford: Certainly, Mr. Chair, I can agree with that. I have been in that position, and I know that it can be somewhat discomfobulating. So, yes, of course.

Mrs. Dacquay: Under No. 1, under the Managerial 1, I assume that that is the salary line for the Deputy Minister. Is that correct?

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, excuse me for speaking before you called my name. Yes, the critic is right, that is the Deputy Minister.

Mrs. Dacquay: I guess I will be a little facetious with this next question, but why does the newly appointed minister of Tourism, why is he taking a reduction in salary, not a large reduction, but a small reduction?

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, I would like to assure the critic that she does **not** need to worry about the Deputy Minister for Culture, Heritage and Tourism. He is indeed not taking a reduction in salary. It is due to the fact that the way the calendar falls, there are actually I believe two fewer days that all employees in the civil service receive money for this year. So that is the explanation, but we do appreciate your concern.

Mrs. Dacquay: Mr. Chair, I would be prepared to pass that line. I do not envision that my colleagues will have a lot of hard, fast questions on that.

Mr. Chairperson: Line 14.1.(b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$463,100.

Mrs. Dacquay: Could the Minister please identify who the three individuals are who are identified under Professional/Technical, and, also, on that same line of questioning, if she could explain why there is a slight increase, year over year, for that line?

Ms. McGifford: Yes, the Professional/Technical persons are my Special Assistant Judith

Baldwin, Executive Assistant Doreen Wilson, as well as the Administrative Assistant to the Deputy Minister Laura Shwetz. As to why there is an increase in salary, I will confer. The difference is apparently attributed to merit.

Mrs. Dacquay: Yes, and likewise under the Administrative Support, five employees identified.

Ms. McGifford: Excuse me again, those employees would be Rosalie Prawdzik, Linda Kuhn, Rema Chandran, Bev Beck and Sheilagh Hooper.

Mrs. Dacquay: I assume that those are all employees in the Minister's office?

Ms. McGifford: Three of those individuals work in the Minister's office and two in the Deputy Minister's office.

Mrs. Dacquay: That ends my line of questioning under that Section 1, and I would be prepared to pass that line.

Mr. Chairperson: 14.1.(b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$463,100—pass.

Line 14.1.(b) Executive Support (2) Other Expenditures \$74,200. Shall the line pass?

Mrs. Dacquay: Under Transportation, I noticed there is a slight increase. Could the Minister explain the reasoning for the increase?

Ms. McGifford: Apparently the transportation costs increase is based on the actual increase from last year, as opposed to the budgeted increase from last year or the estimated expenditure from last year.

Mrs. Dacquay: I am wondering why there has been a decrease in the line reading Communications.

Ms. McGifford: Again, the answer is the same. They are actual costs based on last year's, as opposed to what was budgeted last year. Perhaps that might be attributable to the fact that I am an

urban minister, so that there may be less long distance costs, et cetera.

Mrs. Dacquay: I am prepared to pass the next line, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: 14.1.(b) Executive Support (2) Other Expenditures \$74,200—pass.

We have next 14.1.(c) Financial and Administrative Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,324,000. Shall the line pass?

Mrs. Dacquay: Under (1) Salaries, once again the question is related to the increase under Professional/Technical. I assume it is just changes in classification, but I would just like confirmation of that.

Ms. McGifford: Again, those are merit increases.

Mrs. Dacquay: Mr. Chairperson, I am prepared to pass that section.

Mr. Chairperson: 1.(c) Financial and Administrative Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,324,000—pass. 1.(c)(2) Other Expenditures \$323,100. Shall the line pass?

Mrs. Dacquay: Under this section there is a line identified as Other Operating. I know that there is a substantial increase year over year. I have two questions. What is included under Other Operating, and what is the explanation for the increase?

Ms. McGifford: Well, perhaps I could first explain the increase. I understand the increase results from an increase in desktop management charges from the provincial data network and that the workstation and the basic per seat costs have increased. Although this is partly offset by a reduction in electronic mail charges, it still is an increase. What else is included under Other Expenditures? Perhaps I could refer the member to page 76 at the back of her publication. She could see that under Other Operating it is defined and the various things that are included in that budget line are explained there. That might be helpful for when that term recurs.

* (16:00)

Mrs. Dacquay: This is specifically, though, for the Financial and Administrative Services component of the department. Is that accurate?

Ms. McGifford: Yes. That is accurate.

Mrs. Dacquay: Do all of those items that could be identified as components under Other Operating apply to that branch?

Ms. McGifford: Not all of them apply, I would like to tell the critic. For example, people in Financial and Administrative Services, as the Member can deduce, do not have uniforms.

Mrs. Dacquay: So am I to understand that the bulk of the increase there was specifically due to computerization and desktop management?

Ms. McGifford: Yes. That is the explanation.

Mrs. Dacquay: Did that have anything to do with moving to the Better Systems computer method?

Ms. McGifford: I understand that it is not BSI, but it is desktop management charges which are across government.

Mrs. Dacquay: Mr. Chair, I am prepared to pass that line.

Mr. Chairperson: 1.(c)(2) Other Expenditures \$323,100—pass.

1.(d) Manitoba Film Classification Board (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$157,900. Shall the line pass?

Mrs. Dacquay: Yes, Mr. Chair, I have a question under this section. There is one individual identified under the Manitoba Film Classification Board in a managerial capacity. Could the Minister please identify who that individual is?

Ms. McGifford: Thank you for the question. The individual is Ken Rodeck.

Mrs. Dacquay: The Professional/Technical component there, I assume that includes clerical

and other support to the Film Classification Board?

Ms. McGifford: I am advised by my officials that there are three positions, and that is clear in the text of the document. They are the video program co-ordinator, the inspector and the film projectionist.

Mrs. Dacquay: I am prepared to pass that line.

Mr. Chairperson: Line 1.(d) Manitoba Film Classification Board (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$157,900—pass. (2) Other Expenditures \$279,400.

Mrs. Dacquay: Under personnel services, is that the stipend that is paid to the Board?

Ms. McGifford: Yes, I am advised that that is the stipend that is paid to the Board.

Mrs. Dacquay: Could the Minister tell me the total composition of the Board in terms of—I do not need the names, I am more interested in the number.

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, there are 21 members of the current Film Classification Board.

Mrs. Dacquay: Mr. Chair, under this same section, the Communications budget, I assume the reduction there is projecting more actual figure year over year as opposed to projection.

Ms. McGifford: The Member is right. I am advised that these are projected costs based on last year.

Mrs. Dacquay: I am just going to back up for one minute. I have an additional question. Has the total number of members of the Board changed from the previous year?

Ms. McGifford: I think that when I assumed office there were 19 or 20. There had been, I believe, a complement of 22, but one or two individuals had resigned because of employment opportunities or other concerns. I do not mean concerns with their work on the Film Board, personal matters et cetera.

If I could just add, Mr. Chair. I think that the Film Classification Board recommends approximately 22 members on the Board, and that I am sure governments do their best to keep up with that, but people resign for one reason or another, and so we are not always at 22.

Mrs. Dacquay: I can appreciate that, and I thank the Minister for her response. Mr. Chair, I am prepared to—

Mr. Chairperson: Pass lines?

Mrs. Dacquay: I guess, did the Minister wish to add something further to that?

* (16:10)

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, it has just been pointed out to me by the Executive Director of Finance and Administration that we are, according to the Amusement Act, to have not fewer than 16 members of the Film Classification Board. So there is that figure, but there is not in fact a top figure. It is just recommended by the people who are very familiar with the work that we have 22. In fact, I think, the Act itself allows us to have as many as we want, but of course we are modest.

Mrs. Dacquay: Mr. Chair, I am prepared to pass that line.

Mr. Chairperson: Line 1.(d)(2) Other Expenditures \$279,400—pass.

Next we will move on to resolution 2.(a) Executive Administration (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$285,100.

Mrs. Dacquay: May I ask why we jumped from page 26 and 25, I next have page 27, the Culture, Heritage and Recreational Programs?

Mr. Chairperson: I would like to inform the Member for Seine River that we cannot finalize the final line here, which is the total, until all these the lines below have been passed.

Member for Seine River, what is your question?

Mrs. Dacquay: Well, my question was I have some general questions. Am I not allowed to? On page 27, relative to the totals, I recognize that there is further breakdown that ensues on pages 29, 31, 33, et cetera.

Ms. McGifford: Perhaps I could explain to the Member that the material on page 27 in her book is a congregate or a synopsis of information that is broken down on the succeeding pages so that Executive Administration, 14.2.(a), is the information. The figure of 366.3, for example, occurs at the bottom of the subappropriation 14.2.(a) on the next page.

Mrs. Dacquay: Then under subappropriation 14.2.(a)(1) Salaries, my question is: Who is the manager of this section of the Executive Administration, please?

Ms. McGifford: Before answering the question, perhaps I could introduce Ann Hultgren-Ryan, who is Acting Assistant Deputy Minister today. In fact, our Assistant Deputy Minister Lou-Ann Buhr is the managerial position that you asked about. She is not with us today.

Mrs. Dacquay: The next line, the Professional/Technical, could I please ask the Minister to explain the differential and the justification for the increase? I think I know the answer, but I will ask it anyway.

Ms. McGifford: Once again, the reason for the difference is because of merit increases.

Mrs. Dacquay: I have no further questions under that line, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: Line 14.2. Culture, Heritage and Recreation Programs (a) Executive Administration (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$285,100—pass.

The next line is 14.2.(a)(2) Other Expenditures \$81,200. Shall the line pass?

Mrs. Dacquay: No, I have no questions on that line, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: Shall the line pass?

Some Honourable Members: Pass.

Mr. Chairperson: The line is accordingly passed.

Line 14.2.(b) Grants to Cultural Organizations \$7,903,600. Shall the line pass?

Mrs. Dacquay: It is a lot of money, and I notice there are some changes. The major change is in the deficit reduction. Could the Minister explain what that deficit reduction figure is for, and why there is a substantive increase there?

* (16:20)

Ms. McGifford: I am happy to explain to the Member. I am advised by officials that the increase in deficit reduction includes commitments made by the previous government as well as \$125,000 in additional deficit reduction monies for the WSO this year, the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra.

Mrs. Dacquay: My question, then, to the Minister is: I recognize those were commitments that were paid out or made that were not budgeted for in the previous year.

Ms. McGifford: Those are due to multiyear agreements that were entered into by the previous government.

Mrs. Dacquay: Just in line with that, that is not out of the ordinary. Is that correct? I mean, the same situation can occur in subsequent years. Is that a possibility?

Ms. McGifford: I would think that any government which makes a multiyear agreement and a promise to an institution that depends on that money, I would hope that those commitments would be honoured by the incoming government because, if not, the particular organization would be in an unpleasant position, to say the least. So, although this is the first time I have been in government—officials could advise me—I would assume that it is probably fairly common for new governments to honour that kind of agreement made by a previous government. I see heads nodding, and I hear that it is a contractual agreement, and of course it would be honoured.

Mrs. Dacquay: Yes, can the Minister please tell me approximately how many agencies are the beneficiaries of those operating grants?

Ms. McGifford: Yes, I can answer that question. There are five major operating agencies, and I am assuming that the Member would like me to list them.

Mrs. Dacquay: Yes, Mr. Chair, if possible, please.

Ms. McGifford: The Manitoba Centennial Centre, the Manitoba Museum, the Centre Culturel franco-manitobain, the Western Manitoba Centennial Auditorium and the Winnipeg Art Gallery.

Mrs. Dacquay: Does this line also provide assistance to—you indicated there was like a special one-time additional allotment of \$125,000 to the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra and the Ballet. Those are two major ones that come to mind.

Ms. McGifford: The \$125,000 in additional money to the Winnipeg Symphony is under the deficit-reduction line. The Symphony otherwise receives funding from the Manitoba Arts Council. As far as other deficit-reduction money, the increase reflects approved deficit-reduction commitments to the Opera, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, the Symphony, Contemporary Dancers, and I believe that is it.

Mrs. Dacquay: Is it the understanding that, if any of these major arts organizations do run a deficit, then they can apply for this deficit reduction, or what is the policy that would enable these groups to benefit from this funding?

Ms. McGifford: Of course, we do not encourage deficits, and I am sure that is what the Member is curious about and concerned about. When we realize there is a problem with a deficit, our first response is to help that organization to develop a strategy to address its deficit. In fact, we have worked with all these arts groups on developing strategies to redress those deficits. In the case of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, Contemporary Dancers, Manitoba Opera Association, these are long-term strategies to

redress deficits that have accumulated in the past and, in some cases, are continuing to accumulate.

Mrs. Dacquay: I would now ask for the Minister's indulgence in my not passing that line in case some of my colleagues do have questions on this portion of the appropriation.

Mr. Chairperson: Is there leave of the Committee to not pass that line? *[Agreed]*

Line 14.2. Culture, Heritage and Recreation Programs (c) Manitoba Arts Council (1) Grant Assistance \$8,192,300. Shall the line pass?

Mrs. Dacquay: I do have questions under this section. Under the Grant Assistance, the Minister did identify two of the groups that I was uncertain as to where their funding would appear, and she clarified that it came under this section, Manitoba Arts Council. Can the Minister tell me approximately how many groups are funded under this line?

Ms. McGifford: I think the answer, Mr. Chair, is that we will have to get back to the Member with more specific figures. There are many, many, many groups funded under the Manitoba Arts Council. As I am sure the Member knows, there are groups that get money on a yearly basis and some people who get money on a one-time basis. One of the sources of that information that the Member may be interested in looking at is last year's annual report which does detail funds from the Arts Council to community groups and to arts groups every year. It is very interesting reading, I might add, because you get to know who's who in the arts community. I recommend that to the Member, too. We can get back, if you would like that.

Mrs. Dacquay: I thank the Minister. I will rephrase my question. I recognize that some apply for a one-time-only grant periodically, is that a correct assumption?

Ms. McGifford: The Manitoba Arts Council provides project grants to individuals and to arts groups, et cetera, but it also provides operating grants to certain arts groups so that they get money, as I am sure the Member understands, on

a yearly basis, and it becomes part of their operational budget.

Mrs. Dacquay: Yes, I am aware of that. My question then would be: Approximately how many groups receive ongoing annual funding?

Ms. McGifford: I am advised that we will have to return with that number for the Member.

Mrs. Dacquay: I appreciate that. Could I just ask for an explanation of the subsequent line: Recoverable from Urban Economic Development Initiatives? Are those tripartite agreements that those monies are recoverable from?

Ms. McGifford: As the member can see, the Manitoba Arts Council first received \$875,000 from REDI, as I believe it was known last year—pardon me, UEDI; REDI is the rural one—from UEDI last year, and is receiving the same amount of money from the same program again this year. I am advised that UEDI money comes from VLT revenues.

Mrs. Dacquay: I thank the Minister for that explanation. Is it a global amount that is given and then it is at the discretion of the Arts Council or it flows into the global budget for distribution to the various arts groups?

Ms. McGifford: The Member is right. It is a global amount. It goes into the budget on an annual basis and the Manitoba Arts Council makes decisions about the disbursement of those monies.

Mrs. Dacquay: I would ask for the same consideration, just in case any of my colleagues will be coming in, probably tomorrow, that I leave this line unpassed at this point in time.

Mr. Chairperson: Is there leave to leave line 14.2(c)(1) for the time being? Come back to it later?

Ms. McGifford: Leave.

Mr. Chairperson: There is leave. Leave has been granted.

* (16:30)

Next we have 14.2 Culture, Heritage and Recreation Programs (c) Manitoba Arts Council (2) Less: Recoverable from Urban Economic Development Initiatives (\$875,000). This line does not have to be passed, just read into the record.

Are there any questions from the Member for Seine River?

Mrs. Dacquay: No, that was adequately explained and identified for me, Mr. Chair. I have no further questions under that section.

Mr. Chairperson: Line 14.2.(d) Heritage Grants Advisory Council \$577,300. Shall the line pass?

Some Honourable Members: Pass.

Mrs. Dacquay: Would you please re-identify? Is it 14.2.(d)?

Mr. Chairperson: 2.(d)

Mrs. Dacquay: Yes, could the Minister please identify who the administrative support personnel are under Heritage Grants Advisory Council?

Ms. McGifford: Yes, the support person is Pauline Belanger?

Mrs. Dacquay: Yes, I have no further questions under that section. I am prepared to pass that line.

Mr. Chairperson: 14.2.(d) Heritage Grants Advisory Council \$577,300. Shall the line pass?

Mrs. Dacquay: I thought this was the Salaries section. Is that not a line that has to be passed? It is all included in the total? 14.2.(d)(1) I thought was a separate line.

Mr. Chairperson: We are doing right now 14.2.(d). That is all.

Mrs. Dacquay: Thanks for the clarification. Just one quick question under Other Expenditures. The question is under Communications. There is a minimal increase. Does Communications include written as well as, or is it just your

regular office operating, such as fax, telephone, et cetera?

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, once again, "communication" is one of the terms to find in the glossary on page 76. It includes: telephone, electronic communication services, postal services, advertising program, radio assistance and other.

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

Mr. Chairperson: Line 14.2. Culture, Heritage and Recreation Programs (d) Heritage Grants Advisory Council \$577,300—pass.

14.2.(e) Arts Branch (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$568,100. Shall the line pass?

Mrs. Dacquay: I have some questions here. Can I have the Minister's indulgence to back up for one minute? Under the Heritage Grants Advisory Council.

Mr. Chairperson: Is there leave to revert to line 2.(d)? There is leave. *[Agreed]*

Mrs. Dacquay: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank the Committee. My question is: Is this the section under which the millennium grants are? I just want clarification.

Ms. McGifford: No, this is not the line in question.

Mrs. Dacquay: Okay, and if I may, one further question under that. Is the composition of the advisory council comparable to what it has been in the past? What is the membership?

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, to date, we have not made any new appointments to the Heritage Grants Advisory Council, and I will soon have the numbers on that board. The number 14 is in my mind. I was correct. There are 14 members of the Heritage Grants Advisory Council, and, yes, as I said, we have not made any new appointments to that council.

Mrs. Dacquay: Can the Minister tell me approximately how many heritage groups are recipients of grants by this advisory council?

Ms. McGifford: I did want to add to the remarks I made a few minutes ago that we have sent out letters to the community inviting nominations to the Heritage Grants Advisory Council. It is a council that is appointed usually according to community nominations, and we are in that process as we speak.

As far as the number of recent awards, I am not certain. I am advised that last year 126 grants were made by the Heritage Grants Advisory Council.

Mrs. Dacquay: I thank the Minister. Is there a breakdown that can be provided? I assume that the Winnipeg heritage council is one of the ongoing recipients of some financial assistance through this advisory board.

I just wanted to know if they were able to resource any funding here. I know they are funded primarily through the City, but I wondered if they were also able to access funding through this council.

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, I would like to inform the Member that the Heritage Grants Advisory Council gives money for projects. So it does not give money to other councils to operate but to projects in the communities around Manitoba. So that is the explanation as to why the Winnipeg heritage council does not access money.

Now, if the Winnipeg heritage council had a project and wished to apply for money, then I would assume that they would qualify, but it is for projects.

Mrs. Dacquay: I thank the Minister for that clarification. So they are project specific. Do the projects include any funding for any infrastructure or capital costs or is it exclusively for, like, the program costs?

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, the Heritage Advisory Council gives grants for a combination or a number of things, including capital and program costs.

Mrs. Dacquay: I thank the Minister for that response. One further question on the groups that are funded under the Heritage Grants

Advisory Council. I assume then that the majority of the groups that take advantage of the funding through this council are across Manitoba.

Ms. McGifford: Yes, they are throughout Manitoba.

Mrs. Dacquay: I have no further questions under that appropriation, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: We will go on to line 2.(e) Arts Branch (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$568,100. Shall the line pass?

Mrs. Dacquay: I have a couple of questions under this salaries line. Could the Minister please identify who is employed in the managerial position under the Arts Branch?

Ms. McGifford: Yes, I would like to first introduce Terry Welsh, who is the Director of the Arts Branch. I believe that is Terry's position.

* (16:40)

Mrs. Dacquay: When I look across at the Estimates from last year on that line, it did not identify—and I do not know if that is accurate or a misprint. Although there is a salary affixed, it did not identify that as a regular employee with a staff year component. Does the Minister wish clarification?

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, the explanation is that that was a position transferred to the Healthy Child Initiative.

Mrs. Dacquay: Mr. Chair, I have no further questions under the salaries section. Is that line to be passed separately, or is it all inclusive again?

Mr. Chairperson: I would like to inform the Member for Seine River that Salaries and Employee Benefits is one line.

Mrs. Dacquay: Mr. Chair, I just wondered, I thought perhaps that I had interrupted the Minister and she wanted to make an additional comment relative to my previous question.

Ms. McGifford: It was actually several previous questions. I have a copy of the 1999 Annual Report from the Manitoba Arts Council, which I would like to pass to the Member and she can see the information that she was requesting earlier in that report.

Mrs. Dacquay: Just for clarification. This will give the breakdown for my previous question in terms of which groups were funded under the Manitoba Arts Advisory. Is that correct?

Ms. McGifford: Yes, funded through the Manitoba Arts Council and that is our most recent annual report.

Mrs. Dacquay: Mr. Chair, then I have no further questions under that section, and I would be prepared to pass the line 14.2.(e)(1) Salaries.

Mr. Chairperson: Line 14.2. Culture, Heritage and Recreation Programs (e) Arts Branch (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$568,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$139,600. Shall the line pass?

Mrs. Dacquay: Can I have an explanation please as to what capital expenditure caused the increase in the capital line?

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, I am advised that almost all of that is purchases for the Manitoba Government art collection.

Mrs. Dacquay: Further to that, I am wondering if the Minister can clarify whether the issue of missing art has been rectified and if indeed all of the perceived art that was missing has now been found.

Ms. McGifford: We are down to four pieces of art, three ceramics and one photograph. I am informed it is not a photograph but rather a wooden hanging that is missing.

Mrs. Dacquay: Mr. Chair, could the Minister please repeat that? There is a total of four pieces of art, one wooden hanging and—

Ms. McGifford: And three ceramic pieces.

Mrs. Dacquay: Is the Minister aware that there was a comparable question asked during the

Department of Government Services Estimates and the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ashton) had indicated that all artwork had been accounted for and an erroneous impression was created that the former minister stole it?

Ms. McGifford: No, I am not aware of that.

Mrs. Dacquay: I wonder if the Minister would speak to her colleague the Minister of Government Services and/or check the *Hansard* from those Estimates so that the Opposition could have clarification indeed as to which is the most accurate information.

Ms. McGifford: Yes, I can certainly do that.

Mrs. Dacquay: I appreciate that, and I look forward to having the Minister report back here as to why there may be some discrepancy between responses.

Ms. McGifford: Just to reiterate that, I will be very happy to check *Hansard* and return with an answer to the Member as soon as possible.

Mrs. Dacquay: I am going to defer, for a moment, to my colleague. The Interim Leader of the party has questions on this topic as well.

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (Interim Leader of the Official Opposition): I guess I would just like to get a bit of detail on the four pieces that are still missing or outstanding. There was one wooden hanging, and I wonder if the Minister could provide some detail on whether that was logged or where it was logged, when it was last seen and where it was.

Ms. McGifford: I can provide the detail on the four works. There is one ceramic piece by Jordan Van Sewell entitled *Western Hour Continues*. It was last located in Room 166 in the Legislative Building, office of the former Minister of Education; secondly one ceramic wall piece by Jordan Van Sewell, *Still Life with Plums*, last inventoried in Room 170, Legislative Building, office of the former Minister of Urban Affairs; one wall carving by Keith Morrisseau [*phonetic*], *Shield of Peace*, previously located in Room 70, Legislative Building, office of the former Minister of Urban Affairs; and one Kathy Koop beige vase over 15 years old and could

have been broken. We have a duplicate. It was last inventoried in Room 226 Legislative Building. Now I do see there is a footnote on the ceramic wall piece by Jordan Van Sewell that says Mr. Van Sewell's wall works have an unfortunate history of breaking. So perhaps that explains *Still Life with Plums*, which was last located in the former Minister of Urban Affairs' office.

* (16:50)

I do know that I had in my office a very lovely glass piece which was accidentally broken by a visitor, actually. It was unfortunate, and I know that glass pieces and ceramic pieces are lovely but fragile.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I thank the Minister for those answers. I was wondering, I just wanted a bit of background or information on how the story hit the media. Was this minister involved in any way in communicating? Was there a news release? I cannot quite recall whether there was a news release sent out or how the media might have obtained information that there was some concern by this government around missing art pieces.

Ms. McGifford: There was a news release I believe, and what might be released and what might be construed from the release, as the Member knows from her experience, are sometimes different.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I guess my direct question would be: Was it this minister that put out the news release? Was it under her signature?

Ms. McGifford: To be absolutely honest, I cannot remember, but I can check into it for the Member.

Mrs. Mitchelson: But I would question the motives of this government when normally speaking it is a significant—I mean when governments put out news releases, they feel that there is a significant importance to wanting to communicate to the media or to the public around a certain issue.

So I guess my question would be to this minister, without sort of really accusing this

minister of a witch hunt, just wanting to ask the question without doing her homework, why she would have considered this newsworthy, specifically given the fact that the artwork has been recovered, there was nothing missing and that I think there was an innuendo that there might have been some inappropriate activity by the previous government or previous ministers. So I would like to ask what the rationale would have been for that kind of information being provided to the public when the homework was not done and the end result is that there was not art work missing?

You know, I just think that it is sort of an issue that we seriously have to question and wonder what the motives are of this new government in sort of communicating that kind of information and placing suspicion or doubt over people really who should not have had to be subjected to that. It is not, in my mind, the kind of statesmanlike activity that should be undertaken by a new government that is trying to gain the credibility and the respect of the people of Manitoba.

Ms. McGifford: One of the things that I was very concerned about when I was a critic was the art bank and government art and the ways in which government art was cared for, and I think if the Member opposite goes back and reads *Hansard* from past Estimates, she will find that my concerns are reflected in the questions that I asked previous members about the art bank and about services regarding that art bank.

This year, when this government assumed office, there was an inventory and the first go-round of the inventory revealed I think that there were 104 pieces of art unaccounted for, and this certainly did concern me. One hundred and four pieces of public art is a good number, and these belong to the people of Manitoba and belong in the public trust, and I believe it to be my duty as the Minister of Culture to have some responsibilities along with the Minister of Government Services for the preservation and the integrity of that collection. Asking for an inventory when I first became the Minister of Culture seemed to me to be a sensible thing to do, and so we began that process, and, as I say, what resulted was that there were originally I believe it was 104—it could be 101 or it could be

102, but it was just somewhere over 100, I believe.

It transpired that members on both sides of the House had moved offices and had apparently taken art with them without reporting to the government art bank that they had removed this art and had transported it to their new headquarters. It also turned out that certain pieces of art were put away in cupboards and a variety of places.

So once we had the initial figures we realized that something had to be done, and so people from my department, along with somebody from Government Services, began the work of tracking down these pieces of art. We have been fortunate in finding that there are not 104 or 101 or 102, but, in fact, 4 pieces, the 4 pieces that I have described to the Member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay).

Mrs. Mitchelson: I do not want to belabour this issue too much longer, but my sense would be that a responsible minister would do her homework and find out exactly what was missing before creating some doubt in the public's mind around the credibility of the previous government. I think her colleague the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ashton) has done the honourable thing and apologized on record to members of the Legislature for the undue concern that was caused as a result of what I might call a witch hunt.

Or maybe there was an ulterior motive. It might have been that some of the issues of the day were pretty hot, and maybe this minister thought she might be able to deflect away from other issues that were top of mind on, you know, issues that the Opposition had brought forward or issues that the media were carrying, and maybe she thought that by putting out some information that might cast some doubt on the former government, she would be able to deflect away from the issues of the day.

I think the honourable thing for her to do would be to apologize, and, hopefully, she has learned a lesson from that kind of activity, because I think that, when you accept responsibility to run a department of government and have the privilege of doing that as an elected

member of this Legislature, you have some responsibility to take the job seriously and do the homework that is required to find out, in fact, whether there is an issue before drawing it to the public's attention.

* (17:00)

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. We will recess the Committee for a formal vote in the Chamber. The Committee is recessed.

The Committee recessed at 5 p.m.

The Committee resumed at 6:02 p.m.

Mr. Chairperson: Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. Last we were on line 2.(e)(2) Other Expenditures \$149,600. Should the line pass?

Mrs. Dacquay: Yes, my understanding was when we were interrupted we were under Other Expenditures, the capital, \$30,400. I believe my colleague had asked a question and there was not adequate time for a response by the Minister when we had to recess.

Ms. McGifford: Indeed, the colleague in question had asked no questions. The colleague in question was in the process of lecturing and providing advice. I thank her for her advice.

Mrs. Dacquay: I have an additional question. Is the staff not returning? Because I would like to continue some questioning for clarification on information they gave me relative to this line.

Ms. McGifford: As the Member can see, the staff are returning. The staff, I assume, heard the end of the bells, heard the vote, and are now rejoining us. So perhaps the Member could go ahead and proceed with the question that she wishes to ask.

Mrs. Dacquay: My question on the art is, there was a list of four locations given by the Minister's staff. I wonder if the Minister or staff can tell me what room 226 is and whose office that may or may not have been?

Ms. McGifford: No. I have no idea what room 266 is.

Mrs. Dacquay: Well, in my investigation the room appears to be right next to the NDP caucus office. I think it may or may not have been a deputy minister's office at some point in time. Can the Minister or her staff confirm that?

Ms. McGifford: I would like to point out to the Member that the kinds of questions she is asking about, office numbers and who was in what office, are really something that is best asked in the Estimates of Government Services. The NDP caucus room is room 234. Whether room 26 is near, far or whatever is indifferent to the NDP caucus room being 234. I do not know who was housed in room 226. Perhaps we could all endeavour to find out. I just do not know.

Mrs. Dacquay: Well, the reason I am asking is because there were—

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

LABOUR

* (14:40)

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

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

The floor is now open for questions.

Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister of Labour): I would like to begin by bringing new information to the Committee in response to a question that I took as notice yesterday concerning the oil refinery on Henderson Highway. I was incorrect in saying that they were in a mutual aid group for fire protection. What is happening currently is East St. Paul and West St. Paul along with Imperial Oil are assessing their abilities to

jointly fight any kind of fire or other disaster that might occur at that site, and if they feel it is necessary they are looking to negotiate a fee-for-service contract with the City of Winnipeg.

Previously, the City of Winnipeg did provide fire service at no charge but has changed, as you know, its policies in that regard with several communities on the outskirts of Winnipeg, so currently they are not involved in a mutual aid district but they are working together, and if they feel they do not have the facilities or the capabilities, they will investigate a fee-for-service agreement with the City and will, through the Office of the Fire Commissioner, continue to monitor that situation.

If I may, just as long as I have the floor, in response to the Member for Fort Garry's (Mrs. Smith) series of questions yesterday afternoon about consultation, just briefly give some background on the last four or five years and I just very briefly want to say that the former government did not have a good history of consultation prior to bringing in legislation, certainly not of major legislation or major policy changes, and I would just like to give one example of where the former government did not consult in a major piece of legislation and one example where the former government did not consult in a major policy area.

Actually, we have been talking about the repeal of Bill 72. When the former government introduced Bill 72 the first anyone had any inkling of what was going to be in that piece of legislation was when it was tabled, even what issues were going to be raised, what issues were going to be discussed, not the details of the legislation, which is of course inappropriate to share prior to tabling, but even the issues that were going to be addressed in that legislation came as a surprise to everyone. So I just wanted to put that in some kind of a context for the members that Bill 72 had no prior consultation, and as a matter of fact the only public input was through the narrow, well not narrow, but the one avenue, which is the requirement to hold public hearings.

The second area that I would like to briefly mention to the members is in the major policy area where there was no consultation. That is in

the sale of the Manitoba Telephone System where the bill which allowed for that went through the Legislature in November, early December of 1996. If the members are interested in some quite fascinating theatre, sad theatre but fascinating nonetheless, they should look at the *Hansard* for late November of 1996 and see how the then-Speaker of the House performed her duties in that regard, shutting down debate, not allowing points of privilege which are paramount, et cetera, even at one point shutting off the microphones so that members of the Opposition would not have an opportunity to speak.

This was a major policy issue that never had public consultation or any public hearings. As a matter of fact, no, I misspoke myself. There were no government-sponsored public hearings, but there were public hearings throughout the year of 1996 leading up to that legislation, sponsored by and put on by the then-Opposition New Democratic Party where we went throughout the province of Manitoba and held public hearings, held consultations, on the issue of the privatization of the Crown corporation.

We have held many types of consultation over the last number of months, as the Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell) stated in the House today, dealing with the issue of the repeal of Bill 72, starting back during the election campaign when it was made part of the election platform, openly discussed in many constituencies. I know I had teachers and parents and other interested parties talking to me about our position on Bill 72 in the election campaign, and I was very forthright that we were going to repeal Bill 72 and bring in legislation that would be a balanced approach to the whole issue of collective bargaining and negotiations between teachers and school boards.

So I just wanted to say briefly that the former government did not have an unblemished record in the consultative process. As a matter of fact, it is checkered to say the least, and that is being charitable. Our record in the amount of discussion and dialogue and openness on the issues surrounding the repeal of Bill 72 is something of which I believe we can be very proud. As the Minister of Education said today in Question Period, that consultation and

dialogue will continue up, as I stated before, through and including first reading, second reading debate, public hearings, discussion and debate. At that point in time, report stage, third reading. There have been times when amendments have been made all the way through. Certainly we will keep an open mind and listen to everything that everyone has to say as we have for months and months on this issue.

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): I just want to respond to one thing that the Minister mentioned to this House. We will be dealing with the Office of the Fire Commissioner at a later date so perhaps if this is something she could just take back to her department. She mentioned that right now West St. Paul and East St. Paul are assessing their ability to do a fire control—I take it in particular East St. Paul when dealing with the Esso fuel storage facility. West St. Paul I do not think would have anything really to do with the fuel storage facility. There is no way to get to them unless they take the Perimeter Highway. I do not know if they are part of it.

Could the Minister just assure the residents of East St. Paul that while this process is taking place the City of Winnipeg would still respond to a fire at the storage facility in East St. Paul until the assessment is complete? Again, this is by no means to disparage the hard work that the volunteer fire department does in the Rural Municipality of East St. Paul, but a storage facility the size of the East St. Paul Esso storage facility would take a sizeable amount of equipment and firefighter power to keep something like that under control.

We discussed environmental issues yesterday as well, and one of the Minister's own colleagues who is sitting right across from me, the Member for Brandon West (Mr. Smith), would probably know more than anybody at this table about fire control, his being, I believe, a member of the Brandon Fire Department.

An Honourable Member: Was for 20 years.

Mr. Schuler: Was for 20 years. Just at this point in time is there still something in place that—of course we are not looking for it, but should something happen at the facility that the City of

Winnipeg Fire Department would then be called in and there would not be any difficulty in that.

Ms. Barrett: I cannot speak for the City of Winnipeg. We do not have any direct jurisdiction over their decisions regarding their fire service.

But I would like to mention to the Member there is a mutual aid district in that area. It is the South Interlake Mutual Aid District. It includes the R.M.s of Rosser, St. Andrews, Selkirk, Stonewall and West St. Paul. So in the case of a fire or a disaster at the refinery, I would suggest that that mutual aid district, even though East St. Paul is not part of it yet, they would certainly respond, as I am sure would the City of Winnipeg to a disaster of that magnitude, and the Member did talk yesterday about what was around there, what the potentials were.

I think that while I cannot speak directly for the City, because they are supreme in their decision in this regard, I would suggest that the Member talk to the City Councillor for West Kildonan, the Kildonan ward, Mr. Lubosch, and also I would think Councillor Vandal or whoever the chair of the protection committee is. The committees have changed names and structure, and I cannot remember who—I think Dan Vandal used to be that. But they would be very useful resources to, No. 1, get the specific information about what the City would or could do in a case like this, and, second, if that is not an adequate answer, if you feel uncomfortable that the safety of the people around that facility would still potentially be jeopardized, lobby the city.

Please do let me know what the answer would be, because then we could work with the City as well. But the City does have jurisdiction in that regard, so that would be my suggestion, is to contact the City Councillor.

Mr. Schuler: I thank the Minister for her answer. Certainly we will take her advice on contacting various individuals in the City of Winnipeg, and we will keep her apprised. If we have any more questions on jurisdiction, I guess probably the best place to do that would be under the Office of the Fire Commissioner in the Budget.

I do have some concerns also I want to raise with the Minister. I am sure the Minister will find this of a concern as well. Basically, I would like to ask the Minister why does she rely on the Labour critic to inform her of pertinent topics that should be addressed basically by ministerial statement? I have to ask the Minister, does she not think it better use of her staff time, be it departmental or caucus, to research topics relating to her Cabinet portfolio, rather than my caucus's Web site?

As the Minister may recall, I rose in the House to make a member's statement on May Day, and strangely no one from the government side made any similar remarks. Further to that, I was in attendance with a staff member at the May Day parade and was surprised that not one singular member from the government caucus was in attendance. I am sure that is quite a departure from when this NDP Government was in opposition, and again, why no statement by the Minister and no attendance at the parade by the caucus?

I just want to, again, mention to the Minister that on September 21, 1999, I made a private member's statement—I stand corrected; it was May 1, 2000—about the May Day parade. I am getting my dates a little confused here.

The statement says: On September 21, 1999, Manitobans voted for what has been traditionally seen as a pro-labour government. Yet today, the day nations around the world honour their workers, the NDP forgot their supporters in the labour movement, and I quote: "Shame on them, shame on the Minister of Labour, and she should apologize to workers in this province for this omission. CNN reports much of the world recognizes May 1 as International Labour Day, a day for unions to push for better workplaces."

In Yugoslavia citizen's rallied against President Slobodan Milosevic's regime calling for peace, bread and democracy. When Russia was the Soviet Union, May 1 was a day of worker solidarity, a major date marked by huge processions of workers in Red Square in the post-soviet era. The date has evolved into more of a holiday, still a tribute to workers, but with more domestic concerns being raised. In China crowds filled Beijing's Tiananmen Square drawn

to honour model workers. In Japan some two million people attended rallies at about a thousand locations.

*(14:50)

In Manitoba our labour government did nothing for May Day, not recognizing the efforts and sacrifices of our workers. We in the PC caucus and I as Labour critic do recognize the efforts of the men and women who have served this province well. We wish all of them a great and safe May Day. We heard nothing from the Minister of Labour.

I would like to ask the Minister, also there was the Occupational Safety and Health Week. This was on May 15, 2000. It was a private member's statement in which I stated I would like to take this opportunity to rise in the House and inform all honourable members that this week, May 15 to 21, has been proclaimed as North American Occupational Safety and Health Week. The theme is partners together in safety. I would also like to take this opportunity to admonish the Minister of Labour, who runs thousand-dollar ads in the paper but has no time in this House for North American Occupational Safety and Health Week. Shame on her.

The week is a co-operative effort between Canada, the United States and Mexico. The objectives of the North American Occupational Safety and Health Week are threefold: first, to increase employees', employers' and the public's awareness with the benefits of investing in occupational safety and health; second, to raise awareness of the role and contribution of safety and health professionals; third, to reduce workplace injuries and illnesses by encouraging new safety and health related activities.

Each year more than 700 people die at work in Canada. Most of these accidents could have been prevented. Everyone must work together to identify hazards, evaluate risk, and identify measures to protect workers from injury and diseases. Everyone has a role to play in achieving the safety and health objective to make his or her workplace a safe one. The effectiveness of the safety and health activities is dependent upon the collective strength of

partners working to establish and maintain the workplace environment.

A good safety and health record in the workplace means good business. A healthy employee is an efficient employee. By working together we can achieve healthy working conditions, encourage healthy employee activities, and reduce financial costs of unsafe, unhealthy working environments.

It was not until the following day, on May 16, that the Minister actually got around to making a statement on this very important recognition on the calendar. Fortunately I was allowed to make a statement to that as well. That would have been the second one. I would also like to point out to the Minister that June 12, which would have been yesterday, was the beginning of the Public Service Week, the recognition of another event in our calendar. Again we have heard nothing from the Minister of Labour. I would like to bring to the Minister's attention: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to recognize June 11 to 17 as Public Service Week in Manitoba, something the Minister of Labour should have done today in this House. This time is set aside to celebrate public servants and their contributions to our society.

National Public Safety Week was introduced by the Federal Government in 1992 upon the passage of Bill C-328 in the House of Commons. It set out the third week of June to recognize the value of services provided by public servants from all jurisdictions. Since that time Manitoba has commemorated the week annually with various events and activities.

I am most appreciative of the essential role played in our society by those in the public service, from health care and education to policing and justice to defence and recreation services. Public servants allow our country the great quality and quantity of life we enjoy today. Sometimes I think we forget the value of the contributions made by these individuals taking for granted the professional and competent services that we are accorded.

This week gives us pause to reflect on exactly these things and thank the public servants for their efforts. I trust each member of

the House will join me in recognizing these men and women. Thank you very much.

To the Minister, I would like to ask: Why is it that it seems to be that the Opposition, the Labour critic, has to stand up and recognize these important events and the Minister fails to do so? You know, today would have been another opportunity to have done that. I know she made a ministerial statement yesterday on an equally very important event that was taking place in our province. Today would have been another opportunity to have done so. Does she not believe that it is part of her role as minister to recognize these important events on our calendar?

Ms. Barrett: The May Day march that the Member spoke about, I attended the event at Riddell Hall, University of Winnipeg, the end of that May Day. I cannot remember what was the rest of my day, but that was the first opportunity I had to participate. I did not see the critic for the Official Opposition there, but I have no doubt that he was in the parade for which I applaud him.

The Member did not talk about one event that happens in that same May Day week, and that is the day of mourning which is April 28, which is two days before May 1. I can give the Member some background if he is interested in that, but one of the reasons for choosing April 28 is that it is very close to May 1 which is, as the Member rightly points out, an international recognition day of labour.

In Canada, as in the United States and there may be some connection there, it has evolved that the day where most people recognize the value of labour or have that one day, which we should recognize the value of labour everyday, but that one day is the first Monday in September, which is Labour Day. I think we perhaps need to spend more time in making Labour Day more than just the last holiday before school starts or the summer ends, or the summer south of the 49th parallel ends. Sometimes it feels like summer ended months before that in Canada, but at any rate, that is one of the reasons why the May 1 day is not as well known or as publicized in Canada as it is other places around the world. I did make an

announcement in a proclamation for the day of mourning on April 28.

The second issue that the Members raises about the Occupational Health and Safety Week, I did make a member's statement. I did read a proclamation for Occupational Health and Safety Week. We did issue a press release from the Government, and the ad that the Member references was an ad that was paid for by the federal government, the federal Department of Labour, I believe. They were good enough to let us put our logo on that ad.

* (15:00)

I know there are certain people who peruse *Hansard* regularly, but I would suggest that the Member would recognize that an ad acknowledging Occupational Health and Safety Week in the public newspapers is going to reach a far broader audience than a ministerial statement or a member's statement just by definition.

I did make a ministerial statement on Occupational Health and Safety Week. Public Service Week is not yet over. The Member in his member's statement made his member's statement after he had seen that I had gotten up on a ministerial statement acknowledging the Philippine Heritage Week. The Member should know that a minister is allowed only one statement a day. There may be some of us who would like more than one ministerial statement a day, but never mind, the rules require only one ministerial statement, so I would have thought that the Member might have reframed his member's statement and not have said shame on the Minister, when he knew that I could not have gotten up a second time.

It is a week-long event. There will be a luncheon tomorrow. The Premier (Mr. Doer) is speaking at the awards luncheon at which service excellence awards will be handed out. Our department has nominated several individuals or actually has nominated a division for an award in that category, and I am going to be in attendance at the service excellence awards lunch tomorrow. As I have stated to the Member, the week is a week long and there is plenty of time for ministerial statements.

I would like, as well, to state to the Member that on May 1, I did send greetings to the United May Day Banquet and Social Political Evening where I commented on and congratulated them on the banquet and their efforts to spread the message of May Day. I did acknowledge to the people who were directly involved in the May Day events the importance of May Day to them and to the workers and to our government. That day I also had several meetings with representatives of labour groups where I was able to share my congratulations on the May Day celebrations.

I hope I have addressed the concerns that were raised by the Member.

Mr. Schuler: Just to close that particular issue, and I can sense that the Minister is a little sensitive on it and I guess so she should be. I just hope that the Minister directs her staff, be it departmental or caucus, to keep her more informed about the goings-on on issues that really do affect her department. We even have the NDP caucus Web site where her federal leader is quoted saying, Canadians celebrated National Public Service Week, a time to honour public service workers, so perhaps she could be a little bit more up to snuff on that.

I would like to move on and ask the Minister a question: On February 4, 2000, the British Columbia Labour Minister, Joan Smallwood, issued a press release calling on the federal government to amend the Bankruptcy Act to give workers better protection for their claims for unpaid wages. Before I ask the Minister about that particular point, does the Department have any legislation or regulations dealing with claims for unpaid wages in Manitoba?

Ms. Barrett: The employment standards legislation deals with some of the issues around payment of wages. But the issue of bankruptcy is, as I mentioned, the Member will recall in my opening remarks that the ministers of Labour from across the country met here in Winnipeg in early March of this year, and one of the issues that was raised and one of the issues that was agreed to by all of the Labour ministers from across the country whether they were Conservative, Liberal or New Democrat was that the federal Bankruptcy Act which has juris-

diction over payment of wages to individuals following a bankruptcy needs to be updated, that workers who are now considered unsecured creditors need to have more protection and need to be looked after far better than they currently are under that federal piece of legislation.

We share with our counterparts in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, P.E.I., Newfoundland and Quebec the concern that the Bankruptcy Act provides far more protection to banks with their billions of dollars in profit than it does to the workers whose labour helped the corporation or the business make money when it made money and whose work should be acknowledged when a business or a corporation goes bankrupt.

So we are in complete support with all the provinces across the country in asking the federal government to update and make more fair the Bankruptcy Act.

Mr. Schuler: To the Minister, would these changes require our province to change any legislation?

Ms. Barrett: No. The Bankruptcy Act is a federal piece of legislation, and it would not require any change to any provincial legislation.

Mr. Schuler: To the Minister, will the numerous Labour ministers be calling for action on any other pieces of federal legislation in regard to labour issues in the near future?

Ms. Barrett: One of the areas that we discussed at our conference, or at our meeting in March, was the whole area of family-friendly policies, and that is policies and legislation, and have agreed to have staff work on some ideas before our next meeting in February in St. John's, Newfoundland.

As well, we understand that the federal government is making some changes to the employment insurance provisions, particularly dealing with maternity leave, et cetera, and once that legislation has been passed in the federal House of Commons, we will, of course, ensure that Manitoba legislation follows suit. But at this point, we are not looking at any specific piece of legislation at a federal level or at our provincial

levels, other than the Bankruptcy Act. That was the one piece of legislation that we identified as critical at this point.

Mr. Schuler: I would like to ask the Minister, if we could go back to the pay equity issue for just a moment, at the NDP convention held in Ottawa, a resolution that the convention committed to was for a national campaign for pay equity.

Does your government, in accordance with that resolution, support a national pay equity campaign?

* (15:10)

Ms. Barrett: I must admit that I cannot recall if that resolution actually passed or not. I would have to look that up. But be that aside, as I stated in my comments yesterday on pay equity, I spoke about the need for workers and employers and all individuals and groups to work towards the principle that there should be equal pay for work of equal value and that people who are doing the same work should be paid at the same rates based on seniority and any other factor that comes in through contract negotiations or legislation but that you should not be paid differentially because of your gender or any other extraneous factor.

I believe that it is incumbent upon all of us, as workers, as legislators, as members of the public, as employers, to work towards that goal, because I believe that that goal is a goal that will assist all of the partners in these enterprises. It will assist workers, it will assist management, it will assist owners. There is no downside to this principle, this concept. So in that regard, as I said in my discussion yesterday, we welcome the ability to provide assistance to any organization or enterprise that wishes to ensure that their enterprise is compliant with the principles of pay equity.

Mr. Schuler: To the Minister, she stated first of all that she was not quite sure if that was passed at the last NDP convention. Actually, Madam Minister, you really have got to get onto the Web. I happen to have a page here from the NDP caucus Web site. That would be the federal site. It says: At the August 1999 NDP

convention in Ottawa, Canada's New Democrats commit, and the second bullet is a national campaign for pay equity. So it was something that had been agreed to.

The Minister certainly talked about a general support for the concept. The question was: Does your government, in accordance with this resolution, support a national pay equity campaign?

Ms. Barrett: I believe I answered that question in the sense that we support the principles of pay equity for good policy reasons and for good economic reasons. So whatever assistance on the provincial level that we can provide individuals and businesses and enterprises that are looking to implement pay equity or wondering if they are actually doing a good job in their pay equity, have any questions about it, we are more than happy to facilitate that. I would assume that throughout the country, I would hope that governments would be in accord with that view. But as to a specific campaign with marches and, I do not know, what, a campaign, I think the situation with that resolution is it is very vague, as many policy resolutions are. What I am saying is what we are prepared to do and what we are doing as a government and as a department in that issue here in Manitoba.

Mr. Schuler: Just on the whole pay equity issue, is that a jurisdiction that falls under the federal government, provincial government, or is it both? Has it traditionally been a provincial government jurisdiction that the provinces have allowed the federal government to share? Which jurisdiction does it fall under?

Ms. Barrett: The short answer is both. The more detailed answer is that some corporations, some businesses, some entities are under federal jurisdiction. About 10 percent of the workers in Manitoba fall under federal legislation. So they would come under federal pay equity laws or regulations. Ninety percent of the workers in Manitoba come under provincial jurisdiction. So they would fall under provincial pay equity legislation. That jurisdictional distinction is throughout. All federal workers come under federal jurisdiction in a number of areas and the provincial workers under provincial jurisdiction.

Mr. Schuler: To the Minister, will your government, in accordance with this resolution, be campaigning to see a national program be brought about in regard to pay equity?

Ms. Barrett: Well, as I stated, pay equity is a legislative requirement either federally or provincially. As I said, our jurisdiction is provincial and we are working very hard on that. There was a recent court decision that required the federal government to pay, well, I think the court original decision, in my mind it sticks at \$23 billion. But I think my staff tell me that they negotiated that figure down to a paltry \$13 billion that is owed to federal employees over decades, largely women, who sued and were successful in their suit against the federal government, decades of federal governments for back pay because they were not treated fairly.

Of course, we are in favour of that kind of fairness issue and will work with our federal counterparts in the federal caucus to provide whatever support we can. We are basically concerned as a provincial government with the provincial pay equity implementation and voluntary compliance in assisting in any way we can.

Mr. Schuler: To the Minister, if it is in fact the resolution's intent on creating a national pay equity program that would cover all companies in Canada whether provincial or federal, is the Minister's government, would they be willing to concede jurisdiction to the federal government if that were the case?

Ms. Barrett: I seriously doubt that that was the intent of the resolution. As I have stated, the processes as we have in Canada, with its, well, I call it, I do not know if it officially is, but I call it asymmetrical federalism. We have both federal jurisdiction and provincial jurisdiction. It is not our role as a provincial government to tell another provincial jurisdiction or the federal jurisdiction what they can and cannot do. We can encourage our federal counterparts, we can encourage our provincial counterparts to follow our lead where we have made strides in certain areas or to work with us as provincial governments or federal governments to raise issues and look at legislation.

We are in contact often with other provincial jurisdictions, asking them what they are doing in a particular area, because in some cases another province has done groundbreaking work in a particular field of policy or legislation or programs. It is good government to find out where those programs are, those policies or those good pieces of legislation and see if we cannot make them relevant to Manitoba.

The same at the federal level, the federal jurisdiction is federal jurisdiction. I have no intention, nor do I think, I know that the federal party has no intention of usurping either federal or provincial jurisdiction.

Mr. Schuler: Madam Chair, in the Pension Commission section, under Activity Identification, how are new plans registered?

Ms. Barrett: May I ask the Member if he is finished with Conciliation, Mediation and Pay Equity Services, so that we can let that staff go, or is he going to go back and forth which, I would suggest, is not probably the best way to handle this?

Mr. Schuler: For the time being, we will deal with the Pension Commission. Should I have another question going back, if there is something that comes up here, I would be willing to wait for another day, if there was such a need. Right now, I think we will focus on the Pension Commission.

* (15:20)

Ms. Barrett: Well, then, I am going to suggest that should the Member have other questions that come under Conciliation, Mediation and Pay Equity Services at a later date—I am not prepared to have my staff have to come over here on a moment's notice—I will take any questions he has on that section or on Mechanical and Engineering or Labour/Management Services Division as notice, and he will get the specific answer in due course.

It is not fair to staff to say, well, I may be finished, but I might not. I would like to finish, and the way we have handled it for a very long time when we were in opposition in the former government, we agreed that it was important to

be as fair to staff as possible and not have them have to come to the Committee room one day and then come back a third day and this kind of thing. So I am just suggesting that if the Member thinks he has any other questions under Conciliation, Mediation and Pay Equity, he should ask them now. He can ask them later, but he probably will not have any staff here and he will get a "taken as notice." If that is acceptable to the Member, I am perfectly willing to have that happen.

Mr. Schuler: For now, I would like to concentrate on the Pension Commission.

Ms. Barrett: Then in that case, I would like to introduce Deb Lyon, who is the Acting Director of Pensions.

Mr. Schuler: First of all, I would like to welcome Deb Lyon to the table. The question is: Under Activity Identification, how are new plans registered?

Ms. Barrett: The general process is that a plan sponsor files the document under which the plans are constituted with the Pension Commission, and the Pension Commission reviews that document and those plans for compliance with minimum Pension Act standards.

Mr. Schuler: What is involved in a pension administration review?

Ms. Barrett: Analysts with the division go onsite and talk with and discuss with the plan administrator onsite the administration of the plan and also are able, because they are onsite, to review documents that are not filed when they make the original application. This helps the analyst to determine if the plans are following the minimum standards as laid out in the legislation.

Mr. Schuler: To the Minister: Is this a one-time event or do these reviews happen every so often for each pension plan? Is it a regular review? Do they go in and do a surprise audit?

Ms. Barrett: The on-site reviews are in addition to the regular reviews that are undertaken by the analysts in the division, and there are approximately five or six of those on-site

reviews per year. These, as you can well imagine, are quite extensive. They are very time-consuming, because they are going in quite detail to the onsite review of the material that is there.

These five or six on-site reviews are based on, as I said, the regular reviews of the plans, and there will be a checklist of things such as a risk indicator or an employee has a question or a series of questions, or there may be a solvency question that arises that would lead to the analyst saying that this is a good time to go out on site and review this particular plan because there may be some concerns with it.

Mr. Schuler: To the Minister: How many pension plans are reviewed by the Pension Commission?

Ms. Barrett: Documents are reviewed annually for the approximately 415 pension plans that are registered in the Province of Manitoba. This is the second statement under the Expected Results section, annual information returns. They are all reviewed annually. Then the on-site investigations are a much more in-depth review of those plans for which there is some sense that the Pension Commission needs to have far more information than is available through the regular annual reporting mechanism.

Mr. Schuler: On page 23 of the Annual Report under Legislative Compliance, the number of reviews that full compliance is found. What are the ramifications for failing to be fully compliant with the legislation?

* (15:30)

Ms. Barrett: The first order, of course, would be working with the plan administrators and the employer to voluntarily make the plan in compliance with the rules and regulations in the legislation. I am sure that in many cases, if not most cases, that is what happens because, through neglect or just lack of following some portion of the regulations accidentally, the plan moves out of compliance. The analysts work very closely with the plan administrators and the employers to ensure compliance voluntarily.

If that does not work, and in a small group of situations that can happen, that voluntary

compliance does not take place, the Pension Commission can order compliance. If that does not take place, the third and final avenue is deregistering of the pension plan, but you can well imagine the horrific impact that would have on the pension plan, the people who are relying on that pension plan to provide them with retirement income. That is certainly by far the avenue of last resort, and the Pension Commission does everything in its power to work voluntarily with plan administrators and employers to rectify the situation.

Mr. Schuler: On the same page of the Annual Report, under Promotion of Pension Plans, the percentage of Manitobans in registered pensions plans is found. Does the Minister foresee this number changing in the near future?

Ms. Barrett: The staff tell me that this figure, this percentage has been fairly stable over time and that we do not expect any major changes in that percentage.

Mr. Schuler: Does the Minister have any plans to influence this number upwards?

Ms. Barrett: Manitoba has a requirement that if your place of employment has a pension plan you as an employee must participate in that pension plan. The mandatory nature of that requirement is unique to Manitoba. No other province or other jurisdiction has that requirement, that you cannot opt out of a pension plan if your place of employment has one. However, at this point we have no intention of requiring employers or places of employment to have a pension plan, which would be the only way you could actually have the government be involved in increasing the number of employees covered by pension plans, because we have 100% coverage for those places of business that have pension plans. The only way we could increase that percentage through direct government intervention would be to mandate that the employer would have to have a pension plan in their place of employment. We have no plans to do that.

Mr. Schuler: Just on the whole pension issue, I do not have the book handy here, but it is a book by David Gratzter. He talks about the Canada Pension Plan, that when the bulk of the baby

boomers get into the age where they will be drawing a pension, to sustain it, I believe, and I could be corrected on the number, again I do not have the book handy, Canadians would have to give up approximately 95 percent of their pay to just sustain the Pension Plan.

In the pension plans that are administered, does the Minister know, and could she tell this committee, are there enough funds in those pension plans to sustain a pension for all those individuals that are drawing from it to an accrued age? There is a certain age which they estimate, where they calculate that a person will live to. Are there enough funds in those pension plans to sustain those payments?

Ms. Barrett: Yes. Part of the minimum standards for Manitoba pension plans are that they must be actuarially sound so that given the limit of the actuarial science there will be enough money to cover those employees in that workplace. As a matter of fact, we just recently passed a regulation that stipulates that where an employer goes out of business that their pension plan has to be funded in full for five years so that employees are then covered so that they continue to have their coverage. The short answer is, in Manitoba we have a minimum standard that must be met. Part of those minimum standards that must be met to have a funded pension plan is that there must be enough money in it to deal with all of the employees, to cover their pensions for whatever the actuarial value is.

Ms. Marianne Cerilli, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Mr. Schuler: Are there any pension plans currently reviewed or looked at by the Department that might be questionable insofar as the necessary funds to sustain the individuals that will be drawing from it as that population gets older?

Ms. Barrett: Yes, the regulation that we just passed has the effect—oh, sorry, in answer to your question, yes, there are plans that are not fully funded, so by definition that means that if you are not fully funded, that says that actuarially all your employees would not be covered.

So that is the reason for the amendment, the regulation change that we just put in place, which says that all plans must be fully funded. You have five years to fully fund them, and if your plan winds up, if you go into bankruptcy or you leave or you move or you sell your business and the business no longer is in existence, you still are required to fund, to put money into that pension fund so that your employees at wind-up are covered.

So our regulation now states that, yes, while we do have pension plans that are not fully funded, in the course of time they will become fully funded, and the safety factor is if they wind up, then they still have to be fully funded. So they cannot get away from fully funding their pension plans.

Mr. Schuler: Has it been a problem that companies have left or have gone bankrupt and the pension could not sustain itself?

* (15:40)

Ms. Barrett: Yes, there have been times where companies have ceased business and the workers' pension fund was not fully funded and therefore the workers lost what I believe they were entitled to, and that is the reason we put the regulation in place, so that this will not happen.

Mr. Schuler: If a company does go into receivership and the pension plan cannot self-sustain the individuals drawing from it, is there something that the Department does with that, or does it just let it deplete itself and then those individuals no longer have a company pension?

Ms. Barrett: If a company goes into receivership, and I may not have been clear enough about this in one of my earlier answers, then that gets back to the federal Bankruptcy Act—the federal rules apply there—and on wind-up, not on wind-up but if in receivership the members of the pension plan would receive their pension, what they were owed to the percent that the fund was fully funded.

So if you had a fully funded pension plan, then, yes, they would receive everything they are entitled to. If you have an 80% funded pension plan, they would receive what was funded, but

that extra 20 percent that was unfunded, they would lose because, again, the workers, under the current bankruptcy legislation, do not have, are down right at or near the bottom of the creditor's scale.

Mr. Schuler: If a firm goes into receivership and there are X number of employees, if it is a fully funded pension plan but there is not enough money to keep paying out fully funded pensions, who makes up the difference, or must it have enough?

Ms. Barrett: Yes, the definition of fully funded or solvent means that it has enough money to pay all of its employees at the time that the company ceased operation for the actuarial time that people are theoretically going to live. Again, this is based on the actuarial science. If it is fully funded, they are covered until their time of death. They are lifetime benefits. There are other benefits that may come under a pension plan that are not necessarily fully funded—I am looking at my staff to make sure I am not saying something inaccurate here—that may not be lifetime, that might not be as covered.

I was mixing two things up. I was thinking of disability payments, but a fully funded pension plan, for whatever reason a company ceases to exist, will, by definition, give lifetime benefits to the members who were eligible for a receipt of pension or who become eligible for receipt of pension at some future date who were employees or pension recipients at the date of dissolution.

Mr. Schuler: Should a company go into receivership, who then administers the pension?

Ms. Barrett: Some pension plans have a trustee or an administrator identified who would take on that responsibility of ensuring that pensions are paid out after dissolution of the company. Other pension plans do not, and in those situations or where a trustee chooses not to or cannot take on that role, the superintendent of pensions would then appoint an administrator who would ensure that those pension benefits were paid out.

Mr. Schuler: Minister, Resolution 00EQ-05 from the NDP convention calls for the Government to lobby the federal government to reduce

the age at which the full pension kicks in at 60, and I read:

WHEREAS the Canada Pension now requires you to be 65 years of age for full pension; and

WHEREAS the pension does not correspond with the IWA pension; and

WHEREAS if the Canada Pension was full at the age of 60 it would create more opportunity for early retirement, creating more jobs for the young people in Canada.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this convention of the New Democratic Party lobby the federal government to reduce the age to 60 years with full pension.

That was put forward by the IWA Canada local unions.

My question to the Minister is: Has the Minister lobbied the federal government to this effect?

Ms. Barrett: No.

Mr. Schuler: This having come from the floor of the provincial NDP party, is it something she intends to bring up with her federal counterparts?

Ms. Barrett: I have discussions regularly with federal members of our caucus in Ottawa on a number of issues and would be prepared to address this issue in discussions with our caucus.

I will be honest with you. I do not know if the federal party has a resolution to this effect or if there are caucus plans to have this as a priority at all. I am not up on that process. I will say to the Member that there are many resolutions that are found, both at the federal and provincial conventions, that come forward from various constituent groups and organizations that are not even debated at convention because we have several hundred resolutions, and only a small percentage of those ever make it to the floor for debate, discussion and decision.

This may very well be one of those resolutions, but that aside, I do not have any plans at this point, other than discussing with the federal counterparts what their position is on this issue, to go any further with it than that.

Mr. Schuler: Perhaps if the Minister would like to find out more about where her federal counterparts stand, she should start surfing the Web. But the question actually was the federal government, and I would point out to her that her being provincial NDP and the federal government being federal Liberals, what I was actually asking: Has the Minister lobbied for the federal government to have full pensions kick in at 60, as per a resolution that was passed at her provincial NDP party's convention?

* (15:50)

Ms. Barrett: As I have stated, I have no intention at this point of lobbying the federal government on this issue. Number one, I have to find out if it is actually party policy at this point because I am not sure that it even passed the provincial convention. I do not believe it did, but I will check and find out for sure. If it did not, then it is not party policy. Even if it did pass, resolutions that pass are guidelines, and governments have to prioritize their activities and they have to prioritize the issues they are dealing with.

Frankly, at this point, the issues that we are dealing with the federal government on—there are many critical issues, as we have been discussing in the House over the last few months, the issues of federal support for farmers for disaster assistance in southwest Manitoba, reinstatement of the billions and billions that the federal government has taken away from the health and education transfer payments, issues relating to the Employment Insurance situation. The Employment Insurance account now stands in a surplus of \$27 billion, and that is virtually all due to reduction in benefits to workers across the country.

Those are the issues we are discussing with the federal government through our federal caucus. So this particular issue is not high on my radar screen at this point.

Mr. Schuler: Does the Minister not feel that this is an important issue to deal with her federal counterparts on, the whole way that pensions are administered, whether it be at 65 or 60? Why would it not be on her radar screen?

Ms. Barrett: As I stated, No. 1, I do not know whether it is federal party policy; I do not know whether it is provincial party policy. I would suggest that it is not provincial party policy. I have stated that I will be discussing this. I can discuss this issue with my federal colleagues in the NDP caucus as to their views on this issue, and as a government right now our concerns are the critical crisis issues that we are talking about with the federal government, government to government.

So I will be raising a whole number of issues that we raise from a provincial perspective with our federal caucus, and we also have issues that the federal caucus is concerned about. They are very concerned, as well, about the crisis in health care support from the federal government. They are concerned about labour legislation. They are concerned about many issues that we are concerned about as well.

Madam Chairperson in the Chair

The Member knows that governments or individuals, any one of us, have many more issues to deal with that come to our attention than we can possibly deal with at any one time. So we prioritize those issues that are of critical importance, and those are the issues that we have prioritized as a government, government-to-government negotiations. We have issues that we are talking about with our NDP federal caucus colleagues.

Mr. Schuler: Madam Chair, to you, I just find it amazing for an MLA who in opposition was known for her independent stands that she took, for the positions she took, now seems to wuss out basically on every question.

I ask the Minister: Does she feel comfortable with moving the age from 65 to 60 where a full pension kicks in? Irrespective of what her federal party says, or her provincial party says, is this something that she feels comfortable with?

Ms. Barrett: The Member should perhaps chat with his colleagues who have a little more historical perspective.

The whole point of Estimates is to ask questions about the department and the plan for expenditures and programs for the department. Sometimes, just as in Question Period, the person who asks the question does not get the answer that they expect or want to hear. It does not mean that there is not an answer given. I think I have been fairly concise and clear about the discussion that is underway.

I have stated to the Member before, and I believe the Member in his opening question referenced the fact that—the book that he referenced stated that the CPP was going to go, and I am paraphrasing here, bankrupt in a few years and that kind of thing. At some point there is a challenge to that perspective that says that the CPP is in dire straits. I cannot remember which organizations have raised that, but I do know that there is challenge to that position. So it is not carved in stone. It is not a reality that we all agree on that the CPP is in dire straits. So I think starting from that perspective, my position is, I have stated, that we have critical issues. We do know that the health care system in our country is in crisis. We do know, due in no small part to the failure of the federal government, actually the federal government since 1977 when transfer payments had been reduced but precipitously over the last few years. This is a critical issue that we are discussing government to government and that we are discussing with our federal caucus colleagues in Ottawa.

I have raised the farm crisis in southwestern Manitoba. There are a number of issues that are critical. This is not a critical issue facing this government at this time. I have stated to the Member that I will be discussing this issue with my federal colleagues in the NDP federal caucus, see what their position is on this issue, because I do not believe that the provincial NDP has taken a position on this particular resolution. It is after all a federal matter.

Mr. Schuler: I would like to point out to the Minister, Madam Chair, that the whole point of Estimates is not just to ask questions. It is also to get some answers. The Minister mentions that

there is a challenge to this notion that the Canada Pension Plan is on a downside. Now is the time for debate, but the Minister states on the record that it is not on her radar screen. You know, when is it going to be on her radar screen, when there is going to be a major crisis taking place? Her own party is calling for the moving to get a full pension from 65 down to 60. Yes, that does have a ramification for Manitobans; it does have a ramification for her department.

Her answer is, well, they are dealing with agriculture. Very poorly, I might add. An incredibly poor response from the federal government. You know, the issues they are dealing with are getting basically nothing on, and frankly, Minister, those are not your areas of responsibility unless you feel that those ministers are not doing a good enough job, which I would agree with you on, but that still does not make that your responsibility. Your responsibility is right here, and we are dealing with one of the areas that falls under your responsibility. That deals with the pension commission.

We have here a group calling for moving full pensions from 65 down to 60. Is that something you agree with? What does your department say, Madam Minister, to that? Do they feel that this is something that should be looked at?

Minister, you do not answer the questions. You dance around, and then your fellow colleagues here wonder why we are sitting here. I will tell you why we are sitting here. It is because you will not answer questions. It is a simple question: Is this something that you will consider or is it not? Because it definitely has ramifications. It has a lot of ramifications for Manitobans, and it comes under your jurisdiction. So please do not tell us about what every other minister is doing. I would suggest to you, Madam Minister, do your job and focus in on what it is you are responsible for, and start answering some of these questions.

* (16:00)

Ms. Barrett: I will answer the question. It does not come under my jurisdiction. I have repeatedly stated that. It is a federal matter. The

whole question of Canada Pension Plan is a federal jurisdiction. I have stated that I will discuss the position of my federal caucus colleagues on this matter, and I have just been informed that I was accurate in my earlier statement that this resolution, while it made the resolution book—we allow any resolution to come into the resolution book from any constituency association or affiliated member, and we normally have over 200 resolutions at each convention—did not make it to the floor of convention. It was not debated. Therefore it is not provincial party policy.

The question of Canada Pension Plan is definitely not in my jurisdiction, as I have stated repeatedly. It is a federal matter, a federal issue, and I have told the Member that I will, in my regular comments and chats with my federal colleagues in the NDP federal caucus, discuss this issue, but at this point it is not on my radar screen because it is not part of my jurisdiction.

Mr. Schuler: So when members of IWA Canada Local come to the Minister, what is her response when they say they would like to have the age at which you get a full pension moved from 65 down to 60? What does she say? Lobby the federal party? What is her answer? Lobby the federal government? Do not talk to me about it, I have nothing to say on this, I have nothing to do with this. What kind of an answer does she give them?

Ms. Barrett: If the members of the IWA came to my office, I would say to them exactly what I have said to the Member, and I believe very legitimately. This is a resolution that did not make it to the floor of the provincial convention. I give you the name of the critic for pensions in the federal caucus and suggest that you talk to them. I will discuss it with them as well, as this is a jurisdictional issue that relates to the federal legislation, please lobby—as I am sure they are. This is not a shy organization. They have locals throughout the country. I am sure that they are in regular contact not only with the NDP caucus in Ottawa but also the Liberal caucus and the Alliance caucus and the Progressive Conservative caucus as well. I know they are a very well-organized group, and I know that they will raise this issue. But as I have stated before, it is a

federal jurisdiction and that would be my response to them if they came to see me directly.

Mr. Schuler: I suspect as in most of Estimates, we will continue to get no answer. At this point in time, I am finished with the Pension Commission.

I would like to ask the Minister, insofar as the Manitoba Labour Board, I would like to leave that for later on and go right to the—I am sorry. I do have a couple of more questions. Sorry about that.

Minister, at the NDP convention, Resolution 00EQ06 calls for the NDP Government to maintain and enhance the public pension system. I read 00EQ06 Canada's pension system:

WHEREAS Canadians pay into the public pension system all of their working lives; and

WHEREAS access to the Canadian public pension system is a universal right of Canadian citizenship; and

WHEREAS the Government's overhaul will cut pensions substantially and end their universality; and

WHEREAS four out of ten seniors are already very poor and more will become so as pension cuts proceed; now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we demand the Government maintain and enhance the public pension system which is our right and heritage. IWA Canada Local Unions.

Minister, how do you plan on accomplishing this?

Ms. Barrett: Again, if I am hearing the Member correctly, the public pension system is the federal pension system which consists of the Canada Pension Plan, the Old Age Security system and the Guaranteed Income Supplement.

The Canada Pension Plan is designed to provide a pension for all individuals who have worked a minimum amount of time, who have had some connection with, some tie to the labour force, and it is a universal program that is given

to all individuals based on their level of tie to the labour force.

The old-age-assistance system is a system which is also universal although it is more needs-driven and means-tested driven than it used to be, but it is designed to provide assistance to all individuals that are eligible after they reach the age of 65, I believe. Then narrowing it down even more, there is the Guaranteed Income Supplement which is designed to assist lower income Canadian seniors, largely women I might add—therefore the need for pay equity—whose income from all sources is below a certain cutoff. It is a system that is, in principle, I believe a very fair system. We have had some major problems with its support and the definitions of who is eligible, particularly under OAS and GIS recently, but basically that is the public pension system.

Now the public pension system is a federal system, and again, I would make the comments to the Member that I made on the earlier resolution, and I believe the answer is that No. 1, we did not pass this resolution at the convention that we had in March, that this is an issue to be raised with the federal caucus, and this is an issue that the federal NDP will discuss if it is raised at a federal NDP convention. It is outside my purview of expertise and of responsibility, I might add. Certainly outside my area of expertise, but it is even more importantly for here outside my area of responsibility.

Mr. Schuler: On page 31, there is an increase under Professional/Technical. Is there anything in particular that is taking place there? It is not a big increase.

Ms. Barrett: That is a merit increment.

* (16:10)

Mr. Schuler: Under Expected Results, amendments to the pension benefits regulations are mentioned if you go under Expected Results. There is a section, amendments to the pension benefits regulations. What types of amendments are those?

Ms. Barrett: I do not see where the Member is reading that from. Is this on page 30 of the

Estimates book, and which Expected Results, which paragraph would it be?

Mr. Schuler: Amendments to the pension benefits regulations are mentioned.

Ms. Barrett: Can the Member identify for me where it is on the page? Obviously, the Member found it, or he would not have asked the question at some point.

Mr. Schuler: Now I cannot—it is like the fourth paragraph down, "The Pension Commission carries out"—no, that is not it either. Sorry, Minister. I seem to have lost my place in the book. "With emphasis being placed on the use of risk management, mediation, and audit, the Commission will continue to identify the required new skill sets, . . ."

You know what, Minister, I apologize on that one. I seem to have lost my place in the book. Earlier on, we had discussed about going beyond Conciliation, Mediation. Tomorrow we have a set of questions that we would like to ask the Minister, and we would start right at 2:30. Would she have the individual who oversees that particular area in the budget—

Ms. Barrett: Conciliation, Mediation?

Mr. Schuler: Yes.

Ms. Barrett: We just finished that discussion, and I thought—

Mr. Schuler: Tomorrow at 2:30, we have a set of questions. The problem is that the individual that would like to come in is currently in another area of this building, and that individual would like to come in and ask some questions at that time.

Ms. Barrett: As I have stated since the beginning of these Estimates, when we started with a global discussion, I also stated that once we got into the details of the budget that we would go line by line, area by area. I am asking staff in, in that context.

I asked the Member just moments ago, when the mediation and conciliation and pay equity section was still up, if there were any further

questions. The Member did not say, no, but I would like to ask for the person to come back again. We were not notified at that time.

I will tell the Member right now that the person can ask questions all they want tomorrow, but I am not asking the staff to come back. I will take every single question he has under Conciliation, Mediation and Pay Equity as notice.

Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain): I understand the Minister's comments, but again the process is to ask questions and understand. We have committees going on in other areas of the Legislature, and we have been reasonable in the sense of if Ministers have to have an afternoon off to attend meetings and to be at other organizations or other organized events, we have been certainly, I think, generous. If the Minister wants to start putting ultimatums out and listing, then that is not the way we are going to progress to a point where people are going to get answers.

As the Member has stated, our colleague is in another Estimates asking questions. He has made a request of the critic to come in and ask specific questions. He is giving you a full day's notice. I do not think the Minister wants to get into issuing ultimatums about who will answer questions and what will go on, because I think then we are going to turn this Estimates debate into a fiasco. I do not think we want that.

Ms. Barrett: I was frankly a bit annoyed because the staffperson was here earlier and we were not told at that time that this request would be coming forward. I am prepared to bring the person back for a series of questions at 2:30 or whenever we start tomorrow, but I would like a recognition, because of the need to make sure staff is here when they need to be here, that we go through the book as in order, which we had talked about originally, and I will certainly make sure that Mr. Fleury is here tomorrow afternoon. I am not prepared to have staff on call because the Member wants to ask questions in one order or another order.

When we talk about global discussions, basically we talk about it without staff being there. It is global kinds of questioning and any

kind of specific answers really requires staff to be present to make sure that the Minister is putting accurate information on the record. I am not prepared, frankly, to have my staff sitting here day after day, because we do not know in which order the lines are going to come up. We do know that sometimes it takes longer and sometimes it takes shorter to go through each section, but I am going to tell the Member that I will have my staff here in the order of which the Estimates book is laid out, with the exception tomorrow of the Conciliation, Mediation and Pay Equity Services staffperson coming back for a series of questions at 2:30.

Mr. Schuler: Just on that issue, when we spoke initially about doing global, that is one of the things that the Minister did speak about, is that she was not going to have all her departmental staff here. The Minister does cover a lot of areas in multiculturalism. She covers wide-ranging areas which would entail an awful lot of departmental staff to be here. We agreed that with the global, we understood on this side that if there was an area that we wanted to deal with we would give advance notice, and that is something that we have agreed to. There is not a necessity for an abundance of departmental staff to sit here. Surely they have a lot of duties to take care of, and again, on this one we agree with the Minister. We give notice ahead of time, and that is something that we had I thought agreed to, even in the way that we are going through it.

First of all, we started with the flowchart and the Minister told me where it was that all of the different areas belonged in the Budget documents. Then we went through all the acts and the Minister tabled for us where all those acts belong in the book and from there we have been trying to go through it in a systematic fashion.

Even yesterday afternoon and this morning, we have dealt with the Fire Commission. I think we have always been agreeable that there are certain questions that then come up in the appropriate place. The fact that they are asked probably is not necessarily wrong. It is just that to get the appropriate answer you need appropriate staff there, and I think we have been very agreeable to that.

Certainly, so far, I think things have gone well that way, and we will continue to do so. We want to go through so that again, there is not an abundance of employees who should be doing their jobs and not just sitting here. We agree with that. My request was for tomorrow that some of my colleagues be allowed to come in and ask under that particular heading, Conciliation, Mediation and Pay Equity Services, a few questions.

* (16:20)

Ms. Barrett: I have agreed to that in this case, but I am responding also to an earlier comment that the Member made, that he wanted to skip over the Labour Board, which is the next section in the Budget book. I am saying that if the Member is going to do that after dealing with the Pension Commission, I have the staff member for the Labour Board here. I had three areas available at the beginning of this afternoon. I had the Conciliation, Mediation and Pay Equity Services, I had the Pension Commission and the Labour Board here. That is three divisions that were standing by and are prepared to deal with the Estimates book. I really do not think that it is fair to staff to be skipping back and forth through the book. I have staff here for the Labour Board and the Pension Commission. I was under the impression that the Conciliation, Mediation and Pay Equity section was completed. I now know that it is not. I have agreed to bring staff back for answering of those questions tomorrow at the beginning, but I am going to say to the Member that I am going to have staff here in the order in which the book is laid out because that is the way that it is most effective and efficient for staff to be on call so that they know.

The Office of the Fire Commissioner knows that it is probably not going to happen today that he is going to be here because of the ordering of the book, but if you say after Pension Commission that you do not want to deal with anything, you want to go straight to the Office of the Fire Commissioner, that is very disruptive. That means that that individual has to come from their office, which may take a half an hour. In some cases, the Office of the Fire Commissioner and the Deputy Fire Commissioner are both in Brandon because that is where the fire college is, and that is where much of the work is done.

So I am ready to accede to the request for the return of Conciliation, Mediation and Pay Equity tomorrow, but I have staff here from the Pension Commission and the Labour Board this afternoon. So any other questions in any other area I will take as notice, and the Member will get the information in the fullness of time.

Mr. Schuler: Well, I have gotten the Minister to the point of being speechless though there are many in this House who did not ever think they would see the time. On this particular issue the Minister is correct, and we will continue on Pension Commission as per the agreement.

In regard to Activity Identification, page 30, it states: "Provides information and assistance regarding pensions and the requirements of The Pension Benefits Act to plan members, employers, consultants and the general public." What kind of information is provided to the public or members, employers, consultants and the general public?

Ms. Barrett: The information that is provided by the Pension Commission staff is quite broad-ranging. There is written material in brochure form on the legislation on members' rights of benefits and entitlements, generally speaking, and then many of the questions are specific in nature to a particular pension plan. As long as the inquirer can prove that they are a member of a particular pension plan, the staff will answer their questions concerning their particular pension plan. So it is general benefits' entitlements, general questions about pensions and then specific questions about their own pension plan and concerns. Sometimes there are concerns raised about why am I not getting this benefit, why is this benefit being cut off, why can I not change my decision that I made 25 years ago, and these kinds of issues that come about.

Mr. Schuler: Approximately how many new pension plans are registered every year?

Ms. Barrett: We will have to provide that information. It is not available right here now. We will do so.

Mr. Schuler: Under Expected Results: "Review and approval of approximately 415 annual

information returns . . ." Is that a section within this particular commission who does that? Is that departmental individuals who do that, who go through and make sure that the information, I take it, is properly recorded, and so on and so forth?

Ms. Barrett: Yes. The 415 plans that are currently registered are assigned to one of the three Professional/Technical staff people, the analysts. They are responsible for monitoring those plans and for making sure that everything is up to date and is accurate. Also, I would imagine that any specific questions that were addressed about a particular pension plan would go to that analyst for a response.

Mr. Schuler: The 415 annual returns, are they made public? Is that a public document?

Ms. Barrett: The pension plan returns are not available to the general public, but they are available to a pension plan member through the plan administrator. I would assume, should that not be accessible, a complaint could be lodged with the Pension Commission, who would ensure compliance with that regulation.

Mr. Schuler: The same individuals, I take it, review the triennial actuarial valuations, and that is 50 of the 415 of them?

Ms. Barrett: The triennial actuarial valuations, each analyst would deal with those under their jurisdiction and, of course, as it states, these valuations are only done on defined benefit plans. If you have a money purchase plan, such as the MLA pension plan, currently, they are not required to have a triennial actuarial valuation, but those defined benefit plans are required to have a triennial actuarial valuation.

Mr. Schuler: Minister, previously, I was asking you, under Expected Results, amendments to the pension benefits regulations are mentioned. It is actually item 2, that there are 350 plan amendments. What types of amendments are these?

* (16:30)

Ms. Barrett: That 350 figure is an estimate, based on historical—sorry about that; there is that word again; I did not mean to do that one—based

on past practice, so it is an estimate of how many amendments will be filed by an individual or by the plans. Those are amendments like you add some benefits, or in some cases you would take away benefits or you would change the definition of a benefit or an entitlement. So those are the kinds of amendments.

They are not legislative amendments. They are amendments that are made by the plan itself. They have to be registered with the Pension Commission, so that the information that the Pension Commission has is as up to date as possible about what the plan actually has as its benefits, et cetera, so that when the analysts analyze, they have the information at hand and so that information is available to the plan beneficiaries.

Mr. Schuler: To the Minister: How have these amendments been carried out?

Ms. Barrett: If it is a jointly trustee pension plan, that both parties would agree to the change, and then it would come to the Pension Commission for filing, so that, as I have stated, the Pension Commission and the beneficiaries and the plan participants will know what is actually in the plan.

If it is an employer-administered plan, then the trustees of the plan, whoever that is defined as, would make the determination about the amendment. Then it would, again, go into the Pension Commission.

If it is a negotiated pension plan, whether it is joint or employer, if it is part of the contract negotiations, those changes would take place through negotiations, and then it would be filed, again, with the Pension Commission.

Mr. Schuler: Is there much public consultation when these changes take place?

Ms. Barrett: There is no public consultation because it is not a legislative process. It is a plan process, and, as I have stated, it depends on who the trustees or the administrators of the plan are as to what kind of consultation takes place.

Madam Chairperson: Is it the will of the Committee to take a five-minute break?
[Agreed]

The Committee recessed at 4:33 p.m.

The Committee resumed at 4:46 p.m.

Mr. Jim Rondeau, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Rondeau): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. Is it the will of the Committee to rise today at 5:30? Agreed. The floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Schuler: Mr. Chairman, through you to the Committee, just so that everybody is up to date on what is happening in the Schuler household, Corina turned two weeks old today. She went for her big doctor's appointment. When she was born, she was 7 lbs., 6 oz., and when we left the hospital, she was 7 lbs., 1 oz., which is normally what happens. Today she weighed in at 8 lbs. 8 oz. She grew an inch, so she is no longer 20 inches. She is now 21 inches long. Just for all of those who have not heard this before—and for those who have heard it before, I know you want to hear it again—she is probably the most beautiful little baby girl. I know you are all terribly jealous and envious. As a matter of fact, I might even bring her in. She is just a cutie, so I am really pleased. She is doing wonderfully, and that is great news to our family. That is my question.

Madam Chairperson in the Chair

Ms. Barrett: In response to that statement-question, we are all very pleased. It is always good news when babies progress really well, particularly when there was a little bit of a scare when she was first born. So it is wonderful news, and thank you for sharing that with us.

Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry): Madam Chair, would the Minister of Labour please inform me, is the retired teachers' pension plan under your jurisdiction, Madam Minister?

Ms. Barrett: The teachers' pension plan is under the Minister of Education, but it must follow The Pension Benefits Act regulations.

Mrs. Smith: Madam Chair, thank you. Could the Minister please tell me what those guidelines are, generally speaking?

* (16:50)

Ms. Barrett: The specifics of the teachers' retirement fund, as I stated, are under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Education. The Pensions Benefit Act, which all pensions are required to follow, has minimum standards in areas, such as vesting, locking in, termination or retirement, spousal benefits, solvency, funding issues, investment issues. Those are the kinds of minimum standards that any pension has to abide by. But the specifics of the teachers' pension would best be asked of the Minister of Education.

Mrs. Smith: Madam Chair, could the Minister please inform the Committee, under this minister's jurisdiction, are there any guidelines in terms of the increase in pension matched to the increase in cost of living? Is it indexed, in other words, if the Minister could clarify. Is the pension indexed and is that type of thing under the Labour jurisdiction as well?

Ms. Barrett: My understanding is that the issue of COLA, the cost of living allowance or benefits, is not specifically under the minimum standards, but it is a negotiated item in pension plans or in cases where a pension plan is not negotiated but is developed. That is a benefit but it is not something that is required nor is it under the minimum standards.

Mrs. Smith: I thank the Minister for that information. It is very useful. So just to reiterate or clarify, Madam Chair, the guidelines, the basic minimum standards for pensions is under the Minister of Labour portfolio, but the type of teacher retirement benefits, like through COLA, would be through the Minister of Education's department and through the negotiation process entirely.

Madam Chair, would the Minister inform this committee as to whether or not every aspect

of the COLA would be under the Minister of Education or the Minister of Labour?

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. A recorded vote has been requested in another section of the Committee of Supply. I am therefore recessing this section of the Committee of Supply in order for members to proceed to the Chamber for a formal vote.

The Committee recessed at 4:55 p.m.

The Committee resumed at 5:56 p.m.

Madam Chairperson: The hour being six o'clock, Committee rise.

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

* (14:40)

Mr. Chairperson (Conrad Santos): Would the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply has been dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture and Food. Would the Minister's staff please enter the Chamber.

I would like to advise the members of the Committee that the correct procedure for considering items in the Committee of Supply is in a line-by-line manner. In order to skip ahead, or to revert back to the lines already passed unanimous consent of the Committee is required. We are on page 27 of the Estimates book.

Resolution 3.4. Agricultural Development and Marketing (a) Marketing and Farm Business Management (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,785,700.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Mr. Chairman, as we indicated yesterday, we would proceed with 3.4 and the Estimates today in the Estimates of Expenditure and the programs related to the issues. Basically, as I understand it, the whole range of marketing and market development are part of this, part of the Estimates process, the Animal Industry, the Veterinary Services, Operating, Capital, total Veterinary Services, Soils and Crops, Irrigation Development, Food

Development Centre. Then, of course, all the related issues to that are included in this line of expenditures, including part of the program to deal with farm stress management—the farm rural clients through the presentation of staff and southern development resources, and all those kinds of issues.

So we intend to pursue this section of the Estimates fairly significantly, because we believe, Mr. Chairman, that this is an extremely important part of the whole Estimates process and this is an extremely important part of the Department of Agriculture.

We have known and we have seen what the impact is of a federal government decision to move the Crow benefit out of the perspective of supplying support to grain farmers in this country, and to providing support for transportation on an equal basis to ensure that farmers all across the west would have equal access at equal cost to the export markets from western Canada, no matter where you live and no matter how far from the seaports you were.

When the federal government chose to do away with—which at one time amounted to a program of some \$751 million—move away from that kind of support to western Canadian agriculture, that, of course, laid the foundation to massive, massive changes. This relegated Manitoba farmers into a situation where they would in fact produce the lowest return grains in all of Canada, because it would cost more to the individual producer to ship those grains into an export position.

Some of us had warned the federal government many years ago, when I sat as an executive member of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture. We had the debates at that time on trade-related issues and how that would affect the west, and how it would affect individual producers within the given provincial jurisdictions. We indicated clearly to the federal government at that time they should move very, very carefully, and ensure that there was not a disruptive procedure presented in western Canada that would relegate some producers into a non-competitive position.

Mr. Chairman, clearly we have seen the results of an action taken by a newly elected government that simply had no proper perspective of what that would mean. Today we are faced with a situation. Just let me regress a little bit. We are probably facing a situation the likes of which was described by a professor at the university, when he, in comments, remarked that maybe we should turn much of western Canada back into bison pasture. Some farmers have actually taken that literally. The bison industry, for instance, has become a relevantly significant industry in this province. The meat product from the bison is a sought after product, starting in western Canada, but has now become a fairly sought after commodity in much of the world. Many of the high-end restaurants feature it, bison meats, bison steaks, bison roasts, as a feature item. I think that just demonstrates how the world of agriculture had to change, especially in Manitoba.

We heard much years ago when we first started using chemicals to kill weeds in our crops, when we first started using chemical fertilizer to make the grains and the plants grow and to provide nutrients where nutrients were lacking in our soils. We manufactured chemical fertilizers. Yet, those of us that grew, were born and raised on farms, those of us who were born and raised on century old farms, knew the importance of livestock manure as a fertilizer. We knew roughly what the nitrates and the phosphates and even some of the trace elements were in the livestock waste that we spread on the land, for when we had areas of a field that were not producing properly and you spread sufficient manure on those spots, they would produce as many as the lower parts of our fields where there is more productive soil.

I think, clearly, we are just, I think, seeing the tip of the iceberg of the massive changes that we are going to experience on an ongoing basis in agriculture in rural Manitoba. That in turn is going to affect urban Manitoba as well, because the flour mills in Manitoba might well be history, for two reasons; No. 1, the stringent controls that the federal government still maintains as being a requirement for farmers in marketing grain, such as controls still allowed by the Canadian Wheat Board to designate whether we can or cannot implement or build an industry

that would, in fact, make pasta in this province and market to it freely as individuals, even though now you could become a shareholder through an act that we put through the Legislature a year or two ago which would allow the value-added co-operatives to be established and individual producers to become shareholders in those co-operatives.

We had assumed at that time, Mr. Chairman, that those of us who were true primary producers would be able to market to our own co-operatives quite freely and market those products that we produced through those co-operatives, market them freely into whatever market we chose to find and/or which markets would present themselves. Yet that is not the case because we still have some antiquated procedures that the federal government insists upon maintaining.

It is largely, in my view, the same mentality that existed in the early twenties and thirties when the Wheat Board was established and the rules around the marketing of grain at that time were established, in large part, to supply and satisfy the needs of the Allies during a period of time when we had just come through the conflict of the First World War and were in a position where we might anticipate a Second World War. So the Allies were given a guarantee, Mr. Chairman, that Canada would, in fact, be a residual supplier of milling grains and that we would ensure that those grains would be made available to the Allies, in other words, the Americans, the United States and Great Britain, and a number of other countries, because it was deemed that there should be an ability to provide the Allies with a proper product to make bread.

So some of those rules are still being maintained today, and we are not being entirely critical of maintaining some of these because I think there is an importance there. However, some of us warned the federal government of the day when they talked about doing away with the Crow benefit of the significant changes that would come about, and changes we have seen. Our industry is now no longer entirely a grain-based industry. In the last 10 years, we have seen massive changes. We have seen processing increase very dramatically in this province. We have seen livestock production increase very

dramatically over the last 5, 6 years, and we will see a much greater degree of livestock production, I believe, simply based on competitiveness.

That leads me to the issue that I think we need to discuss and debate in this line of Marketing and Development because we have been in some areas of livestock production relatively free to choose and get into the production—and I am talking about individual producers as a farm, and very often when I sit here I still perceive myself as being a farmer out there instead of being a legislator, and sometimes maybe the comments I make reflect that, but I think as a farmer and I hope I always will, because I would not recommend to any one of my kids to do anything other than farming because I think it is a great industry to get into, even though there are tough periods of time that we have to slug through, but it is a great industry to get into.

Change we must, and some of the changes that have come about have come about simply because of producers' initiative. The elk industry, there are many of the producers who believe that we should, as some other provinces had, allow producers to build confinements and raise an animal that we had deemed wild in this province for many, many years, and, similarly, we did exactly the same thing to the bison industry. That is well known. Some of the exotics that we got into, some were successes; some were not quite as successful. That, I guess, is part of the learning curve in agriculture, to invest in those where you think you can be successful.

However, I think there is an area that we need to seriously consider, and many people have deemed me to be a critic of supply management. I want to put my views on the record as far as supply management is concerned. I am a great believer in supply management. I believe that the John Deeres of the world, the international case IH, the New Hollands of the world, the General Motors of the world, the Ford Motor Company of the world, the Chrysler Company of the world are great supply managers. They will not produce more than they can sell, if they can correctly predict the market.

I think agriculture in general has a great deal to learn; although, we must recognize the

individual's capacity and rights to freedom to choose where or when he or she participates within the laws of the land. So I respect a great deal those commodities that have chosen to have their commodities ruled and regulated under a supply management system. I think many of us that are involved in some other industries that are not controlled by supply management have something to learn from them.

* (14:50)

However, many of the quotas, the quota basis that was set when supply management was initially initiated were designated and set largely because of population-based analysis. One province has more population basis; therefore, they should have more productive capacity, and others have more in other areas; therefore should have a greater degree of productive capacity. That worked well as long as we had a management system that included the transportation to port of the fundamental supply of a livestock industry. That is the feed supply. The cost to port or to market was relatively the same to every producer no matter where you produced from in western Canada.

Secondly, in order to compete with the corn industry, Mr. Chairman, we had a system and developed a system of a competitive pricing system with corn coming into the eastern part or central part of Canada, mainly Québec and Ontario, from the American side. So we chose to put in place a freight assistance program, which we called the Feed Freight Assistance Program, which allowed the producer to ship grain into eastern Canada again and compete with corn in the eastern market. That allowed our barley to compete with corn in the eastern market.

Similarly, the Atlantic Provinces, the Maritimes, indicated to Ottawa that they should also be able to participate, and we developed another program called the At and East program, which allowed for a subsidization of our feed grains to be moved from Thunder Bay into the eastern provincial markets, thereby relegating the cost of production at a relatively even balance throughout Canada because the cost of grain was what the base of cost of production in western Canada and the freight costs were then covered off by you can call it subsidized or

whatever—subsidized, right. It allowed western Canadian farmers to compete against American corn and/or feed grain coming into Canada. It worked fairly well.

So you could set a system of supply management based on population and the world did not really fall over itself because of that, and it allowed the competitive factors to relegate the price of the cost of production to be about the same in western and eastern Canada.

However, when the federal government chose to do away with those freight assistance programs, both the At and East program, the feed grain assistance program, and the Crow rate benefit, it removed roughly about a billion dollars worth of freight equalization payments and relegated to Manitoba the highest cost of production, cost of feed, if you took into consideration the cost of getting that feed to an ocean port. It simply made us in Manitoba non-competitive, so our producers had no choice but to either produce hogs that would consume that grain or produce other livestock, cattle, as we said before, bison, elk, emus, ostriches. They tried everything, even tried wild boar.

So we have come to a point where we found, I believe, our niche. The cattle producers have expanded their herds fairly significantly, although at a very even pace. The hog producers have expanded much more rapidly. I think one of the most unfair assessments that I have seen has occurred in the hog section, simply, Mr. Chairman, because hog manure or whatever you want to call it—somebody had mentioned before, the back end of the barn. The stuff that comes out of the back end of a pig smells a bit differently than the stuff that comes out of the back end of a cow. So, I mean, the smell and how we store manure, I think, has had some bearing on the acceptance or the non-acceptance of hog production in this province.

It has very little to do, I believe, truly with the environment because we have, Mr. Chairman, right at the edge of our farm three fairly large barns that produce probably about 2400 to 3000 hogs a year, so there would be about 6000 to 9000 hogs come out of those three barns annually. They produce enough manure to fertilize three to four quarters of land. Last year,

they could not fertilize because we did the nutrient analysis of the manure before we put it on the land, and there were not enough nitrates there to give us the same N application that our land required to grow an average crop as there would have been in 70 pounds of N put on through chemical fertilizer.

So we applied that fertilizer, injected it right into the ground. There was a large hose used. It is almost like a six-inch hose. That is a two-mile long hose, and you pump the manure, and it is spiked right into the ground, and the hose moves with the cultivators; you go back and forth in the field. At the end of the day, you can virtually not smell the injected product into the soil. In the spring, from what we have seen so far, we would think that that is a much, much safer way to fertilize our soil and a much more environmentally friendly way to fertilize our soil than apply chemical fertilizers. We truly believe if we had one barn that produced about a thousand pigs a year, for every quarter section of land we had on our farm, we would not have to buy any fertilizer.

I was speaking, Mr. Chairman, to one of our fertilizer suppliers the other day, and he informed me that they were really becoming worried in some areas of our province, that they would probably be relegated out of business if we continued our livestock production the way we are. I think that speaks very highly of the farm community becoming self-reliant on an environmentally friendly product that would allow us to produce food without the injection of chemicals into the soil.

Now, think about that. Yet, we have constantly said that is what we should strive for. Today I am hearing the term used "pig factories" springing up all over the place, but nobody speaks about the environmental friendliness of the product that you can put into the soil that is one of the most natural fertilizer products in the world. We constantly talk about the negative effects and the negative impact to agriculture and to society of changes that we have made because of one little decision, one very brief decision, Mr. Chairman, in the production cycle in western Canadian agriculture and in Manitoba agriculture.

So, the question I have, Mr. Chairman, for the Minister: Can she articulate for me what kind of technical support she is contemplating providing to farmers to allow them to test the fertility of the natural products that they are going to have access to on an ongoing basis, or is she contemplating providing some very environmentally friendly processes and testing procedures that will ensure that we do not over-fertilize or underfertilize? I think under-neutralization of our soils is far more important to the long-term impact of the environment than overfertilization, although the impact to water in some areas that are not clay based, I would suspect, might have the adverse effect. But, therefore, I think it is absolutely important that this government realize the importance of a proper testing procedure of materials that are going to be injected into the ground as fertilizer.

* (15:00)

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food): The Member covered off a lot of issues in his comments, but I am going to focus on his question. He started out by talking about the environmental friendliness of manure and whether the Department raises that issue. I have to tell the Member that that is an ongoing issue that is constantly raised by Department staff, which certainly promotes the use of manure as a fertilizer.

The question was some of the things that we are doing to ensure that manure is managed properly, and what we are doing as a department. The Member also indicated that, in some cases, they are not able to apply the manure on his farm because of the content of the manure. I would like to tell the Member that there are projects that are being done and research being done where you can actually blend the commercial fertilizer with the manure and apply it in one application, or it can be applied in two applications where the commercial fertilizer is applied, and then the manure is applied to get to the right level.

But any operation that is 400 animal units or more must each year file a manure-management plan, and under the existing regulations you have to include the soil analysis and the testing of the manure to ensure that you have the right analysis

for the soil so that you then can apply the right amount of manure to the land to get the nutrient level to the level which will ensure the proper growth of the crops which are so very important.

So, Mr. Chairman, those things are being done by the Department. Field demonstrations using manure as fertilizer were conducted at the crop diagnostic centre in Carman, at check strip sites at Crystal City, Rosebank and at the Manitoba Zero Tillage Research association in Brandon. Individual sites were set up in three of the four regions in agri-Manitoba for investigation in 2000 in Killarney, Bowsman and Starbuck. Several other field demonstrations using manure on pasture and hayland and annual crops are being conducted by regional staff in the Interlake and the Eastern Region.

As well, Mr. Chairman, Manitoba Agriculture and Food regional staff are being trained to assist producers in completing their manure-management plans as is required by Manitoba Conservation's livestock, manure and mortality management regulations.

I want to also inform the Member that in this budget we have put in place a nutrient management specialist, and this position will result in expanded activities to ensure the proper use of manure as crop fertilizer, minimizing concerns with the handling of livestock waste and reduce reliance on commercial fertilizers through the use of a natural locally available product.

So there are a lot of activities that are taking place. As well, I want to also inform the Member that there are many fact sheets that the Department works on and puts out. We have fact sheets that involve manure and entitled *Manure as a Resource*; another one, *Calculations of Manure Application Rates*; *Manure Nitrate Losses and Prevention*; *Control Run-off from Confined Livestock Areas*; *How Hog Operations Benefit Local Communities*; *Health Issues and Livestock Production*; *Livestock's Odours, Sources, Concerns and Solutions*; *Nitrates in Soil and Water*; *Surface Water Issues*. So those are a few of the fact sheets.

As well, there is the extension support. Tools for producers include software to calculate

the cost of various manure-management alternatives plus APMETHCO software, MARC '98 software we have developed to help producers plan their manure application to maximize profit and to avoid environmental impacts. This was released in March of '99, and there is a 2000 version that is going to be coming out.

Manitoba Agriculture and Food developed a manure-management strategy to focus efforts on research and development of livestock operations. The Livestock Manure Management Initiative, which was established some time back, takes a leadership in research and development efforts of the private industry.

So there are many various things that are going on to promote the use of manure. Certainly the Member is also aware that we have just put in place the Livestock Stewardship Initiative, which I announced in January, and various changes that we are proposing to make, and we will be having the public meetings over the next little while, where the public will have the opportunity and producers will have the opportunity to talk about their industry and bring forward suggestions as to what they think are other things that we can do in the Department of Agriculture to help them in this industry. I certainly look forward to that process, where producers will have the opportunity to make suggestions of what other support can be provided by the Department.

I think that when the Member looks at the activities that are ongoing in the Department and the funds that have been put forward in various research projects with respect to manure management and all the development that is happening, we are working very closely with the producers in the industry, ensuring that there is proper use of manure as crop fertilizer and looking towards assurances that we can indeed reduce the amount of commercial fertilizer that is needed and move towards using local product on local soil.

* (15:10)

Mr. Jack Penner: I guess the Minister did not hear my question. My question was very simple. It was what, if any, kind of nutrient testing

facilities or equipment is she contemplating putting in place that would allow farmers to be able to test the nutrients in their lagoons for application as fertilization?

Is she putting in place, or are they developing, a tester such as we use for moisture testing in grain, such as we use for protein testing in grain? Are there any testers being developed that she knows of, or is her department involved in funding a project that would be directed towards doing an on-farm testing piece of equipment that we could use to ensure that the level of nutrients could be ensured from tank to tank or lagoon to lagoon, because we know that the test results from the top of the lagoon to the bottom of the lagoon can be significantly different on various nutrients, whether it is micro-nutrients, the copper sulphates, or the irons, or all those kinds of minute nutrients that are contained in waste products.

Is she contemplating developing or helping, assisting in developing a tester of some sort that farmers could have on their own farm to ensure that the nitrates or the nutrients that they were applying on every acre of land could be tested periodically during the application process, or whether she is going to leave that to the large testing areas where you do one test of a lagoon and then assume that the nutrients will be safe? Is she providing any assistance, or has she directed her staff to look at assisting in the development of that kind of equipment?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, the Member talks about testing on an individual farm, and my understanding is that there is technology that an individual can purchase to do their testing. But he is right that those tests would not take a reading as the fluid is being applied to the land. What we are involved in through the Manure Management Initiative is a project that will test the level of nutrients in the fluid on an ongoing process as it is being applied to the land.

That is an initiative that is going on right now that the Department is involved in, and we hope will be successful, because that is the kind of reading that producers need, that they can get the most benefit out of the fluid and ensure that they do not overapply in one area and

underapply in a different area. Because if you overapply, you are actually wasting an awful lot, and producers do not like to see that happen, nor do we.

But those are the kinds of projects that we are working on, and individuals could be testing their nutrients at a commercial facility. The Member asked if we were doing any of that. The Member will remember that in 1991 all the provincial labs were privatized by his government, so if an individual wants to test their manure for nutrients they would have to send it to a private lab or purchase their own equipment that they could test with on their farms. We are working on a project that will, through the Manure Management Initiative, I hope will be successful, that would give more adequate information to the farmer as the fluid is being injected into the soil to ensure that there is proper management.

As well, Mr. Chairman, there are other projects where they are looking at blending also the manure from the lagoon once it is tested, if it has not got the right grade of nutrients to add commercial fertilizer and to bring it up to the level that is required to meet the needs of the producer for a particular crop.

Mr. Jack Penner: The Minister is probably aware that many of the farmers are starting to use satellite imagery during harvesting of their crop. Their combines are equipped with measurement devices that are directed or applied through satellite technology. It gives you a reading of the yields on an ongoing basis down the field within—you can measure the yield within a couple of hundred feet on an ongoing basis. You plug the disk into your computer and it lays out for you a program of fertilizer application. You can install that same disk in your fertilizer applicator, and it will vary its rate of application as you go down the field based on what the harvest results have been on the combine.

Of course, when you buy chemical fertilizer, it is relatively easy to set your equipment or to add a variation monitor to your fertilizer applicator. However, it is more difficult when you apply liquid fertilizers, especially if you do not know what the rate of nutrient is flowing

through your pipes into the ground. We do attach behind the liquid fertilizer applicator a dry nitrogen applicator and/or a phosphate applicator into the same equipment. We are able to vary our applications and monitor the application of the manure or the effluent into the ground and supplement with commercial fertilizers if we have to. We would like not to do that if we do not have to because, as I said before, if we can move to a situation where we can raise enough livestock on our farm to provide the nutrient to grow the crop, then I think we are relatively close to reducing our cost of production on an acre of grain very substantively using something that is sometimes now costly to get rid of, and that is the waste of the animal manure.

So I am wondering if the Minister, and she did not answer the question, is providing assistance to somebody or if she is directing her department to be involved in developing the new technology that is required? I heard what you said as far as the previous government doing away with the testing labs, and I think that was a great idea to do that, to privatize them, because I think the efficiency factor can be increased relatively dramatically. However, that should not preclude a government from providing some financial assistance to somebody that is in the process of or has the technology and the ability to develop a process of application that could be utilized by everybody and then could be marketed through whoever the manufacturer or developer of that product would be.

I just want to know whether there is any kind of financial assistance being designated towards the development of that kind of technology by her department.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, the Member asked if there was financial assistance from the Department for those kinds of projects. For the particular project that I was talking about and that he has been asking about, there is financial assistance through ARDI. There is funding through MRAC and certainly through the Manure Initiatives. These three groups work closely together to ensure that there is co-operation and they understand where the funding from one group is going. Also, once a project is developed to a certain level, then the Department gets involved and does demonstration plots and

works with the producers and with the developer of the project to collect data that will then be helpful for the producers.

* (15:20)

The individual brings a project forward. I want to tell the Member, as I indicated, there is this project that is in its very early stages but it is being developed. They are looking at ways to ensure that we can maximize the use of manure on farmland to the benefit of the producer, funding agencies. Certainly the Department is following up on it, and if there is a request for information from the Department staff there, I am certainly prepared to be involved with them and then do, as has always been the case, the demonstration projects to collect the data.

Mr. Jack Penner: Could the Minister tell us with whom the Department might be working, who some of the proponents might be of developing this kind of technology or who some of the companies might be that they are working with, or individuals?

Ms. Wowchuk: I will take that as notice and provide the Member with a list of all the Manure Initiatives that are in progress right now.

Mr. Jack Penner: I think, Mr. Chairman, it is extremely important that we recognize the importance of dealing responsibly with livestock wastes to assure people that our farmers are, as they have always been, true stewards of the land.

I think far too often we have not given farmers enough credit for the absolute awareness of ensuring that the land will be maintained for their future generations, because many of our farms today are dependent on the virtual long-term existence of the steward of the previous owner. Most of the farmers, I would say, that are in existence today recognize the importance of maintaining an environment within its own operation to ensure that that soil base will have the productive capacity to continue providing for a family's livelihood. Not only a family's livelihood but to ensure that the security of the food supply and the safety of the food supply is maintained on a long-term basis.

I do not think we give farmers enough credit. Far too often we are far too critical. We use a very critical eye to examine the operation of the farm. Much of what is said very often leads me to a great deal of distress because I do not think that we often enough give thanks to the farmer for maintaining a secure base and to ensuring that the water quality is maintained in rural Manitoba.

We sometimes forget that many of these farmers depend on the water on their own farm for their drinking and daily use supplies through wells and others. They would be the last ones that would want to see any contaminants come into their own safe supply. Similarly, farmers normally are the ones that would want to ensure that the rivers and streams that run through our farms are not contaminated to any degree because our livestock and everything surrounding it is dependent on the viability of those rivers and streams and the quality of water in those rivers and streams.

So I think sometimes when we review public data, not data so much, but when we publish articles or people write articles about the quality of the land and the quality of the water, the security of the quality of the land and water, I think we far too often do not give credit where credit is due and that is to the main operators that operate in those agricultural areas. I think it is time that we recognize that. Maybe we should at some point in time consider an award instead of a criticism of those very farms.

The reason I raise all this is because I received a number of calls from primary producers over the last week or so when the Minister released her publication on the discussion paper on the Livestock Stewardship 2000. I had not read the entire document until the last couple of days, when I started getting all these calls from people that had viewed it. They asked what the intent was or what the purpose was of the discussion paper, whether it was designed to be a criticism of the agricultural community or whether it was in fact designed to lead us to a better process.

The first call I got was from a friend of mine. I said quite frankly, I am sorry I cannot respond to that because it would appear to me

that it was truly an effort designed to ensure that we pass regulations and legislation that would demonstrate our desire to maintain the environment. Then the person said: Why are we raising the issues in North Carolina? Why are we making mention of North Carolina, what they have done in North Carolina, and the lessons we have learned from North Carolina? Why are we raising the Netherlands and what they have done in the Netherlands? Why are we raising Denmark because they all appear to be negative issues?

They said: Why are we raising the profile of the negativeness? Why do we not raise the profile of those countries and/or provinces and/or individuals and profile those that have been very successful in developing a livestock industry without damaging the environment? Why do we want to profile on the negative?

I said I am sorry. I do not know. So I am going to ask the Minister: Why would she want to profile the negative in her discussion paper? Why would she want to reference those countries and/or states that appeared to have had some environmental difficulties? Why would she not have reflected on the positive side of the issue to promote the positive side of development and demonstrate to all of society that you can in fact develop a livestock industry and be very environmentally friendly while you are doing it?

Ms. Wowchuk: I just want to ask the Member before I answer this question. It appears we are into the Animal Industry and Veterinary Services and Soils and Crops. I wonder if the Member can indicate whether he has completed his questions on Marketing and Farm Business Management. We could then bring the different staff in.

Mr. Jack Penner: Well, Mr. Chairman, I have no difficulty in bringing other staff in. I want to indicate to you, though, that in my view, and the reason I raise this, in my view, this is extremely important in marketing, market development and research, this whole area. That is how closely integrated and related this should be viewed as.

I want to ask the Minister some other questions in this regard, because I think it is

important. I would like to know and certainly if the Minister wants to bring staff in, by all means. I am sure we have a lot of chairs that staff can sit at if she has staff available. Let us bring them in and have them here so she can ask the staff those questions. There is lots of room to sit here.

* (15:30)

Ms. Wowchuk: I thank the Member for his comments and his clarification. I want to just go back to one of the beginning comments that the Member made. He referred to manure as waste. I want to remind him of a story that I heard several years ago when I was at a meeting in Dauphin. I was talking about the livestock industry and I referred to manure as waste. I was very quickly reminded by the members of the agriculture industry that, in fact, this is not waste, and we should not refer to manure as waste. We should refer to it as a resource. Indeed, manure is a resource. It is not a waste, it is a very valuable resource. I just remind the Member of that, because I was called to order by people in the agriculture industry, in the livestock industry, who indicated to me that when you use the word "waste," you put a negative connotation on it, and we should recognize this by-product of the livestock industry for the value that it really has.

The Member refers to the document, and he said he was not quite sure of the purpose of this document. I would ask him to refer to the first page of the document where it says: this discussion paper is the starting point for public consultation on the future of our livestock industry. Your input will help the Manitoba Government determine how the industry should grow in an environmentally sustainable way. I have to tell the Member that, prior to putting this discussion paper out, we had discussions with people in the industry, with the representatives of the agriculture industry—people in the hog industry and in the beef industry—and had a very thorough discussion with them as to what we were doing. Certainly, we all recognize, and the Member outlined it in his earlier speech where he said: agriculture is changing in Manitoba. We have advantages, we have a cost-of-production advantage, and certainly with the elimination of the Crow, that advantage has to—people have to look at ways to use this change to their

advantage. They are moving away from grain production into livestock production.

That does not mean, Mr. Chairman, that we are not going to have any grain production in Manitoba. We have a large base of land that is very good for grain production, but people are looking at ways to add value to this grain, and they are looking to put it through cattle, through hogs, sheep, chickens, goats, any kind of livestock that they can add market value to. I talked about the goat and the sheep industry many times. If you look at the amount of sheep and goat meat that is consumed around the world, there are certainly opportunities for our producers to take advantage of that. When you see the rising numbers, I think that people are recognizing that and we will see more of those species raised in Manitoba. At the present time there is an increase in the cattle. We have people talking about feedlots in Manitoba, and certainly with one processing plant for hogs in Manitoba and another one proposed for Manitoba, farmers are looking at how they can increase their hog production.

We want assurances that it will happen in a sustainable way. The Member questions why we would outline what is happening in North Carolina and the Netherlands. I would remind him that my predecessor, his colleague, quite often referred to the problems in Taiwan and the problems in North Carolina with their hog industry and wanted to ensure that we looked at those examples to ensure that we did not make the same mistakes in Manitoba. So it was an issue for my predecessor, for his government, and certainly we want to look at what is happening in other countries.

In this document, we look at what other countries are doing, we look at the size of operations in other provinces, and some of the lessons that we can learn from other countries because we, Mr. Chairman, should not be trying to reinvent the wheel. We should look at what other countries are doing, look at what we can gain from their experiences, and then apply it to Manitoba so that in 30 or 40 years we can ensure that indeed the expansion is sustainable. That is the goal, to look at what has happened, so I have absolutely no difficulty in what is in this document. Experiences elsewhere, intensive livestock

production is not new, and technologies and practices are rapidly involving.

Manitoba can benefit by experiences, examining the mistakes and appropriate decisions made elsewhere, and the differences and similarities of our jurisdictions. That is what we are looking at here. We are looking at what has happened in Denmark. We are looking at what happened in the Netherlands, North Carolina. We do not only go there. I believe that we also look at other provinces and look at what is happening there.

Then, Mr. Chairman, if you look at the document, we ask people what they think. How can we ensure opportunities continue to exist for all size of farms throughout Manitoba? How can we ensure that equal environmental controls are in place for all types of operations? This document is intended and is put in place to set out a framework for a public discussion.

As I say, I could indicate to the Member, he says he has had several calls in his office asking questions about the document. I would invite him to ask those people to call my office if they want clarification on the document. We would be quite happy to have that discussion. As well, I would hope that these people who have some questions will come out to the public meetings that are scheduled for later this summer and indeed put their suggestions and their ideas forward to ensure that we do develop a plan for growth that is viable and sustainable. To do that, we must consider the issues from all perspectives. We must consider the issue from the economic, from the environmental and social aspects. All of these things have to come into consideration.

Certainly, Mr. Chairman, I think that there is a great future for the livestock industry in Manitoba. I have had discussions with the producers, and I think that this document is the starting point for public discussion. It summarizes Manitobans' foremost concerns surrounding the livestock industry: specifically, environmental protection, land-use planning, quality of life, viability of the rural economy. It also discusses trends that are influencing the industry, the regulatory environment and experiences of other livestock-producing areas.

The objective is to raise awareness and stimulate thought and focus public discussion.

So that is the purpose for the document. Certainly, his colleagues, in their discussions on the growth of the livestock industry, talked about the issues of North Carolina, the issues of Taiwan. I am sure if we look far enough, they would even talk about the issues in the Netherlands, where there are changes being made, at this time, to their industry. So, hopefully, the process will allow for discussion and will come out with a plan that will result in the continued growth of our livestock industry in this province.

Mr. Jack Penner: Well, Mr. Chairman, my question remains: Why would we have focussed on the negative aspect of the development of this industry by identifying all the concerns, by identifying the concerns that have been expressed many times, at public meetings, and largely from information obtained through the Internet. Having spent enough time on the Internet now, you know that much of the information put on the Internet is put on by individuals who have, very often, no expertise at all. Anybody can put anything they choose to on the Internet. Anybody attempting to use that as a base of expert information would have to be questioned.

But I want to ask the Minister why she would focus on the negatives of North Carolina, why she would focus on the negatives of the Netherlands, and why she would focus on the negatives of Denmark instead of finding areas of either Canada, the U.S., or other parts of the world that had used positive processes and used those examples of how we can in fact provide a sustainable agricultural livestock industry without impacting negatively the environment in this province. Why would she have focused on the negative? I go back to this document. I will end the question there, and I want her to respond strictly to the centre part of her document, focussing on North Carolina, the Netherlands, and Denmark, and why she would have chosen those areas of the world and the negative side of the production of hogs, largely, in those countries.

* (15:40)

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, the Member talks about the issues that are outlined in this document about North Carolina, the Netherlands and Denmark. I would also ask the Member to refer farther into the document, on page 33, where we talk about the regulatory approach throughout North America, and we look at British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, and again, this one referred to North Dakota, Iowa, and talked about the regulations that are in place in different places. We do have good regulations here in Manitoba, but certainly you can always improve on regulations. The regulations that we have in Manitoba have just been adopted in Alberta. Alberta is moving towards Manitoba's regulations because they recognize them as good regulations. No matter what you have, you can always look at improving them, and that is part of the process. Our industry is growing; we want to ensure that it grows in a sustainable way. By looking at all of these things, we may change some of the regulations. It may not be; it may be that the regulations will stay the same. We want to hear what the public has to say; we want to hear what the farming community has to say.

In this document, we have looked at the regulatory approaches of other provinces. We have outlined the acts that are in place in Manitoba so that the public is aware that we indeed do have a regulatory approach here in Manitoba. We outlined the various steps that we have to go through to build an operation. The Planning Act, the provincial land use policy regulations, the municipal livestock planning and zoning, The Environmental Act, under which is the livestock manure and mortality management regulation, which I spoke about earlier.

All of those things are outlined in this document to give the public an understanding of all the regulations that are in place now, because many times, Mr. Chairman, we hear people say, well, you know, the industry is expanding in Manitoba, there is no regulation, there is just unfettered development in Manitoba. That is why we wanted to ensure that the facts are out there as we began this discussion about our regulations.

I want to ensure that there is enough information out there to frame a healthy

discussion because we know the industry is growing. But, you know, Mr. Chairman, the Member asked why we are focussing on the negative, on North Carolina. I want to read to you a bit of an overview of North Carolina and then the next line says "lessons learned." And what have we learned from North Carolina? The lesson that has been learned is that, and I quote: The design of manure storage structures should incorporate sufficient free-board capacity to withstand heavy rains. There must be appropriate distance between manure-managed storage structures and water courses. A requirement for additional engineering should be considered for the existing manure-storage facilities that do not need regulatory setback requirements. Sufficient cropland should be available to apply manure at a rate according to the crop nutrient regulations' requirements.

These are the things. North Carolina made some mistakes when they were expanding their industry, and these are the lessons that they have learned from their expansion of the industry. And we are just pointing out what North Carolinians have learned.

Let us look at the Netherlands. Their hog production, their livestock production and poultry in the Netherlands is very high on a very small base of land, and as a result, the livestock sector produces far more manure than is needed to fertilize their crops. The amount of manure produced in excess of crop requirements each year is equal to the total amount of manure produced annually by livestock in Manitoba. I do not see that as a negative, Mr. Chairman. I see that as a fact. The fact is that in the Netherlands they produce more manure than we do each year. The amount of manure produced in excess of crop requirements each year is equal to the total amount of manure produced. That is their excess. We are pointing out a fact.

This situation resulted in an over-application of manure on crops, particularly in eastern and southern Netherlands where the most intensive livestock production occurs. The environmental problems are complicated by the over-application of inorganic fertilizer which is relatively cheap. In response to the problem, the Netherlands introduced manure production rights to restrict the production of animal

manure. Animal feed with low mineral content was promoted, causing phosphate levels in manure to fall at an average of 10 percent. The sale of the manure was also promoted to redistribute manure from areas of high stocking densities to areas of low stocking densities. Improved fertilizer recommendations and the replacement of fertilizers by manure have led to a 30% reduction in fertilizer use in recent years.

In 1998, the Netherlands introduced a mineral accounting system. Livestock farmers over a certain density are required to register nitrate and phosphate input used in fertilizers and animal feed and in nutrient output in the form of products and manure. A levy is applied on nutrient losses greater than the allowable standard. Apart from the levy, the accounting system is similar to the Manitoba manure-management requirements for livestock production.

What is the lesson we have learned from the Netherlands? Mr. Chairman, the cumulative nutrient supply provided by manure and fertilizer should not exceed the crop nutrient requirements of the same area. Nutrient management requires careful planning each year to prevent environmental problems. Correcting excessive nutrient application after environmental damage has occurred is expensive and difficult.

Mr. Chairman, I could go on to outline to you what the history is on Denmark and the lessons learned there. But the reason I am pointing this out is the Member has indicated that this is a negative to provide this information. As I read this, I do not see where the Member is picking up negatives. What we are doing is outlining what other countries have done and the lessons they have learned in their application. Many of the lessons that they have learned are things that we are doing already. These are things being done in Manitoba. So I think that we should be proud of the fact that in Manitoba we are ahead of where other provinces are.

Mr. Chairman, we talk about the Netherlands and why we outline those. I want to just share with you the pig density in those countries as compared to Manitoba. In the Netherlands, which is a very small piece of land, they have a

total land base of 1.9 million hectares of land, and their density per hectare is 6.4 hogs per hectare.

* (15:50)

In Denmark, their density is 4.4 hogs per hectare. In Belgium and Luxembourg, they have 5.2 hogs per hectare. In Taiwan, there is a density of 7.2 hogs per hectare, North Carolina 3.4 hogs per hectare. But, if we come down to Manitoba, the density in Manitoba is 0.37 hogs per hectare. So we compare, Mr. Chairman. We have provided the information to the public about how large the industry is in those countries, the kinds of challenges they face, how they address them, and the lessons that can be learned from them. As I say, if we look at many of the lessons they have learned, some of those things have been implemented in Manitoba.

But, by putting this information forward, I do not see it as a negative as the Member does. I see it as information that I believe will stimulate a very good discussion, and I hope that we will have excellent presentations. I know that we have appointed an excellent committee that will listen to the public, go through the information and write, I hope, a very good report for our government.

Mr. Jack Penner: Mr. Chairman, the Minister has read some of the presentations into the record, some of the references into the record. I think if she reads the whole section, experiences elsewhere, she would have to agree that the whole connotation of that section is a negative connotation on the industry. I have to wonder why she would want to bring that negative kind of connotation to the debate. What relevance is the Netherlands to Manitoba when our land mass capacity is at least four or five, maybe ten times the actual agricultural land capacity for the application of fertilizer to our lands and what relevance to the Netherlands? Why the reflection on the negative aspect of overapplication of manures in the Netherlands? Why the connotation or the reference to the encroachments of established urban residential areas in leading to land-use conflicts in North Carolina?

Why the reference to the environmental concerns and the state's climate and topography

when the North Carolina topography has no relevance in respect to what Manitoba's topography is. Why the reference to the high hog-production concentration in the eastern part of the state in North Carolina and many of the storage structures built on the hillsides when we have virtually no hillsides in Manitoba to construct storage facilities on? Why the reference to the overflow concerns in the breach forms on the hillsides and the spillage of that into streams and water? Why the reference of the manure runs running downhill into the nearest service water courses? Why the reference to hurricanes when seldom ever we see the impacts of hurricanes in this area? Why the reference to the negative land mass and feed grain production in North Dakota when we have the exact adverse to that? We have a tremendous land base and a tremendous capacity for food production and fertilizer applications.

I truly do not understand why we would use this kind of an approach to try and gain a positive out of a process that is going to be very public. What this will do is ignite the fuse to bring all the detractors into the debate, and at the end of the day the Minister will see that she will have a very difficult time, based on what she has heard, writing a positive report. It will be very, very difficult for her. I say to her that she could have very easily gone and provided a balance to the whole paper, and I do not see that balance.

When I look at the "Common Concerns" section, again it is a very large section dealing with all the concerns and yet where do I see the positives? The only positives that I see is that she has outlined in part of the document some aspects of the regulations and guidelines that the previous government has enacted.

I think the reason why Alberta is looking at our legislation and other provinces are looking at the Manitoba legislation that has been enacted to ensure that proper environmental processes were established to meet the needs and the demands of the livestock industry is because it is probably the best legislation anywhere in North America. Indeed, some experts have commended the Department of Agriculture and their staff for the integrity and for the way they have ensured that the legislation and the regulations would be such that agriculture could operate with and the

agricultural operators would ensure that the environment would be protected. I give the staff in the Department of Agriculture a tremendous amount of credit for having worked very closely with their minister and government to ensure that that kind of legislation was written and the regulations reflected that industry's needs.

I believe that the provincial land use policy is second to none in this country. I believe that the municipal livestock planning and zoning act and The Environment Act are without question if not the best then very close to the best in all of North America. I respect what the Minister is saying, that one can always make additional improvements, too. I say to her: Be very careful when you put out this kind of a document that this document does not just lead to the negative side of the debate.

What you want out of this are some very positive recommendations that would encourage the acceptance of the livestock industry by the general public as an environmentally friendly industry that can be sustained over the long period of time. The way you do that is by bringing a positive debate to the table. I truly believe that if the Minister would have given some significant thought to what she put into this document she could have encouraged that debate in that direction, but yet she chose to apply the negative side of this.

I want to ask the Minister what the process will be, how many committee members she is going to appoint to this, and who will write the report after the public process has transpired.

Ms. Wowchuk: Well, you know, Mr. Chairman, the Member talks about a negative spin. I guess that is the job of opposition. The job of opposition is to create a negative spin out there on things that the Government does.

I want to tell the Member that, as I read this report, I see many positives in it. When we talk about the growth of the industry, the need that the growth of the industry take place in a sustainable way, we see these as positives. The Member says that we are raising negative issues. Well, I think that the Member is either choosing not to hear or refusing to hear what is out there, because if he is listening he will hear, he will

have heard that these issues have been raised in the public, whether or not the industry is sustainable, whether we have proper regulations, whether we have enough legislation to regulate the industry.

* (16:00)

That is why we have pointed out in this document what the regulations are, what the process is for the industry to expand. The planning act, the municipal livestock and zoning, all of those things are pointed out in here to ensure that the public has the information, and that those issues that people have been raising with concerns to the industry, indicating that there are no regulations, that there are unfettered development, that this information is made available to the public for those kinds of discussions.

The Member says we have good regulations, and I do not think that we should be afraid to examine them. When they are brought under scrutiny then let us have the debate and let us have the discussion as to whether or not they are the right regulations. When you put out the information, that discussion can take place. Certainly the arguments that are put forward by the opponents or people who have concerns, when they are not able to sustain those arguments, then we are in a more credible position. We will show that the regulations that we have are good regulations. We will listen to the public, and maybe some of the regulations will be changed. But there is nothing wrong with looking at where you are at, looking at what is happening in other countries, and building on those.

Certainly, the Member said: Why did you only raise common concerns? Well, these are issues that the public is asking questions about, our groundwater, our groundwater withdrawals, surface water, phosphates, runoff, direct access, odour. The Member himself talked earlier about odours and the need to address that issue. Disease transmission, management of mortalities, excess manure application, land use planning and development approvals, property values, quality of life, the trend toward larger operations. These are the kinds of issues that the

public is raising. We are outlining in here the issues that have been raised, and I know that the Member has heard these issues as well.

We have regulations. We have experiences in other countries where there is a higher density of hogs than we have in Manitoba. Again, this has not only to deal with hogs; this is also to deal with cattle and other livestock. We should remember that, because there is the opportunity and the interest for growth in other aspects of the livestock industry, particularly in the feedlot industry. I hope that we can encourage that, so that we could in fact some day get back the processing industry here in Manitoba. But we have bison, we have all other species that could someday be in very large concentrations in some areas. So we should not be afraid to talk about it, and we should not be afraid to raise what is happening in other countries.

The Member talks about the fact that there are hurricanes in North Carolina and that they are not here. Certainly, there are hurricanes in North Carolina, so they have different issues to address than we have here. That is just part of what North Carolina is about.

I think the Member's issue is he is trying to put some kind of negative spin on this. I want to tell the Member he can try to put whatever kind of negative spin he wants to on the growth of the livestock industry in this province. I support the growth of the livestock industry in Manitoba. I want to work with producers to ensure that that growth takes place in a sustainable way. The Department is doing the work that is required to ensure that producers have the resources and the educational tools that they need to have this growth take place. We can see that there is growth in Manitoba and there will be more growth in Manitoba in the livestock industry, basically because we have changes in transportation costs. We have a large land base, and farmers are looking for alternatives.

Ultimately, Mr. Chairman, it will be the farmers who will decide whether they want to change from grain production to livestock production. I think that it is very healthy to have a debate and a discussion. I look forward to those meetings.

The Member questioned about the chair. The chairman of the committee is Mr. Ed Tyrchniewicz. Also on the committee are Mr. Nick Carter and Mr. John Whitaker. It will be the responsibility of those people to hear the presentations and to look at the regulations that we now have and to get the information that they want and then to write the report.

I have a lot of confidence that we have a very balanced board where we have the representation from the academic side. We have representation from the environmental side, as well as, a farmer and a municipal leader. I think all of those are very important areas that we need to have representation from, and I am very confident in the quality and the level of knowledge and the ability of these three people to listen to the public and write a report that will be ready for government later this year.

Mr. Jack Penner: I am very pleased to see Mr. Ed Tyrchniewicz as chairman of the committee. I think Mr. Tyrchniewicz will bring a level of professionalism to the chair. I have had a significant number of dealings with Mr. Tyrchniewicz when he was in transportation and in other areas such as the development of the ARDI program and a number of other areas. So I have a great deal of appreciation for Mr. Tyrchniewicz's ability. Mr. Tyrchniewicz was, of course, one of the people who worked very closely at the University of Manitoba with Professor Clay Gilson who passed away a few days ago, and, of course, Mr. Gilson will be missed very, very much by much of the agricultural community.

Mr. Gilson contributed very dramatically to agriculture and the agriculture industry. We will never forget Mr. Gilson in the sugar beet industry and his profound knowledge of the regulatory process as well as the economic impact of the industry and the reports that he had drafted in order to try and convince the federal government to maintain the industry.

Of course, Mr. Gilson has lent his expertise in many other areas of crop development, transportation issues. The list is virtually unending. He leaves a very fond memory with us, with the agricultural community. I certainly want to go on record as having recognized his

contribution to the agricultural industry in this province and, indeed, Canada and North America. So he leaves us with a saddened heart, but I am sure we will have the opportunity to express those views and many others in this Legislative Assembly at a later date. Truly he will be a person that is missed by the agriculture community.

I want to just reflect on the responsibilities of the Committee and the attempt the Minister is making at putting a positive face on a document where I see far more negatives than positives. I think she will hear that from many others in the industry. There are a great deal of concerns that are being expressed. A number of them have been expressed to me personally over the last couple of days about this document and what it will lead to.

* (16:10)

The Minister has an interesting way of sort of slapping one in the face with her interpretation of what one has said. That is, of course, up to her. If she wants to be that kind of a person dealing with the issue, that is up to her. I say to her that the common concerns she addresses such as groundwater, sensitive areas, nitrates, drawn water withdrawals, surface water, phosphates, runoffs, direct access of livestock to waterways which have been common throughout North America, indeed, I believe the world. When we visited Africa a few years ago, we saw the migrating herds of wildebeest on the Serengeti Plain and the impacts that they had, both positive and negative, to the environment of that area. One could not help but reflect on what the bison had been like in this province before the white man came to this part of the country, and the huge herds, and the impact that they had to waters and streams, because that is the only access they had to drinking water.

In many parts of this country, whether it is the deer roaming, the elk or much of the other livestock, the only access they have to drinking water is by walking up to a stream and drinking from the stream. Hopefully, the Minister is not indicating that we should fence off every stream and every aspect of a stream's waterways to livestock, because I think that would truly be infringing on Nature itself.

I could go on and read into the record things that she makes reference to: trampling shore-lines, urinating in water and all those kind of things. I am not sure how relevant; maybe it is relevant. But I am not sure whether it always gives that relevance for a positive debate of a developing industry. She refers to odours and disease transmission and management of mortalities and excessive manure applications, land use, land values, quality of life and trend toward larger operations. I mean, for somebody living in a small community or a large community that has no knowledge of the industry at all, reading this portion and then reading the central portion referencing other countries and the negative impacts that other countries have experienced due to overexpansion of livestock industry, to leave this document and people that are reading it to a debate, that would be a very negative debate, I think.

Mr. Chris Aglugub, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Truly, if we would have started off with this document by emphasizing the Manitoba regulations and guidelines and the positive impact that we have had on the environment by imposing legislation and regulations that were designed specifically to protect the environment, if we would have started out that way in The Water Rights Act, The Farm Practices Protection Act, The Environment Act, The Animal Care Act and the technical review committees and their responsibilities, and all those kinds of things.

I mean, you could have had a document that would have been seen as a positive document to be taken out to the people to bring a positive debate to the expansion of the livestock industry in a very positive manner. Yet we have attempted to draft a document that I think many will see as a very negative document.

Now, having said that, Mr. Chairman, I have a colleague of mine that would like to raise in this section some issues in regard to agriculture developing and marketing and more specifically maybe with irrigation and irrigation development. So I will turn the mike over to my colleague from Portage la Prairie.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, before we get the questions from the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Fauschou), I want to acknowledge that the Member recognizes that there are some good things in this report. He is just not happy with the order that we have put them in, and that we should have put the regulations and the planning act first and then come into the other information. If that would be the Member's major concern with this document, then that is fine, but I think that the public has enough interest in this issue that they will read through the whole document. They will read through where the livestock industry is growing and the changes that are taking place, and they will read through the regulations.

You know, the Member is saying that we are putting on a negative issue here, a negative spin to the industry. If he wants to take that attitude, I guess that is where he is at, but I want to say that these are issues that are in the public's mind. The public has raised these. I have to say, Mr. Chairman, that we have a very sophisticated public out there. They know these issues and they do have issues that they have raised with us, and we have put some of those under concerns. I would not want for the Member to think that by putting this information forward that they were going to shape the discussion. I believe that the public is sophisticated enough that they will read through this document, but they will bring their own issues forward.

The Member also talked about the wallabies and the impact on the environment by wild animals. I kind of got the impression that he was saying that work should not be done on animals on riverbanks. The wild animals go through the rivers and have an impact on the environment, and it comes and it goes with the animals, but those are wild animals and there is no way to control that.

We have domestic animals, and there has been work done over the years by the Department and by various groups to try to keep domestic animals out of the rivers. His government has done it, other governments have done it, but this is not going to happen overnight, Mr. Chairman. This is a long process, and various

things have been done, repair work to riverbanks.

You cannot control wild animals going through the river, but there have been projects over the years to get farm operations to move further back from riverbanks. I would hope that we would continue, and it is our intention to continue in that direction because we recognize the importance of keeping streams clean. Animals will always cross through them, but if there are ways, if you could keep livestock out of the riverbed, it helps all of us and ensures a safer environment and addresses the issue of water quality and fish habitat and all of those kinds of things.

This is a long-term project and will continue to be a long-term project because it is not something that can happen overnight, but I am looking forward to hearing the discussion. I know that we have a very capable committee in place to listen to the presentations and that the public has issues that they want to discuss. I think any discussion is healthy. From that discussion we will review the regulations we have, and should there be need to improve legislation—in fact, my colleague the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Ms. Friesen) introduced a bill today that will address some of the changes in legislation that we propose, and the Member will have the opportunity to discuss those as well.

Nothing is stagnant, Mr. Chairman. It is an ongoing process. Agriculture is not what it was in the 1900s; it is not what it was in 1950 or in 1960. We are into the new millennium, and we know that in ten years' time agriculture will be different again. It is an ongoing process, and we in that process have to continually, as government, look at what regulations are in place and how we can improve them to ensure that this growth and change in our agriculture industry, in our livestock industry, will happen in a sustainable way.

Mr. Chairman, if I could ask a question, if I could follow up—a question for clarification?

* (16:20)

Mr. Chairperson: The Honourable Minister.

Ms. Wowchuk: The Member indicated that they now want to go on to Irrigation, and I wonder: Is he then prepared to pass 4.(a), (b), and let us go on to irrigation.

Mr. Jack Penner: No, Mr. Chairman, we are going to have some more discussion on it. We just had some discussion here, and I think we are going to leave that for tomorrow, if that is the Minister's will. We will leave Irrigation for tomorrow. We want to also continue this section tomorrow. We have a number of issues to raise in this section before we continue on. There are Veterinary Services, and the operation of Soils and Crops, Irrigation Development, Food Development Centre, all those issues we have not raised yet. So we will continue Marketing and Farm Business Management discussion tomorrow.

Mr. Chairman, in reference to the farm business development and marketing development, I think it is important that we recognize that this province has a tremendous opportunity. If we take a positive approach, and if we leave the industry with the view that this province is truly progressive in nature, and that we want to approach business development initiatives in a very positive manner, and that we are what we say we are, (1) that we are concerned about the environment, (2) that we are willing to pass legislation that will ensure that, that we are indeed bound and determined to cause jobs to value-added initiatives, and that we are serious about developing new markets in new areas of the world, then I think we will develop a positive attitude and portray ourselves as a *government* and a province with a positive approach. We then will encourage, through that process, industries and/or businesses to come visit us, take a look at who we are, what we are, and what potential we have, and therefore create an atmosphere that I think will be seen as very positive. People, like the Maple Leafs and the Schneiders of the world, in other industries, will want to make their homes here and develop here, and provide employment opportunities here.

That was our intent, and that was our direction when we governed this province. Hopefully, this minister and her government are not losing sight of that.

When I look at this document compared to the document that we put forward as a discussion item on the value-added initiatives and the opportunities there, it is a totally different approach. That is why I talked about the negativity of the Livestock Stewardship document that she has put forward. Mr. Chairman, when you want to talk about the quality of life, and the possibilities for the development of qualities of life, we have some tremendous opportunity. We have a land mass with virtually nobody living there, from Churchill right down to the U.S. border, and we can provide privacies and we can provide opportunities without encroachment and to others in an almost unlimited manner. Yet the Minister wants to use such things as encroachment, and the detriment of our sensitive areas and direct access and overfertilization and phosphoric pollutants. All these kinds of things come forward in this document that she should have been, in my view, using this document to portray the industry in a positive manner.

Yet she wants to say that the sensitivity of odour differs greatly from one individual to another. High concentrations of very strong odours can result in nasal irritations, trigger symptoms in individuals with breathing afflictions and asthma, or add to stress a person may be feeling. The three main sources of odours on livestock operations are the livestock housing or containment area, the manure storage site or structure, and the application of manure to land. The intensity of odour depends on a wide range of factors such as the number of animals, the manure management system and the type of animals being raised. Does that sound like a positive statement? Does it, Mr. Chairman?

I say to the Minister that she should very seriously reconsider, and maybe give some real thought to what kind of a spin she wants to create for the industry and what kind of a picture she wants to paint to others that know nothing about the livestock industry by publishing this kind of statement. Look at disease transmission. Some neighbours of livestock operations are concerned about transmission of disease from animals to humans. How many times, Mr. Chairman, have you heard of a person becoming sick because of handling livestock? How many times have you heard that? How many

documentations of that have you seen in your history in this province? Articulate for me how many cases there are where humans have actually become deathly ill because of direct contact with livestock. It seldom, seldom, seldom happens. There are periodically times when there have been references made to it, but it becomes very difficult to actually prove that this has happened. Yet she goes on to say that bacteria, viruses, protozoa, that parasites can spread these types of diseases. Exactly. But not the animals.

Then she goes on to say bacteria are commonly found in livestock manure and may survive for some time. Only a few of these bacteria can be transmitted to humans from animals. Then she goes on to say about viruses that may be present in livestock manure do not normally survive for a long time, but this document gives the indication to the non-agricultural person, the non-knowledgeable person that there is a real danger here. I think, Mr. Chairman, there need not have been that kind of a negative reflection in this document, painting the industry in a colour that is not relevant to the reality of the industry.

As a matter of fact, the last barn that I wanted to go into, they told me: I am sorry, you cannot go in, and if we would let you in, they said you would have to make an appointment. We would ensure that we would have sterilized clothing here, and boots, and that you would be willing to take a shower with sterilant before you go into the barn because, sir, we do not know whether you are clean enough to go into our barn. We do not want you carrying on your shoes or on your clothes germs that are not prevalent in our barns.

As a matter of fact, many of these hog barns these days are so clean they do not let anybody in—

An Honourable Member: You could eat off the floor.

* (16:30)

Mr. Jack Penner: Yes, you could. Absolutely. So I say, Mr. Chairman that this document should have really had some very, very serious

consideration before it was allowed to be published and distributed publicly because I truly do not think that it serves very positively the livestock industry as a model of the cleanliness of the industry, and how environmentally concerned the farm community is in general.

If the Minister would have given us some indication of that in her document, then I can accept that, but she has not. Instead, she focuses on North Carolina and the negatives in North Carolina, the Netherlands and the negatives in the Netherlands, and the negatives in Denmark. Then she goes on to tell us how different Denmark is from Manitoba. I think, Madam or Mr.—I am not quite sure who is going to be in the chair.

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

Mr. Chairman, I think that this is truly an indication of how concerned our Minister is with the agricultural community whom she is supposed to serve. So I say that the Minister might want to next time, before she puts out a document like this, have some real reflection on how positive a picture she wants to paint of the farm community, and demonstrate the concerns that the farm community has with the environment, and how absolutely intense the need to maintain the quality of food coming off those farms to the general consumer is, and how concerned the farmers are with maintaining a standard that is higher than any other standard in the world in food production. That is how we, in my view, should portray our farmers—not with the kind of negative connotations that are contained in this document.

If the Minister would have wanted to, she could have done that very nicely, and I think she would have been commended from all aspects of the agricultural community. I am afraid that what she is going to get out of this document is exactly what she put into it.

Having said that, I would like to look at the economic development in agriculture for a short period of time and reflect specifically what has happened over the last couple of years in the province of Manitoba. We experienced in 1997, I guess, a disaster that we had seldom ever seen

in this province, and I refer to the flood of '97, the flood of the century. We saw, during that period of time, governments and agencies, people, volunteers and people from all over the world contribute from the bottom of their hearts to a voluntary effort, whether it was through the Red Cross or whether it was through Mennonite Disaster or whether it was through the hundreds of other individuals and organizations that contributed to helping rebuild the Red River Valley and many of the farmsteads in the Red River Valley and the communities.

The armed services came in and gave their all. Indeed, one of the young people that served in my community lost his hand because he touched a live wire going under a bridge and so he left part of his life behind in our community. We will never forget that young man. We will never forget the services that the armed forces contributed. We will never forget the Salvation Army and we will never forget many of the other organizations that contributed and gave, and we will never forget all the volunteers that came from all over the province and indeed some from the United States and other countries, came to help and they gave. They gave with their hearts.

Yet when I see what goes on in the southwest part of the province and when I see the politics that are being played in the southeast part of the province and the southwest of an issue that arose during the 1999 flood, I really have to wonder. It was really only a change in political philosophy that caused the change in effort to try and help rebuild the lives of those that were afflicted by no fault of their own. The water that came through the Red River Valley, Mr. Chairman, came out of the United States, most of it. Some of it was attributed to off-land runoffs over here, but much of it was contributed from outside. It came relatively fast and it went away relatively quickly, and yet, in the southwest it is still not gone. It came last year and it came in torrents of rain, the likes of which most of the people living there had never experienced before, and once it started raining, it did not quit. It would not quit raining, so people lost their livelihood; people lost their entire incomes for the entire year. The economic impact to the regions, to the total system is, I think, immeasurable.

Those people need a government that understands that. They need a minister that will be a proponent for them. They need a Premier that will stand by their side and say we will not allow you to lose your communities; we will not allow you to lose your schools; we will not allow you to lose your hospitals; and we will not allow you to lose your livelihood because of an act of God that you have no control over, and we will do for you exactly what governments have done in other parts of our province.

I will never forget, as long as I live, the look on people's faces when we came to the Swan River Valley in 1988 and saw the desperation that was there. You only need to look into people's eyes, and you only need to visit people's homes and you only need to look at the fear that people have of the unknown. The unknown is: Where are we going to get our survival from for next year? That is the unknown.

I think it is unfair, Mr. Chairman, that we have allowed ourselves to be subjected to that kind of political manoeuvring. I think it is unfair to the people in the southwest that they have been used as pawns in a political battle the likes of which I have not experienced in this Legislature. Between two levels of government that pretend to love each other, and I know that the Honourable Chairman has expressed many times that we need to express that love for each other, how do you really do it? Just by putting your arms around those people and saying we are going to stand by you? Just by verbal assurance? Or do you sometimes put your hand in your pocket and demonstrate clearly to them that you are serious, that you mean what you say.

* (16:40)

I have heard so many times when our minister has stood in this House and in other public forums and blamed the federal government for not coming to the table. Mr. Chairman, to blame is only to shrug off responsibility. It is only to shrug off responsibility. I think to demonstrate caring is to provide substance. That was done in the Red River Valley by everybody, by all levels of government, by all voluntary organizations, by all the people that were prevalent and involved with trying to

restore the lives of those that had been hurt. And yet we have virtually abandoned many of our residents in our province over whom we govern and over whom we are supposed to be the protector. We have virtually abandoned them. I think that is one of the most unfair situations that I have seen a group of our citizens being put in. I think it behoves us all to truly reflect on the needs.

I again this morning received a call from a resident, saying: How are we going to survive until next spring? This person is still not able to see this year even all his crop. I know the Minister will say we have crop insurance to cover, but, Mr. Chairman, \$50 an acre in crop insurance coverage goes a very short way today, in order to pay your taxes, your fuel bills, your capital cost, your interest on your land, especially when you have to borrow money to even live on until next year. The interest bill alone can virtually eat up the whole of the contribution of the amount that you would get from crop insurance. So it becomes a very, very small item of a total operation.

So, Mr. Chairman, I say to you that there needs to be some extraordinary help given to those people in the southwest area. In order to recognize the plight of those people that reside in the southwest and indeed southeast Manitoba, I would ask your support because I truly believe that you can have an influence in your caucus and with your Minister and with your Premier to try and influence their decision to put their hands in their pockets.

The previous government left you with a significant bank account that you can write a cheque to and put your amount of contribution on the table. Those people would thank you from the bottom of their hearts forever. You would save many of the destitute, especially the young businessmen and the young farmers. Those that feel destitute you would save from the mental anguish that they are facing today because some of them have been told if nothing will change they will lose their farms. Some of them have already lost them.

How would you feel, Mr. Chairman, if somebody came in here through no fault of your own and deprived you of your pay cheque that

you receive every other week and said there will be none from here on in? There will be none. You will have no income. What would you say? You would say: I will go on unemployment insurance. But they have no unemployment insurance to fall back on, because they are individual operators, they are individual businessmen that have given their life and their total investment invested in a food production facility to provide food for the rest of the world, and yet we as a province, we as individuals, we as citizens are walking away from them.

I am going to propose a resolution, Mr. Chairman, because this is agriculture and this is an agriculturally relative issue. It deals with income of people in agriculture.

I would move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Morris (Mr. Pitura), that

WHEREAS the current government's position on disaster aid for the farm families of southwestern Manitoba has left these families in dire circumstances; and

WHEREAS the Premier is using the suffering of these farm families as a negotiating pawn in his fight with the federal government; and

WHEREAS the current Minister of Agriculture has abandoned her role in standing up for the needs of these farm families.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED by this committee that the necessary funds required to support the aid program for the farm families affected by last year's disaster in 1999 be transferred from the Fiscal Stabilization Fund to the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture for an immediate program irrespective of the timing of the payment of a federal contribution.

* (16:50)

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please.

This resolution is out of order. It is not allowable to move funds from one item to another. This is moving funds from Fiscal Stabilization Fund to the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture.

Past Manitoba Supply Chairperson rulings and *Beauchesne's* Citation 951 provide precedent for ruling out of order this motion and any similar motions. So I declare the motion out of order.

Mr. Jack Penner: I challenge your ruling.

Mr. Chairperson: The Honourable Member for Emerson (Mr. Jack Penner) wishes to challenge the ruling of the Chair.

The ruling of the Chair has been challenged. Shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Mr. Chairperson: All those in favour, please respond by saying yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Chairperson: All those opposed, please respond by saying nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Chairperson: I consider that, in my opinion, the Nays have it, and the ruling of the Chair is therefore sustained.

An Honourable Member: Yeas and Nays, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Frank Pitura (Morris): Mr. Chairman, I will call for Yeas and Nays.

Mr. Chairperson: A formal vote has been requested. Two members are required to request a formal vote. Are there two members who request a formal vote?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Mr. Chairperson: The Honourable Member for Emerson (Mr. Jack Penner) and the Honourable Member for Morris (Mr. Pitura). The section of the Committee of Supply will be called together for the conducting of the formal vote.

Formal Vote

Mr. Chairperson: Call in the Members.

All sections in Chamber for formal vote.

Mr. Chairperson: In the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in the Chamber considering the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture and Food, a ruling of the Chairperson on whether or not a motion was in order was challenged. The ruling was sustained on a voice vote, at which point a formal vote was requested.

Therefore, the question before the Committee is: Shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained?

A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 26, Nays 18.

Mr. Chairperson: Therefore, the ruling of the Chair has been sustained.

The section of the Committee of Supply will now continue with consideration of the departmental Estimates. Order, please. We are on item 3.4. Agricultural Development and Marketing (a) Marketing and Farm Business Management (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to respond to the many issues that the Member put on the record. We are in the section dealing with marketing, and the Member began his comments by talking about whether our department was still committed to marketing of agriculture products. I want to tell the Member that indeed we are an exporting province and marketing is very important to this government. We continue to emphasize the importance of trade.

I must say, Mr. Chairman, that we have a tremendous interest in Manitoba by people from other countries. This morning I met with the minister of internal services and trade from Egypt. There is potential for a lot of trade with Egypt. Egypt is very interested in canola. In fact,

there is a company that will be exporting ostrich from Manitoba. That is one of the areas of diversification that the people have certainly been struggling with, but they will soon be announcing a trade in ostriches to Egypt. As well there is a company that is going to be building a canola processing plant in Egypt, from Manitoba. So Manitobans are very prepared to invest, and other countries are prepared to invest in Manitoba.

I mentioned having met with Egypt. Yesterday I met with the deputy minister of agriculture from Ukraine who is very interested in developing further trade and sending people to Manitoba to learn agriculture skills. They want to further the project that we have jointly with Saskatchewan, in Ukraine, on promotion of beef and the forage products. They are looking to have that project expanded. They are also looking to Manitoba to have opportunities—and across Canada—to bring workers over to Canada to learn our skills.

Later I am going to be meeting with representatives from Iraq, Mr. Chairman, who are interested in agriculture trade. Very recently I met with representatives from Italy who tell us and my departmental staff, who have been in Italy, talks about the tremendous technology that Italy has developed in the meat processing industry. They have been in Manitoba and have invited us back to come and look at their agriculture products. They have a technology that they want to share with us. They view Manitoba as a point where they could invest in the processing that will then access the rest of the world. We have had representatives from China who have been here to talk about trade there. Certainly we have talked about the issue of canola and other investments, all of those countries.

I am proud of the Department and the work that they do in promoting Manitoba. I have to say, Mr. Chairman, that we will continue to do that. We have representatives, staff who have just been to the Netherlands and to the U.K. to talk about Manitoba and the opportunities that there are in this province in a lot of aspects.

The Member covered a wide range of issues in his last question. Because we are on the line

of Marketing, we talked about a wide range of issues ranging from the Stewardship Initiative 2000 to the crisis in the southwest part of Manitoba. I am surprised that the Member, with the number of years of experience that he has, that he would not remember that a committee cannot be moving money from one appropriation to another, Mr. Chairman. That was just a stall tactic on the part of this government.

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

IN SESSION

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 6 p.m., the House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 13, 2000

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