



Third Session - Thirty-Seventh Legislature

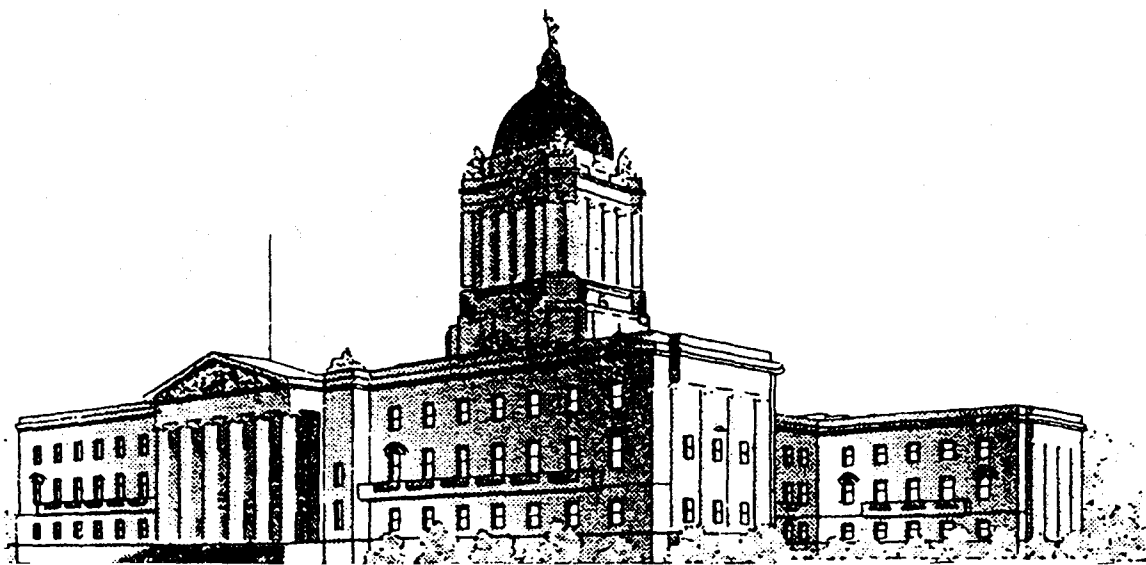
of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Seventh Legislature

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 30, 2002

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYERS

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to recognizing the honourable Government House Leader, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us from Charleswood Junior High 134 Grade 9 students under the direction of Ms. Barbara Fitzjohn. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger).

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill 14.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 14—The Public Schools Modernization Act (Public Schools Act Amended)

Mr. Speaker: Resume debate on second reading of Bill 14, The Public Schools Modernization Act (Public Schools Act Amended), standing in the name of the honourable Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer).

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

Mr. Jim Rondeau (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to speak on Bill 14, the modernization of school divisions.

In my previous career I used to work in Frontier School Division. As an administrator in Frontier School Division and a teacher, I learned a great deal about how school divisions operate. I learned that, through some amalgamations in Frontier School Division many years ago, they took over the operations of Gypsumville. When they took over the operations and administration of Gypsumville School there was a lot of fear out there. The fear was that the quality of school, the local autonomy, et cetera, would disappear.

I am pleased to say that, after the amalgamation of the administration in Frontier School Division from Gypsumville, something has happened. First, there was additional programming offered in the school. There were more guidance counsellors. There were more consultants and clinicians. There was a lot more to offer to the teachers as support. There was more administrative support.

Other things that happened in the Frontier amalgamation was that payroll was done centrally. Purchasing was done centrally. A lot of the administrative functions created were done centrally which provided that the administrative money was able to be funnelled to the school itself. Rather than have a large administration, what we then did was we were able to get cheaper prices on the purchasing. We were able to get proper consultant and clinician services for students, so we were able to support the teachers better in the classroom. Then, over the years, the program delivery also improved. Programs such as adult education, such as work education, guidance, work experience, et cetera, were then offered to the school.

Then what happened was through the amalgamation you provided better delivery for teachers, better delivery for students and better programs. Because of that, I believe that Bill 14 will do a few things: One, it will force money that is presently spent for administration, presently that goes to the purchasing, to payroll, to bus administration, to central administration, that

money will no longer go to bureaucrats but will actually go to classrooms and go to students. I think that is important.

As a former bureaucrat, I know that what the cost will be in Frontier School Division to add a few communities will not mean they will hire a whole bunch of new people. What that means is they will keep existing staff, with a little bit more support, and the extra money will go to students.

When we are starting to talk about that, let us say that in some small jurisdictions where you have 7%, 8% or 9% administration costs, then if you have some communities that have high administration costs, that money, if you can then bring it down 2 percent or 3 percent from 9 percent, you will get 2% savings; 2 percent on a million dollars is a considerable amount of money so that might hire a TA. If you take 2% savings over \$10 million, which would be very, very much possible, then you are talking \$200,000, you are talking numbers of teachers, special resource programs, you are talking clinicians, and you are talking money in the classroom. It is very, very important to take the money and put it where it is necessary, and that is with students, so I think that this amalgamation is important.

By capping the amount of money that schools spend on administration, and with a government that continues to put more money and more resources into schools, what that means is students will get better education because they will get more resources, more TAs, more money in the classroom rather than in administration. I know, as a former educator—*[interjection]* Yes, we are taking it from the boardroom to the classroom. We are taking it from administrators into teachers' assistants, into support for students, and that is what we need to do.

I am pleased to be part of a government that looks at students first, not administration. So thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the Government, I am pleased to support Bill 14.

Mr. Speaker: Any other speakers on Bill 14? As previously agreed, the bill will remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer).

* * *

Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister of Labour and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Education, Training and Youth (Mr. Caldwell), that the House resolve into the Committee of Supply.

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

CONSERVATION

* (10:30)

Mr. Chairperson (Harry Schellenberg): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This morning this section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 254 will resume consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Conservation.

We are on item 12.4. Conservation Programs (k) Lands (3) Remote Sensing (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$551,300 on page 50 of the main Estimates book. At the last sitting of this committee, there had been agreement to revert to 12.4.(f) Fisheries, which had previously been passed in order to allow the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) to ask questions. Is that still the will of the committee?

Mr. Harry Enns (Lakeside): Mr. Chairman, I am prepared to move these Estimates along with just a comment we have had, and I appreciate the minister's willingness to accommodate a colleague of mine. We have had a lengthy discussion on the fisheries issues. The minister, the Government and department are fully aware of some of the concerns that we have. I would just like to, in leaving that section, remind all of us that Lake of the Prairies, we talk largely about its fishing, its sustainability of the fisheries, its asking the fisheries, but I want to remind the minister and his department that Lake of the Prairies is essentially a flood control structure. The issues of management on that lake are very often decided about what is happening in the city of Winnipeg. For instance, the city of Brandon that gets its water supply from it, the commitment that the department has and the regime

that is built into the management of Lake of the Prairies to ensure an adequate supply of water is maintained throughout the length of the Assiniboine River are very important features of the management of that lake.

Mr. Speaker, I can foresee a time when, for instance, if our improving flood forecasting shows that there is a very heavy buildup of moisture in the upper reaches of the Assiniboine, Saskatchewan border, that the regime that the lake management is presently under could be drawn down severely to anticipate the heavy flows in the fall. That may not be in agreement with the management of the lake that is predicated entirely on what is the most optimum fisheries conditions.

I just put on the record what is known and just a reminder that these structures that were built, and they were man-made structures that were built, let us not lose sight of the primary reason for Lake of the Prairies and the Shellmouth Dam is that is part of a tripartite Winnipeg floodway, Portage diversion, Shellmouth Dam, flood protection measures that a royal commission recommended and was acted upon by previous governments.

Mr. Chairman, with those few comments, I am prepared to move on to the rest. Pass.

Mr. Chairperson: We are now on item 12.4. Conservation Programs (k) Lands (3) Remote Sensing (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$551,300—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$239,000—pass.

I will just read 12.4.(k)(3)(c) into the record. Item 12.4.(k)(3)(c) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations (\$23,700).

12.4.(k)(4) Land Mapping Services (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$459,900—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$73,100—pass.

12.4.(m) Habitat Enhancement Fund \$50,000—pass.

Resolution 12.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$52,600,700 for Conservation Programs for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2003.

Resolution agreed to.

Mr. Chairperson: We will move on to page 51, Resolution 12.5. Environmental Stewardship (a) Divisional Administration (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$143,700. Shall the line pass?

Mr. Enns: Under the heading of Environmental Stewardship is a fairly broad question of policies, plans, programs sustainable. I would ask the honourable minister to accommodate my colleague from Portage la Prairie who has a forestry question, a new innovative forestry question to ask, that if at all possible he could raise it with the committee at this point.

Mr. Chairperson: Is there leave for the Member for Portage la Prairie to ask this question? *[Agreed]*

Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie): Thank you very much. I am sure the minister is familiar with the work of Doctor Durand who developed the Discovery elm, which is tolerant of Dutch elm disease, and has further worked involving Dr. Tam McEwen with hybrid poplar. Currently, the progress in development work with the hybrid poplar and species that are showing extreme promise for our temperate climate here and offering quite a number of economic benefits with their work.

They have approached a number of departments, I will speak specifically of Agriculture, and found very limited abilities from that department because of stretched resources and another crop, if you might, being added to Agriculture, which the production through hybrid poplar would probably have an agricultural component and be able to work into that industry.

I had suggested to them, after finding a relatively cool response by Agriculture, that they approach Conservation and express to them that under Environmental Stewardship as well as you providing for resources to individuals who are studying and coming up with solutions for climate change and global warming that perhaps your department would be able to assist in this new technology and the potential that hybrid poplar production has for this province in quite a number of sectors that would benefit from hybrid poplar production.

I am wondering whether the minister can update and provide information about this initiative and whether it is a consideration of his department.

* (10:40)

Hon. Oscar Lathlin (Minister of Conservation): I can indicate to the member that we are aware of Mr. McEwen's work with this project, the hybrid poplar. We will certainly look at assisting his work, either through the Agro Woodlot Program or perhaps through the Sustainable Development Innovations Fund.

Mr. Faurschou: Well, I am appreciative that the minister is aware of Doctor McEwen because I think the application, as I have expressed earlier, has a very broad range of application, whether it be for the pulp and paper, softwood lumber, or mature trees they have found could have application in the hardwood, as well, providing stability for conservation programs and also quick establishment of forestry reforestation of areas damaged by fire, erosion, wind, water. So I am very pleased that you have there, and I encourage you to continue.

One other question I had for the minister in regard to management and long-range planning, I will be very specific to the J.R. Simplot undertaking in Portage la Prairie and that being a potato processing facility. At the time of announcement by Premier Doer that there would be a number of ministries working in co-operation with Agriculture to provide for the enhanced infrastructure which would come under Minister Friesen's direction but also, too, the development work that would be required for irrigation and land management.

I am wondering if the minister can update me as to the number of meetings that the minister has had with his colleagues Minister Mihychuk, Minister Wowchuk, Minister Friesen within this context to provide for expanded areas for potato production under irrigation.

Mr. Lathlin: I thank the member for the question. I can also advise him that, yes, we have been working on the issue of water availability for irrigation, and, currently, based on the information that we have, we are confident that

the water will be available where it is needed. We continue to work with the Department of Agriculture and Food on that issue, well, on a regular basis.

Mr. Faurschou: I thank the minister for his response. I just want to take this opportunity to compliment his department and the staff who attended the Clean Environment Commission hearings earlier this year on this topic of water quality and water availability for not only the processing component but that of potato production and the staff that attended those very lengthy hearings in December and in January.

I do want to compliment their professional, well-prepared presentations and their responses to questions that were raised by presenters in those proceedings, that they were extraordinarily well prepared and well versed with the information that was needed for that decision and ultimately the licence being granted.

I do want to stress at this time to the minister that this is a very timely and vitally important process to have the plan in place and ultimately the infrastructure or design for infrastructure be ready in very short order, because as we speak construction is underway for that plant. Within a year and a half's time, we are looking to have a requirement of almost 20 000 acres of additional potato production in Manitoba to provide for that processing plant in Portage.

It is vitally important for us in the Legislature here that not only your department but Industry and Trade, Agriculture work very co-operatively and with the idea that time is of the essence here. I cannot stress more strongly that this is vitally important to the agricultural economy in Manitoba, that we diversify, have more high-value crops produced.

I am certain the minister is well aware of the U.S. farm bill passed into law with presidential signing last week and that we must in this province make for the planning and ultimate support for diversification here in the province.

Mr. Lathlin: Yes, I can indicate to the member we are continuing to work in co-operation with other departments on this particular project.

I want to add, though, to the earlier response I gave him where I talked about how the availability of water for irrigation or, I guess, quantity of water is being addressed. I also wanted to say, though, that we are also working on the issue of water quality in the Assiniboine River. There are studies currently going on to try to determine the quality. Both our own and Simplot's work, I think, in the end will determine what is needed for a healthy river. So we are concerned for both the quantity as well as the health of the river.

Mr. Enns: Mr. Chairman, I am prepared to move this section along, with just allowing me to add my voice's support to that of my colleague from Portage la Prairie.

I know that earlier on with respect to the forestry question that he asked on the hybrid poplars, earlier on in the Forestry division you advised us that the province buys all of its seedlings for reforestry from the Pineland agency. I appreciate that the Pineland agency is a stand-alone agency as such, but I think what we are really and what Doctor McEwen and others who have moved along this project are looking for is some kind of interest shown by an agency like the Pineland Nursery that would, even on a pilot project, purchase a quantity of these seedlings, and that is on a commercial scale, test out some of the opportunities that this hybrid poplar tree has for us.

I am thinking about such reforestry areas up in the Swan River area that with the Louisiana-Pacific group harvesting in that area and others. It seems that the research work by Doctor McEwen has been done but has failed to get a kind of pick-up or a lift-up from the province and from commercial users. There might be an opportunity, and even if nothing else, if the department were to discuss this issue with Pineland, I appreciate forestry decisions will be made by those expert in that field, but I think that is what the member from Portage is looking for. With those few comments, I welcome the minister's response.

* (10:50)

Mr. Lathlin: I think earlier I responded by saying that we would look at assisting Mr.

McEwen's work either from the Agro Woodlot Program or maybe from the SDIF. I will go further and say I would be willing to meet with Mr. McEwen in order to discuss further his project at some future date.

Let me also say that with respect to Pineland, although we do go out for competitive bids, so far Pineland has been able to win the bidding. No, I would be more than willing to meet with Mr. McEwen to see what he has.

Mr. Chairperson: We will go back to line 5. Environmental Stewardship (a) Divisional Administration (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$143,700-pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$165,100-pass; (3) Northern Initiatives \$400,000-pass; (4) Grant Assistance \$110,900-pass.

We will go on to 5.(b) Sustainable Resource Management (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,096,400. Shall the line pass?

Mr. Enns: Mr. Chairman, the other day the minister was good enough to table an additional supplementary booklet on the Sustainable Development Innovations Fund initiative, \$3.4 million. Where in these Estimates is that \$3.4 million? Can you point that out to me?

Mr. Lathlin: I understand that that particular section will be dealt with at a separate time. It is not part of this Estimates process here.

Mr. Enns: As I recall, though I was not the responsible minister, in essence these funds come from what I call environmental taxes that were imposed on the people some time ago, various levies on everything from pop bottles, whiskey bottles, although I think the tire tax is a little separate dedication. But is that still more or less the case, that the \$3.4 million, although we are not discussing it now, but I am just reacting to that information that you provided the House the other day, Mr. Minister. That \$3.4 million comes from that source?

Mr. Lathlin: I can indicate to the member that the source of funding for the SDIF is the provincial sales tax on disposable diapers and the 10-cent levy on liquor bottles. That is where that is.

Mr. Enns: In previous years, under the administration that I was part of, this fund was used extensively to support a host of citizen groups, for want of a better word, across the province in various projects that had some element of conservation to them, some element that could range from cleaning up a creek bed here in some of the urban parts like the Seine River or Sturgeon Creek, to the planting of trees and shrubberies. There was admittedly a liberal interpretation of what that contained. A community might want to enhance a playground with some shrubbery and trees. They often raised money of their own and made application to this fund for some supplementary funding.

I note from the information supplied that it would appear that this fund is now being, after what I notice a bit of a hiccup in the flowing of the money from the year before, it has now been more or less restored—

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. Just as notice, you are talking about the Enabling Appropriations, which are scheduled in the Chamber. It would be more applicable to do it in the Chamber. However, if the minister wishes to answer the question, that is fine. But, just as information, it is really not in Room 254. This is done in the Chamber.

Mr. Enns: Mr. Chair, I sense the pressure from staff here. I will back off. I am quite prepared to discuss that at the appropriate time. It is probably just as well we have raised the issues, but these are some of the questions that we will be asking when that vote comes up at the appropriate time in the House. I do accept the redirection.

Mr. Chairperson: I thank the member for his co-operation.

Mr. Lathlin: Perhaps I can answer the last question that the member was asking, even though we are still going to be talking about this at another forum. The member's question is: Is this still the case with respect to SDIF money being set aside to fund what we would call environmental projects? Yes, that is still the case. I think we can go into more specific examples of projects that are being funded for the member. But let me give you at least the

broad allocation portion of the fund. For example, we fund the Environmental Youth Corps, \$200,000; the waste reduction and prevention program, \$550,000; Climate Change, \$250,000; orphan mine site from Conservation, \$250,000; orphan mine site through Industry, Trade and Mines, \$250,000; the Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation southwest woodlot, \$312,000. It gives us a total of \$3.4 million.

Mr. Enns: Mr. Chairman, we will move on. There will be another occasion to discuss this more fully. Pass.

Mr. Chairperson: 5. Environmental Stewardship (b) Sustainable Resource Management (1) Salaries and Benefits \$1,096,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$1,011,800—pass; (3) Grant Assistance \$10,200—pass.

5.(c) Environmental Assessment and Licensing (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$965,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$107,900—pass.

5.(d) Aboriginal Relations (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$181,800. Shall the line pass?

Mr. Enns: Mr. Chairman, I believe I raised a question on this issue. This is the appropriation line that covers the cost of the Aboriginal council that the minister has referred to, more specifically of the group that Mr. Fontaine is chairman of. Is that part of this?

* (11:00)

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Chairperson, the Aboriginal Relations Branch is located in the Environmental Stewardship Division. It is a branch. The staff contained therein act as a support to the Aboriginal Resource Council. The Aboriginal Resource Council, as I said earlier, was established some two years ago. So the staff that are situated in the Aboriginal Relations Branch are really providing support through that Aboriginal Resource Council.

I might also, because I think the member was referencing Mr. Fontaine, Mr. Fontaine has been appointed to chair the east side round table, while it has some connection but not directly.

Mr. Enns: Okay, Mr. Chairman, more specifically, we are now discussing \$181,000 for salaries under a heading which is Aboriginal Relations. Who exactly is being paid this \$181,000 of salaries under this item?

Mr. Lathlin: I am not certain if the member is asking for names of the individuals who are working in that particular branch. I can tell him that there is a director and two analysts. In total, there are three people working there. If he wants, I can give him the names.

Mr. Enns: Mr. Chairman, what I am trying to put together is the level of commitment that the department, the Government has with respect to its Aboriginal Relations. You have different segments in different portions throughout your Estimates. You have a group doing round tabling under the chairmanship of Mr. Fontaine in east Winnipeg. You have an Aboriginal council. We have a directorate and a division here of Aboriginal Relations for \$181,000.

I will find some other way, but I am trying to put together what the Aboriginal component is, if you like; that is, a system advising this minister, this department and government on a host of areas. You are telling me, Mr. Minister, I kind of assumed that maybe it came under this line here, that the Aboriginal council is in addition to this, if you understand what I am getting at.

Mr. Lathlin: No, I am not really certain as to what the member is asking, but I know he will come back to me. Let me tell him now that the east side round table that Mr. Fontaine has been asked to chair is funded out of the Sustainable Resource Management Branch. Mr. Chairman, there is \$350,000 allocated for that process.

I want to tell the member that the east side process is not what I would call a purely Aboriginal process. It is very multiparty. There are different stakeholders being involved.

With respect to the Aboriginal Relations Branch, as I said, there is a director and two analysts. They liaise with the Aboriginal community. They give advice to the department as a whole, and they also work with the Aboriginal Resource Council mainly as a support to help

organize meetings, facilitate research and so on and so forth, but they also will provide advice when they are asked by groups like the east side or any activity where there might be some Aboriginal people involved.

Mr. Enns: I ask the minister, and I probably should know having watched this department for a while, is this a new initiative on the part of this Government, this minister?

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Chairperson, this initiative is not new this year. We started two years ago. But, yes, it is a new government initiative.

Mr. Chairperson: We will go on with 5. Environmental Stewardship (d) Aboriginal Relations (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$181,800—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$46,000—pass.

Resolution 12.5. RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$4,239,700 for Conservation, Environmental Stewardship, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2003.

Resolution agreed to.

Mr. Chairperson: We will go on to Resolution 12.6. Clean Environment Commission (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$262,400.

Mr. Enns: Mr. Chairman, no specific questions here. Is the commission dealing with any specific issues at the moment? I know that they have concluded the most recent hearings. The major hearings were probably the ones that my colleague from Portage already referred to in the Simplot application.

Is there a major developmental proposal under the commission's review at this time? I am just trying to get some idea of the current activities of the commission.

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Chairperson, I can indicate to the member that the work that is ongoing currently includes a mediation exercise that the commission is involved in with respect to the Maple Leaf, Rothesay, rendering operation and area residents.

There is also another similar exercise that they are doing. That is the southern area forest consultation process.

Another piece of work that they are doing is the development of a public consultation process on the nutrient management strategy.

They are also working on the environmental impact statement guidelines with respect to the Wuskwatim generation and transmission consultation and report preparation work they are doing.

* (11:10)

Mr. Enns: The commission was housed briefly in Steinbach. When was it brought back to Winnipeg? The correct chairman is still Mr. Duguid?

Mr. Lathlin: Yes, the chairperson of the Clean Environment Commission is still Terry Duguid.

With respect to the Steinbach office, my information is that when I came along I inquired about it because I knew that we were gearing up to get the commission going again. So I was advised at the time that under the previous administration, the commission, although it was situated in Steinbach, conducted most of its work and business in Winnipeg. The old Clean Environment Commission office space is now occupied by additional staff the department has added to process the intensive livestock applications from the Steinbach facility.

Mr. Enns: I just want to advise the committee that the honourable member from River Heights was hoping to ask some questions on the Clean Environment Commission. I would defer to him at this time.

* (11:20)

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I note in the report to the Clean Environment Commission of the public hearings on Simplot data processing plant in Portage la Prairie that the minister chose not to follow a couple of the recommendations.

One that was not followed dealt with phosphorus removal. The report suggested that phosphorus be removed to levels consistent with those established in other Prairie cities, including Regina, Moose Jaw, Saskatoon and Calgary.

I just raise a concern with the minister that the minister seems to be treating Portage la Prairie citizens and Manitoba citizens inequitably compared to other Prairie cities, and whether the minister can provide justification for his decision not to have better phosphorus removal in the Portage la Prairie Simplot plant?

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Chairperson, I thank the member for the question. I would like to start by saying that I would like to differ with his opinion with respect to treating Portage la Prairie differently. In fact, I believe the majority of the citizens of Portage la Prairie, certainly the civic leadership of Portage la Prairie and indeed the MLA for Portage la Prairie and others, have been quite supportive in the department's decision.

This issue is still an open issue. The technical advice has been that the phosphorus is not the limiting nutrient for concern in the river and Lake Winnipeg. So the required tens of millions of dollars of investment for phosphorus removal that may not be required would be probably a poor use of resources at this time. Instead, we are doing extensive river studies that will determine what treatment may be required in the future. The Clean Environment Commission licence that was issued clearly outlines that commitment.

Mr. Chairperson, I might add that very recently I have exchanged correspondence with the federal Minister of the Environment, Mr. Anderson, on this issue, which I would be glad to share with him, because I think the letter that I signed off to Minister Anderson was quite informative. So we are committed to join with the federal government in dealing with the results of the water quality studies if they show that additional treatment is required at Simplot.

Mr. Gerrard: I note as well that the minister has waived the recommendation with regard to ammonia limits.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. We cannot hear you.

Mr. Gerrard: Oh, I am sorry. I note that the minister has waived the recommendation with regard to ammonia levels as well. I would ask the minister to comment on this and to provide an understanding or a commitment as to what the minister's plan would be if the research were to indicate that action needed to be taken to reduce ammonia or nitrogen and phosphorus levels in the Assiniboine River.

Mr. Lathlin: I can indicate to the member that the ammonia levels remain at the current limits. They, too, are a part of our study that we are doing as well as the current review of our provincial water quality objectives. The present licence limits do meet our current water quality objectives. But if further research indicates that these need to be lowered then steps will be taken to ensure that appropriate treatment occurs at the Simplot plant.

Mr. Gerrard: One of the recommendations was that there be a pilot project established demonstrating how a regional watershed authority could work as a mechanism to address water quality and quantity issues and that this should be considered for a portion of the Assiniboine Basin. I would like you to comment on this recommendation and what the plans of the department are with respect to such a pilot project.

Mr. Lathlin: I can indicate to the member that this work is going to be part of our water management strategy as well. We agree with the CEC recommendation, the watershed planning approach. We will be having the water management strategy group provide us with some advice as to implementation with respect to the pilot, and from there we will probably take a broader approach.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Chairperson, I would like to have the minister comment on one of the items which was brought up by the Clean Environment Commission report. Let me just quote from the report: The commission panel was given the impression that there is little monitoring of water licences. The lack of effective reporting and enforcement mechanisms may be permitting

excessive and inappropriate water use. It appears, however, that there is currently no effective means of knowing how serious this situation might be.

Much of the licensing of water withdrawal in Manitoba is done on the basis of estimates with very little actual measurement through water metering. The current licensing arrangements do not appear to assign any significance to the environmental impact of water use. There seems to be little incentive for irrigators and other water licence holders to conserve water.

* (11:30)

I note in the report that the current estimates and modelling show an overall supply of 70 000 acre-feet available for licensing in the region from all sources. I note, in the report, that it has been estimated that potato producers in the area would require an estimated 10 000 acre-feet of water from all sources to grow the potatoes required for the Simplot processing plant. I would like to get the minister's estimates and numbers on how much of that 70 000 acre-feet available is being used, and to what extent these numbers are known with any certainty, and what the minister is doing to address the clear shortfall that was pointed out in the Clean Environment Commission report.

Mr. Lathlin: I want to advise the member that we recognize the problems that exist with respect to water licensing. However, we are setting in motion, as part of our water management strategy, improvements to the system, including metering. With respect to the water, my information and the advice that I am getting thus far from professional people is that there will be enough water. We do not feel that there will be a deficit.

Mr. Gerrard: I note, on another subject in the Assiniboine River, that there is a recommendation from the Clean Environment Commission that a notification system is needed to alert downstream water users of changes in water conditions along the Assiniboine River.

Now, as the minister may well know, the road on the south side of the Assiniboine River just west of the Perimeter is called Lido Plage

Road because it was a widely used swimming area, Lido Plage referring to the beach, and that the Assiniboine River was a favourite swimming spot for many Winnipeggers in the 1930s. I suspect the MLA for Lakeside would attest to this phenomenon.

I believe that the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) is also aware that there are good camping spots where Highway 1 crosses the Assiniboine River. Mr. Chair, this was a river which has been, in the past, widely used for recreation, including widely used for swimming.

I would bring to the minister's attention that the Rural Municipality of Cartier has recently put in a boat launch area for increased recreational use along the Assiniboine River downstream from Portage la Prairie. In the current environment there is a great deal of uncertainty about the water quality and how safe or not it is to swim, concerns about not only E. coli levels, for example, but concerns about the chemicals which may be in the water as a result of the various inputs that come from a variety of sources along the length of the river.

I think that the minister might find that the response of the department, that notification of, you know, unusual water quantity conditions that is currently in place is a totally inadequate response given the increased recreational use of this river and the desire of individuals to know how safe it is for use for recreational purposes, including swimming. Right now there does not seem to be any information provided on a Web site, as it could be done conveniently, or another way from the minister's office to allow people to know what the current situation is.

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Chairperson, yes, there is a notification system that is in place for water treatment purposes on the Assiniboine River. We are looking at whether more can be done. Of course, like with everyone else, water quality is of great concern to everybody, including us. That is why we are undertaking a three-year study of the water quality in that river.

I think the member should be aware that our water quality objectives for nutrients in the river are exceeded naturally at the Saskatchewan border.

Mr. Gerrard: My concern, for example, for recreational uses is probably less in terms of phosphorous and nitrogen in the immediate impact except to the extent that they cause alga blooms, but I think that the concerns in terms of monitoring of water quality for recreational uses, like swimming, is more in terms of levels of E. coli and other potential chemicals, which, you know, might be hazardous or toxic or not good for people to swim in for example.

I just wonder whether the minister will make a commitment while he is minister to provide regular reporting on these areas so that people who are interested in recreational use of the Assiniboine River will have a basis to make a decision in terms of whether they want to go swimming and so on in the river.

Mr. Lathlin: I can advise the member that we do have surface water quality monitoring stations along the Assiniboine River, you know, which tests for various parameters, I am told, including E. coli, but maybe not as frequently as we should be doing. So I want to assure the member that I think during the summer months we should be testing it more frequently. So I will make a commitment with respect to in the summer months to test more frequently.

As far as the regular water quality monitoring that goes on, this is now reported on publicly. Also, when our ongoing studies are completed and reports are prepared, those will be made public and shared with the communities that are situated along the river. So I will make that commitment.

* (11:40)

Mr. Gerrard: I thank the minister. Because the Internet is a widely available form of access, I just wonder if rather than just writing, as it were, to the different R.M.s, can there be a commitment to make sure that information is available so that anyone in the public can see it.

Mr. Lathlin: Yes, we will definitely look at that recommendation.

Mr. Chairperson: 12.6. Clean Environment Commission (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$262,400.

Mr. Enns: Is the commission fully staffed currently?

Mr. Lathlin: The answer is yes.

Mr. Chairperson: 6.(a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$262,400—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$274,900—pass.

Resolution 12.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$537,300 for Conservation, Clean Environment Commission, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2003.

Resolution agreed to.

Mr. Chairperson: Resolution 12.7: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,145,900 for Conservation, International Institute For Sustainable Development, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2003. Shall the resolution pass?

Mr. Enns: At the time this institution was established it was, you know, at the height of the introduction of sustainable development to society following the Bruntland Commission, et cetera. It was believed to be, certainly my former premier, Premier Filmon, and the previous administration were pleased to be able to secure its headquartering here in Manitoba and in Winnipeg, inasmuch as certainly the Manitoba governments were among the leaders in embracing sustainable development as a general policy throughout all government activity.

My simple question here is, as we are dedicating a million dollars, a million-plus to the continuance of operation of this institute, is the minister satisfied that it is still performing to its original mandate? Has it run out of steam? Was it a fad? I would appreciate a few comments from the minister as to what he feels are the benefits to the environment in Manitoba for this particular expenditure item in his Estimates.

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Chairperson, the answer to the member's question is yes. When I first became minister, I looked at this, as a matter of fact, because I had the same questions. It has been there for awhile so does it need revisiting to see

whether it is still relevant. So I believe that the institute, its mandate and its role are still very much relevant, particularly now as we go into areas like climate change and so forth.

The institute has a very substantial reputation around the world. It is housed—*[interjection]* Mr. Chairperson, I am sorry, I had to make sure I had my numbers right. Around the world they have 10 to 12 what they call virtual offices. So they provide I think a very useful function and because of their existence here they have showcased Manitoba as its home base. I visited the office once. It is located at the Canada Bank Building, and they employ approximately 40 people. So, in my opinion and based on the information and advice that I have been able to get when I had questions, I have decided to continue to support it.

* (11:50)

Mr. Gerrard: I would like to sort of take the question of the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) a step further in terms of the International Institute for Sustainable Development. It seems to me that this could be a leading-edge effort which highlights and is integrated with a lot of other things that are happening in Manitoba to make sure we have a sustainable economy.

I think that it is quite important, for example, that reports which are released on a regular basis from the institute are addressed, recommendations are looked at with some care and that just like we have with the Clean Environment Commission the ability to look carefully at recommendations coming from the Clean Environment Commission, that the minister should be providing some feedback on what his actions are in terms of recommendations which come from the International Institute for Sustainable Development. So I think this institute has a larger role than perhaps the minister has suggested, and I would like him to comment a little bit further.

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Chairperson, of course, I did not want to appear to convey the message that the institute does not play a very large and important role in the area of sustainable development. We have limited time here, but I will tell the member that we distribute many of the

institute's reports that come to us to colleagues across the country. Several of the institute's initiatives are being used by us, as a matter of fact. One very good example is the sustainability indicators that we are now well into.

Maybe I can also advise the member that the objectives of the institute, the vision is better living for all sustainably, and its mission reads: to champion innovation, enabling societies to live sustainably. It promotes the concept of environmentally sustainable economic development and the integration of the principles and practices of sustainable development within and between the public, private and voluntary sectors here in Canada and abroad.

Some of the activity that they are involved in is identifying, supporting, promoting and conducting research in Canada and internationally, as well, in the field of sustainable development. It initiates and supports education and information programs. That will, of course, enable citizens to understand and increase their knowledge of the principles and benefits of sustainable development. So that is why I support the work that the institute is doing.

The institute, for example, has participated in the work of the Manitoba Climate Change Task Force that was led by the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy. Its president, David Runnalls, served on the task force, and the staff in Winnipeg played a very strong supporting role. The institute's appreciative inquiry project in the community of Skownan in Manitoba involved over 100 interviews and six community workshops.

In 2001-2002, five Manitobans participated in the Young Canadian Leaders for a Sustainable Future. The institute analysis on the North American Free Trade Agreement's Chapter 11 on investor-state provisions was very well received and deemed to be an important piece of work.

Lastly, I want to say that the institute continues to play a very important and strong role in the Arctic, focussing on how it can help strengthen the voice of the indigenous people of the North. Recently, I viewed a videotape that was co-sponsored by the institute, and it showed

the effects of global warming in some Inuit hamlet up north. I forget the name of the hamlet now, but it was quite graphic, and I think whoever sees it will probably be affected by the images created in that video.

The meetings that I go to I always say that for those of us who sit in office towers in Calgary and Montréal and Toronto and Winnipeg, well, I should not say Winnipeg because it is different, but those people, you know, they do not see the effects of global warming, so they go on planning for all kinds of things. I think in Manitoba it is a little different story. That is why we have been quite supportive of the federal government's work on the Kyoto Protocol, because in Manitoba here we are seeing the effects of global warming already. All we have to do is look at our winter roads. We can barely get in there every winter to transport building materials and all kinds of necessary goods and services that northern isolated communities require. Of course, again in Churchill, we see the effects of global warming on polar bears. So there are all kinds of good work that the institute is doing, and that is why we are being supported.

Mr. Gerrard: I would just like to follow up, perhaps in part because of the reference and the involvement of the International Institute for Sustainable Development personnel and the Global Climate Change Task Force. I ask the minister when he will be providing a response to the recommendations of the task force in the public document.

Mr. Lathlin: I can indicate to the member that we are going to be releasing the provincial action plan very shortly.

Mr. Gerrard: I thank the minister, and I look forward to receiving that, Mr. Chairperson, because I think that clearly there were a whole series of very worthwhile recommendations which need a response, and I look forward to seeing that.

Mr. Chairperson: Resolution 12.7: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,145,900 for Conservation, International Institute for Sustainable Development, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2003.

Resolution agreed to.

Mr. Chairperson: The time being 12 noon, I am interrupting proceedings. The Committee of Supply will resume sitting this afternoon following the conclusion of Routine Proceedings.

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

* (10:20)

Madam Chairperson (Bonnie Korzeniowski): Good morning. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This morning, this section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 255 will resume consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Agriculture and Food. We are currently considering the motion moved at our last sitting by the Member for Emerson. The floor is now open.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Madam Chairperson, in order to expedite the proceedings in committee, I listened to what many of the members said yesterday, and it is certainly not my will to impede on a very small procedural matter or delay the Estimates any longer. Therefore, I would suggest that the committee dispense formally with the motion that is on the floor. Because I was the mover of the motion, I would withdraw the motion if that is the will of the committee.

Madam Chairperson: Is there unanimous consent for the member from Emerson to withdraw his motion? *[Agreed]*

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food): Madam Chair, I thank all members who put advice on that motion on the record yesterday, and I thank the member for withdrawing the motion.

We had agreed that we would do Crop Insurance first of all, but our staff is not here. If we could just take a few minutes and if I would have agreement with the member, we could start with Executive Support, and then, as we agreed, right after lunch the staff from Crop Insurance, who have to come in from Portage, will be here. Then we would be prepared to revert to Crop Insurance, as we had agreed.

Madam Chairperson: We will proceed to consider line 3.1. Administration and Finance (b) Executive Support. The floor is open for questions.

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chair, the staff is just coming in from across the street on the Executive Support, if we could wait for five minutes for staff to be here.

Madam Chairperson: Is it the will of the committee to wait or take a five-minute recess?

Mr. Jack Penner: Madam Chair, I think it would be useful to have staff here, that staff knows what the discussions have been and the procedure has been. Therefore, I would suggest we wait long enough, adjourn long enough. Is adjourn the right word? *[interjection]* Recess long enough to let staff be here.

Madam Chairperson: Is it agreed that the committee will recess for five minutes? *[Agreed]*

The committee recessed at 10:25 a.m.

The committee resumed at 10:33 a.m.

Madam Chairperson: Will the committee come back to order, please. The floor is open for questions.

Mr. Jack Penner: I would like to, first of all, say to the minister that the debate around the table yesterday clearly demonstrated, I think, the desire for the minister and her colleagues to curtail the Estimates process in committee. Many of the comments that were made will be duly noted and will be responded to in some form or another. They will not, however, be dealt with within this committee. They will not be addressed by me to this committee, because I think they were irrelevant to the operations of the Department of Agriculture.

I think that the Department of Agriculture has a tremendously arduous task ahead of it, especially this year. It is not all in light of the U.S. farm bill. Some of it is of the minister's own making. The difficulties that we face in

agriculture today is the difficulty of making the decision as to how far we want to diversify this economy in this province, and how fast we want to allow the diversification diversification of the agricultural community in this province.

The farm community is prepared to make the transitional changes that are going to be required to be made. They, however, do want some assurances that they will be allowed the flexibility and the freedom to make the decisions based on good, sound financial analysis. Many of our farmers today have a far greater expertise within their own operations than what has ever happened before in agriculture.

There are many farms today who hire agronomists to give them advice. They hire environmental people to give them sound planning advice. They hire experts of all different manners, especially when they are planning multimillion-dollar investments such as live-stock operations and other operations. I know on our farm specifically, and I am not going to talk much about my farm operation, but on our farm specifically when we made the switch from sugar beets to beans, it caused a huge investment decision to have to be made. It was a multi-million-dollar decision that we made and it was not made easily.

We had many market analysts who gave us advice and many, many people who supplied the products that we needed to make the transition, such as chemical companies, what kind of pest management processes we would use, what kind of fungicide management process we would need. We consulted with people in Ontario and people in the United States, farmers, industry people, marketing people, and then we drew up a plan.

Once the plan was drawn, it included virtually everything. It included how we would impact the environment, how we would financially manage the resources that would be required to keep the operation viable and how we would function in the marketplace. As a matter of fact, it was some 10 years ago that I approached a local seed plant operator, and I suggested to him that he might want to look at changing his operation to a pulse operation. For

him, as well, that was a major change in his operation.

I suggested to him that we had done the numbers on it and we had done all the background work, that if he was not going to move into bean processing, we would. We would have made the investment; however he phoned me six to eight months later, and he said they had had significant discussions with a supplier out of Ontario and a processor and that they were looking at forming a partnership in developing this new industry. So many of the changes that we see are not changes that happen overnight or by accident. They are caused. What I saw in that business, the huge investments he had to make—we talk about multimillion-dollar investments on our farm, but this individual who caused his total processing industry to change made even a much greater investment in the business, in the transitional business.

Not only were we contemplating spending large amounts of money, we were also looking at losing large amounts of money. By one decision in Ottawa, our industry was closed in this province of Manitoba, the sugar processing industry. That refinery would still be operating today if Ottawa would have made one slight adjustment in their policy, and I will never, ever forgive the administration in Ottawa.

I do not care whether they were governed by the Conservatives or the Liberals. It was the administration that advised the politicians. That is why I raise this when we are dealing with the executive management team here, for a very specific reason, because the politicians took the advice of the bureaucrats to not allow the processing of sugar industry to continue in western Canada. They did that in order to protect the interest of the eastern refineries. I will never forgive the bureaucrats in Ottawa nor the politicians in Ottawa for what they did.

* (10:40)

We had a tremendous opportunity to expand that industry if we would have only adopted the same principles of protectionism operated under in every sugar-producing nation in the world. They all abide by the same principles. Canada chose to walk outside of that line. Canada chose

to decide outside of it for one simple reason. It was to allow the eastern processors, and even the western processor, the one that is still there in British Columbia, to be able to buy offshore sugar at dumped prices. Some of that sugar came into this country at less than 2 cents a pound.

The justification made in Ottawa was simply: We are protecting the jobs in Montreal and in New Brunswick and Atlantic Sugar, Redpath Sugar, St. Lawrence Sugar. We are protecting the jobs in those industries. Ottawa never gave any consideration at all to the huge number of jobs that would be affected and farmers that would be affected in Manitoba.

I raise this because of the dramatic changes that caused on our farm. Was it detrimental in the end? As it turned out, it was probably a benefit to our own operations because sugar beets had returned us a slight profit but not one that would be sustainable over the long term unless those policy changes would have been made.

The Americans were getting a protection of 17 cents a pound on raw sugar coming into the United States, and the American refiners were given the option of then refining that sugar, in other words, just spinning the molasses out of that sugar and then exporting that sugar as white refined sugar. They then were able to draw back. It was called the tariff drawdown program. They were able to draw back and apply for a refund on those tariffs. In other words, if they exported the sugar, they received that 17 cents a pound paid on top of what they were exporting the sugar for as a refund. We as farmers simply could not compete, nor could Manitoba Sugar compete in that sort of environment.

There were all kinds of things said about the allotments under the trade agreement. I believe it was 100 000 tonnes originally. It was drawn down to 10 000 tonnes of exportable sugar that we could have supplied the U.S. even under those agreements. It, in the final analysis, killed us.

I want to say to the minister, where we are dealing today with again a huge transitional environment in this province, it is not so much the specialty crops that we are dealing with

today. That was a decade ago when we did that. We are dealing with a livestock transitional program. We all knew that when the Crow benefit would disappear, when Ottawa would finally get rid of the Crow, there would be vast changes. I am on record as supporting that change. As a matter of fact, in a speech I did a number of years ago, I applauded the Government for even looking at making the change because I believe that the competitive factors should be allowed to rule whether an industry is justified or not justified. I truly am what you would call a free trader because I believe it is only in the long term that competitive forces can decide whether an industry or a business should survive. If they are good at what they do they will find ways to do that.

However, we have now seen in the past 10 years an indication by Europe that they are not going to move away from agriculture as a livelihood. They are going to ensure that they maintain a large number of people in their rural areas to maintain their rural communities. When I was in Germany we were told point-blank that it had nothing to do with agriculture production or maintaining an agriculture food supply. It had everything to do with maintaining a social atmosphere on a much broader basis than having them confined in the large urban areas. They thought it was cheaper over the long term to utilize these kinds of programs than to build the infrastructure that would be required to bring nine million or ten million people into centres such as Berlin and others.

I concur with that. I applaud them for doing that. However, it does cause us a significant amount of problems when an administration such as the U.S. decides that they are going to get into matching them dollar for dollar. What is the cost to the American people of maintaining a rural infrastructure and a rural community base? I do not think that cost can ever be calculated. I think there is a social aspect to this that you can never evaluate in dollars and cents. I think there is a human benefit that is derived from ensuring that local, rural, smaller communities are maintained. I believe that we as a society need to reflect sometimes on a much, much broader basis when we make decisions and how we affect everybody else down the line with those decisions.

I see in the Estimates book here a line that deals with the mission statement. It says: "The department's mission and role statements support the provincial government's commitment to improve the quality of life for all Manitobans." I say that I believe the U.S. and the Europeans have done that and have made major, major policy decisions to improve the life of rural people in those countries. So they are going to inject and keep on injecting significant amounts of money.

What would it cost our federal government and our provincial governments if we made a decision like that? How would it change western Canada? Well, let me say this. I believe that western Canada would dramatically change if Ottawa would only allow the true competitive factor to be instilled in western Canada and allow western Canada to operate as many of the eastern provinces are allowed to operate. Whose fault is it that we do not? I think it is our fault in western Canada. We can seldom ever agree on the same process even in the Department of Agriculture, least of all in many of the other departments, in a process that we should adopt and establish.

If we would allow ourselves the ability to think beyond where we currently are today and leave our political wrangling or our political views, put them aside and do what would be best for society, then I think you could accomplish the improvement of life in Manitoba to a much broader mandate than what we currently envision.

What would the cost be to the federal treasury? In the long term I suspect it would profit the federal treasury. It would mean a short-term, fairly significant investment, because I believe the next round of the WTO and other trade discussions will lead towards a much greater reflection of equality in all the nations, because food will be the essence of the debate and food could very well be the next war. I think we are into it now, the food war.

I think if countries want to make allotments for those countries that can be the suppliers to meet the needs of the more needy countries, I think that is another whole social debate that needs to be struck.

I also believe that Ottawa has neglected to recognize the importance of developing a rural infrastructure that will lead towards the expansion of the agriculture to capacity, that this country has. I believe that we have just even started to touch on our potential. If Ottawa would use some visionary measures, they would have already said to Canadians that we will do exactly as the Americans have done, until we come to our senses and until we come to agreements and arrangements that will put our producers and our people in this country on an equal level playing field. What is needed to get Ottawa to recognize that? We need some very strong provincial representation to Ottawa. We have not got that. We have not got the will, the desire and, I believe, quite frankly, the expertise to develop a unified front to put to Ottawa. I believe that there is not enough will and that Ottawa will do everything in its power to keep the divisions that we currently encounter at almost every avenue in negotiations and debate in Ottawa.

* (10:50)

We need to bring in to this department and in all levels of government the expertise that is needed to do the debate, do the negotiations agreements that will get us down the road. Quite frankly, it does not matter which political party is in power, but the political party that is in power needs to start furnishing itself with the data and the human resources to get the deal done. I think, if there was a political will across this nation by the provinces, to join forces and join in the effort, we could very quickly convince Ottawa to move much differently than we have. So far, there has not been a unified approach to this.

Having said that, Madam Chairperson, when we look at the Executive branch of this department, I think we have some wonderful staff in this department that have served the agricultural community in a narrowly focussed sense, and that is to help them operate, to help them gain the expertise that they need and to give them the advice that is sometimes asked for and desired by the farm community. I think we have some very high-level people in that regard.

I would suspect that we should be very careful that we do not allow the very narrowly

mind and very narrow-minded views to be front and centre in decision making that we see today. We have organizations that have an agenda, that is very narrowly based, and I suspect that they have some political ties in this province that they use. I would also suspect that they will keep on driving their agenda, such as PETA, such as Hogwatch. Many of the environmental groups have very narrowly based policy proposals, and we need to be, as a Government, very careful that we do not allow those people to set the agenda for this province.

The environment is something that every farmer deals with every day. His or her capacity to stay in business in large part on how they deal with the environment, because if they destroy the water base or the land base that they utilize to make a living, they are gone. Every farmer knows that. Every farmer is far more aware of that than anybody else is in this province, that you need a good, sound, healthy soil base and a good, sound, healthy water supply. Those are the main ingredients of maintaining a livestock operation, of maintaining a farm operation.

I am really shocked when I see a Minister of Agriculture bring forward a bill such as Bill 23. Really, when I first saw it, I almost chuckled, but then I took a serious read of this bill, and I said what are we really saying with this bill as a government? What are we really saying to farmers with this bill? We are saying to farmers we do not trust you to make the decisions that you have made all your lives. We do not trust you to be able to handle products that you have handled all your lives. We do not trust you to build equipment that can deal with these matters.

Two years ago, we were asked by our neighbour whether he could use a quarter section of land to apply fertilizer on, natural fertilizer, hog manure. We said, yes, you can. Here is how much nutrients we want. We want 70 pounds an acre N, and we need 40 pounds an acre of phosphate. We are going to apply some of the minor nutrients later on such as copper and zinc and all those kinds of things, but we can do that when we apply the seed. So this guy did the tests on the material that he was going to put into the ground and gave us exactly what we wanted. We had to add 20 pounds of phosphate later on because there was not enough phosphate in the

material that he was supplying to supplement the nitrates in the material he was supplying.

How did we do that? There was an applicator hired which cost us \$10 an acre. This guy had built his applicator himself, attached a four and a half inch hose to this applicator. It was two and a half miles long. He set up a big pump at the reservoir, and this machine dragged this hose back and forth along the field while he was applying it, and it was injecting the liquid right into the soil and you could not even smell when you drove into the field with a car.

Now, who built this? Who designed it? It was a farmer, because they wanted to make sure that the nutrients that they applied—and we wanted to make sure—were going to be able to be applied at the rate that we needed to produce the crop. Many people do not recognize that you can kill a crop if you over-fertilize. If we put twice the amount of nitrogen onto a crop than you actually need to raise a crop, you will kill it. What farmer would be silly enough or economically irresponsible enough to mis-manage that? I mean, nobody in their right mind would pay \$1,000 an acre to apply \$20 an acre worth of material to kill his crop. I mean, that is silly.

When I saw Bill 23 as a proposition before the House saying that the farmers are now going to have to be trained to apply their own manure to their own farms and/or if their neighbour wants some manure applied with the applicator that this farmer owns, he is going to have to have a licence and he is going to have to be trained for nutrient management and all that, who do you think would train them? Have we got people in the Department of Agriculture who have more expertise than the people who have developed the system?

I find this astounding, absolutely astounding that the minister would be naive enough—and she is a farmer or she puts herself off to be a farmer—to think that these farmers will destroy the very environment that they live and work in. All I am saying is, the executive branch of this department has a responsibility to ensure that the minister is advised of what is already going on out there.

* (11:00)

I say this in all reality. I have been the Minister of Natural Resources. When I walked into the Department of Natural Resources I was as green as grass green could be, and I depended entirely on the good advice I got from my executive branch. They were great at this, but you always had to be careful that you did not set aside good advice and follow your own little agenda which could be driven by the environmentalists, could be driven by Hogwatch, could be driven by any plethora of groups that we have in this province.

I suspect that is where the minister is. I suspect the advice that she got from the executive branch is adverse to what she actually put forward in legislation. I suspect that, but we will get into that once we get into the Estimates of the department.

I want to ask the minister today whether she is agreed with her mission statement and whether she has read her mission statement in her department. Madam Chair, does she agree with that mission statement?

Ms. Wowchuk: You know, Madam Chairperson, the member put a lot of information on the record, and whether it is accurate or not, that is something that the people who read the information can read, but I would have to say that much of what he has said is quite, quite inaccurate.

You know, the member talked about the subsidies, the whole issue of the U.S. farm bill, and where Europe is going. There is a negative impact on our producers because other countries are not living up to their commitment to the WTO. I think the move by the U.S. government in the last couple of weeks is going to have a detrimental effect on agriculture in Canada, and particularly on the prairies, because it is on the prairies that grains and oil seeds are important commodities and pulses are important commodities. It is on the prairies that we have a lot of movement of livestock both ways across the border and the country of origin labelling that is in the U.S. farm bill. It could have some serious consequences for our producers. Those are all very important issues.

The member talked about the sugar beet industry, and I know he was very active when the sugar beet industry was shutting down, as was our caucus. The present Premier (Mr. Doer), then in Opposition, worked very hard with the sugar beet facility and with the workers at that facility trying to get something set up and lead the discussions to try to maintain the plant here in this province.

So everyone recognized the importance of that industry to Manitoba, important for the farmers, important for the workers in Winnipeg, because there was certainly an opportunity to value-add to that industry. We were all very concerned about it and still are concerned with the fact that because of decisions made by Ottawa, we lost a very important industry, but our farmers are, I think, some of the best in the world, the farmers here in Manitoba. They took a tragedy, a loss, and turned it to an advantage, and have diversified into other crops that are now very valuable crops for producers. The major crop that they have diversified into is beans. Our producers are quite fortunate that beans are not covered off by the U.S. farm bill, but the pulse crops are, and that will mean there is going to be pressure on those people.

The member talked about the depth and the quality of staff in executive support that we have in this department, and I want to tell the member that I have all the confidence in this staff that a minister could have. I get very good advice. There is a tremendous amount of depth and information and visionary thinking within the staff as to what is happening, what the impacts of the federal government's decisions are, as well as where we see agriculture going.

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

The member asked about the vision statement and whether I support the vision statement. Well, I can tell the member that if I did not support the vision statement, then I do not think it would be in the Estimates book. I believe that what we have here is a very good statement. It sets out where we see the industry going.

There is a tremendous change in agriculture in this province. We see land coming out of cereal grains and going into a variety of different

crops. We see more value added. Look at the agriculture stats that just came out, you see an increase in the amount of processed and semi-processed products that are going out of this province. So I am very pleased with the work our producers are doing and the work that our Government is doing with the producers. We talk about diversification. We know we have a growing livestock industry, but we do not want all of that growth to be in the hog section. We want growth in the livestock section, in the cattle industry, in the feedlot industry. Certainly there has been a substantial growth in the smaller species of animals as well. Sheep and goat have increased.

In recognition of these we have hired a sheep and goat specialist to work in this province. The people in that sector are very appreciative of it. We have hired an organic specialist that we have not had in this province. Producers see this as another opportunity. I think there is a wide range of opportunities. There are opportunities for large farms, for medium farms, for organic production. We have a large land base. We have a lot of expertise within the farming community. As a department, we work with them in every aspect that we can to meet the challenges and opportunities that are ahead of us in this province.

Mr. Jack Penner: The mission statement says: "We are dedicated to creating a supportive environment that advances the greater prosperity and stability of our farm families." Yet, when I look at the two pieces of legislation that have just recently been introduced into this Legislature, I wonder about the minister's trust in the very farm families that she is being the proponent of in this mission statement and whether she is really seriously advancing the thought of a greater prosperity and stability, because it would lead me to believe this can in fact cause doubt in the minds of the very people that make the investments, whether it is in the cattle industry, whether it is in the sheep industry, or whether it is indeed the supply-managed industry.

Our supply-managed industry is also changing as we speak, whether she is extending the confidence or applying a confidence kind of an atmosphere, providing a confidence building

atmosphere to rural families. So far the direction that I have seen this minister head in would lead me to believe that she is either unconsciously doing what she is doing or she is blatantly ignoring the needs of those farmers.

So I ask the minister if she seriously supports her own mission statement—and it is not a vision statement, it is a mission statement—of greater prosperity and stability, what other legislation is she bringing forward that would cause the comfort in the agricultural community, in all sectors of the agricultural community, the comfort that investments they make and new directions they take will, in fact, find a welcome environment in this Government with them?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, if you look at the vision statement and if you look at the mission statement, we say: "We are dedicated to creating a supportive environment that advances the greater prosperity and stability of our farm families," through Agriculture and Food partners and rural communities. Agriculture is very important to the rural communities and the rural communities are very important to be there to provide service for the farming community, as well.

I think that the steps that we have taken and the legislation that we have introduced fits in very well with that statement and is in the best interest of all people who are living in rural communities. I can tell the member that there has been discussion with farm groups and all farmers want to ensure that as they do their farming that they do it in a way that it is there for the long term, that we are taking practices. I believe most farmers do follow practices that will ensure the long-term stability of the soil, the land and the water that they are provided with to use, and the legislation that we are bringing forward will enhance that ability of farmers.

* (11:10)

I do not see, and I do not believe with the discussions that I have had with farming communities, that they see this legislation in such a negative light as the member does. Producers that I have talked to see this as fitting in with their farm plans, fitting in with their management plans, just as they have worked with other

pieces of legislation that have been brought forward. The member is referring to the pesticide and fertilizer application act. When you look at that piece of legislation, there is a component of the legislation where there are courses that are offered to people who apply pesticides and there is licensing for that. This fits right in with that.

It has been discussed with the farm community, and I think that it fits well with the mission statement and with the vision that we have for a healthy rural community and the ability for the agrifood sector to be more profitable and competitive through expanded diversification and value-added and fits in with the plan for a growing livestock sector all within a sustainable agriculture framework.

Mr. Jack Penner: The interesting thing about this legislation is it forces an operator, it forces a farmer who has developed a manure applicator operation who custom-applies for his neighbours as a sideline business. The minister's statement, originally when she was elected, she said my view of agriculture is that we will create an atmosphere whereby farmers will be able to allow to gain access to off-farm jobs that will help them maintain their farm operations. That was her vision of rural family life. In large part, that is true. That is happening today. Many farm partners work off the farm to gain a second job, but many of the farmers are now joining forces, and they are incorporating. We call these the megafarms, the megacorporations now, the factory farms. Well, they are joining forces because they cannot afford to do it by themselves.

You know, we had a tractor. The John Deere dealer brought a tractor down last week, Thursday, to our farm. When I came home, it was sitting there, huge tracks on it, far larger than any municipal construction equipment that I had ever seen used to build roads or whatever. It was a 450-horsepower tractor. It had a little satellite box on the top of the cab, a little round yellow bulb at the top of the cab. These guys punched a few buttons and aimed it at 70 degrees, set it at 70 degrees, and that tractor travelled in a 70-degree angle as straight as an arrow, nobody at the steering wheel, not an operator. The cost of this machine was just under \$400,000, one could

say just under half a million dollars, just a tractor.

Can one farmer operating a 2000-acre farm afford this kind of advancement in technology and in the application of his farm? No, they cannot. So what they do is they join forces, very often incorporating, very often forming partnerships, but more often than not now, farming incorporations, brothers and sisters and fathers and mothers incorporating their operation for two reasons, to be able to work together, utilize the equipment together, even though they operate and own separately, but they utilize the equipment together, and then make investments, very often jointly, in livestock operation, feedlot operation, cattle feedlot. I have seen elk operations, bison operations, all in this kind of a format. That is how agriculture is changing. It is no longer the little single-family farm that generates most of the activity. It is, in large part, even those little family farms buy equipment together and use the application equipment together.

Now we are forcing, under a new piece of legislation, we are going to force the person that owns that equipment, when he wants to apply for his neighbour, his manure coming out of a little hog barn or a big hog barn, it does not matter, we are going to force him to license that thing. We are going to force him to go to school to learn, relearn from the guy that invented it, and he might, this person, or she might have been the person that invented it, now going to have to go to school to get a licence. I mean, how silly can we get in legislation? How absolutely intrusive do we want to become in application?

I look under farm bill, under Bill 2, The Securities Act, where an inventory record will now have to be kept, which farmers do anyway. I mean, it does not matter, but the inventory will have to now be reported. If there is a slight loss of inventory, who does the minister want that reported to? To the minister. How silly can that be? I mean, why would the minister want to know what loss of inventory is? Would she not want to say report it to the authorities? If it is under The Securities Act, should it not be reported first to the authorities, then if the authorities think it is important enough, bring it to the minister's attention? But she wants to

micromanage the farms of this province. Let me say to you that is one of the worse socialist approaches that I have seen yet and more intrusive into agriculture production than I have ever seen in this province before.

It reminds me of a trip we made to Ukraine. We visited farms, and they showed us how huge farms operate, 65 000 hectares this one farm, all operating under one. Well, this minister wants to move the whole operation. Over there, it was not the manager of the farm that made the decision; the minister made the decision. The minister decided this year we are going to apply fertilizer, and then fertilizer is applied. Mr. Chairperson, if the minister decided, no, we are not going to apply fertilizer, we are not going to apply fertilizer. If the minister decides we are going to plow, then we are going to plow. If the minister decides we are going to apply manure, then we apply manure. If not, then the manure stays where it is. That is what the manager of the farm told us when we were in Ukraine.

* (11:20)

This legislation reminds me of exactly that kind of an approach, the centralist, ministerial, top-down authoritative approach that this Government is taking, and it is approaching the same visionary measures that were applied under the Communist rule of the U.S.S.R. I would suspect that this minister really is headed in a very wrong direction, and I think the farmers of this province are becoming very, very skeptical when they hear that kind of legislation being proposed, not in consultation with them but imposed unilaterally without consultation with them, because I have yet to hear one farm leader say to me: We proposed this kind of legislation to the minister. It has not happened, my dear friends around this table.

So all I am saying to the minister is: Be careful how intrusive you become in the direct lives and livelihood and the ability to manage their own operations, because the co-operative spirit in our rural communities has not yet died, but if you impose these kinds of measures that you are proposing on much of our farm communities today, and you do it under the auspices of the livestock review process that was done by Mr. Tyrchniewicz and his committee, I have not seen one recommendation that is applied to this

Bill 23 in his entire report. I want to see the minister table at this committee the section of that review of that report that applies to the licensing of manure application equipment. I want to see that because I have yet to read that in Mr. Tyrchniewicz's report.

I say to the minister be careful of how intrusive you become in the lives of rural Manitobans because rural Manitobans do not have to stay in Manitoba. They have demonstrated that this past year in how many of the young people have left the farms and have moved out of the province. Many of them have and many more will if she is not careful.

Madam Chairperson in the Chair

My next question to the minister is: What sort of an approach are you going to take or is this Government going to take in the war that is going on in some of our municipalities in dealing with livestock issues and in either building, expanding or even maintaining what is currently involved in some of these municipalities?

I refer to a letter that I received from the R.M. of Piney and some of the changes that the R.M. of Piney is making to its livestock by-laws. Can the minister indicate whether she has any concerns about the major restrictive application of municipal law that is being applied in the R.M. of Piney and how that impedes the ability for farmers to farm on their land and products that they can produce in Manitoba.

Can the minister give us a bit of an overview as to what her direction will be and what her advice to her Government is going to be on how to manage these matters effectively to ensure that the expansion of our livestock industry can, in fact, occur in an orderly manner?

Ms. Wowchuk: There are several issues that I would like to address that the member put on the record. The member talked about the securities bill, and I am quite surprised that he is raising that bill because I thought that we had an agreement that we would work those issues out. We had a meeting yesterday to talk about this.

But he talks about the minister's authority under this act, and the member says he has been

around a long time, so he knows that in many pieces of legislation, a minister is outlined as the person who has the responsibility, but he also knows that under regulation there is delegated authority. That happens under many pieces of legislation in agriculture and in other areas. So this is not an intrusive step. It applies to commercial applicators, and, in fact, commercial applicators now, when they have loss of any inventory, there are a couple of commodities that are of concern, that they could be used in a negative way for explosives and such that there is a concern about.

The security legislation is looking at how we can ensure the safety of people in this province, and it is recognized that there are a couple of agriculture commodities that could be used in a negative way. We hope that it will never happen, but there has been an all-party committee that has been working on security legislation because since September 11, it was recognized that there could be some risks and some pieces of legislation that had to be addressed provincially. All parties have been working on that, and we had a meeting yesterday, and we will continue to work on that piece of security legislation in the best interest of Manitobans.

There is no interest for this Government in getting additional powers for ministers, as the member is implying. He is fully aware that under pieces of legislation where it may be spelled out as reporting to the minister, that is then delegated through regulation. But, ultimately, as the minister of this department, I am responsible. That is what the legislation says.

For the member to imply that this is something that is happening to take control is just a bit farfetched. He knows that those discussions have taken place amongst all parties, and we are trying to move this legislation forward in a co-operative way. I hope that the member will continue to be co-operative. But we have seen, as the Member for Dauphin outlined the other day when we had an all-party committee dealing with the agriculture industry, it was the Member for Emerson (Mr. Jack Penner) who then at the end of the process sort of got off track and did not support the farming community as they had expected all of us would.

With respect to the pesticide and fertilizer application legislation that I have introduced into the House, this is not legislation about licensing equipment. This is where we want people who are applying this manure as a fertilizer to have the comfort and security that they are doing things right. That is why there are courses that are going to be offered. Madam Chair, when they take the courses, these courses will make the participants aware of all the legislation, whether it be environmental legislation or legislation in agriculture that people may not be aware of. So it is a way to provide more information.

There are courses for pesticide applicators. You know, Madam Chairperson, under the pesticide applicators course, any farmer can come in and take that course. It does not mean that they will be a pesticide applicator. You can take the course to learn information. In fact, quite a few years ago I took the pesticide applicators course in Dauphin, Manitoba. My husband and I both took the course to learn a little bit more about the products and about legislation and the system and how it works and to learn about legislation. This course that will be developed will be available to all farmers.

I believe that many farmers, whether they are applicators or not, will take the course just to familiarize themselves with legislation and learn more about the application. Certainly there might be some of those farmers who can offer advice to other farmers. They might even learn about some equipment that one farmer has developed and they might be able to then adapt it to their equipment. I do not know why the member sees this as such a negative. Anywhere you go in life, if you can learn more and get an opportunity to meet with other people, learn about how their operations work, then I see that as a positive.

* (11:30)

Now, the member says he has not heard about this anywhere. I would encourage him to read the Tyrchniewicz report. That report recommends courses, it recommends certification of applicators. So again the member is wrong. He says it is not in the report. Well, it is in the report. He should read it. We put that committee

in place to give the public the opportunity to have a discussion, to give producers the opportunity to have a discussion about the livestock industry, because we know the livestock industry has grown in this province, is growing and will continue to grow.

Mr. Jack Penner: I want to know where it says that we should license manure spreaders.

Ms. Wowchuk: The member asks where it says it should license manure spreaders. Well, I can tell the member the legislation does not say we are going to license manure spreaders. Again, he is not reading the legislation. So the member is wrong again.

I am really worried about this member, because I do not know where his research staff is. Madam Chairperson, he is not reading the legislation right, because that is not what it says. He has got his own mind made up about what this is going to mean. He has done this a few times now. He went way off the deep end when we brought in our Budget and said we were moving the Food Development Centre from Portage la Prairie to Winnipeg. He said that on the radio. He created a big panic in Portage la Prairie, saying we were closing the Food Development Centre. Well, lo and behold, if he would have just held his breath and not got hysterical for a little while, then he would have seen that in fact our Government was making a huge commitment to Portage la Prairie, far greater to food development than his government ever made. So, you see, the member sometimes gets on a tangent. Now he is talking about licensing equipment. It is not in the legislation, and it is not licensing equipment. It is giving people some more information, making them aware of legislation. I believe it will help people with their applications.

Of course, what we want people to do, we do not want people wasting valuable fertilizer. We want to ensure that they are applying it properly. We want to ensure that there are not risks, because certainly there has been a lot of discussion. It is a whole educational process, so I hope that the member will recognize the value in education and training and in people getting together and sharing thoughts and ideas and gaining information. In fact, for some of these

farmers who have developed equipment, it might mean another business for them, because someone may like what they do and maybe they can sell their technology to another farmer. I see the opportunities there for producers, but, ultimately, it is about providing information and ensuring long-term sustainability. I can tell the member, he may see this in a negative light. That is not what we have seen.

With respect to the R.M. of Piney, that is an area that there has been a lot of debate about the livestock industry. I believe it is in the member's constituency. So he is well aware of the issue, as are many of us in Government. What the member knows is we have guidelines that are in place, and those guidelines determine setback and all of the other issues related to the industry. Madam Chairperson, we also have elected officials in this municipality, and those elected officials have responsibilities to make decisions in their municipalities.

Right now, we are following this very closely. They have responsibilities, but there are also guidelines in place as to how the livestock industry can expand. I hope that, over the next short while, this will work it out, but certainly there are recommendations in the Livestock Stewardship Initiative that have been made that we are working on to find a way where we can give the municipalities and the livestock industry the supports that they need to ensure that they can expand in a sustainable way.

Mr. Jack Penner: I have a news article which I believe came out of CBC this morning, which says the debate over livestock operations, particularly the hog farm, has been raging in this area for years. Then it says dozens of people crammed council chambers in Vasser Tuesday evening. Many protest against the third and final reading of the by-law. At one point, RCMP were called in to quell the dispute.

I raise this only because I believe that it is this minister's inaction that is causing the disputes to happen. People and municipalities simply have not got clear guidelines or clear direction from this Province as to what can or should be applied in search for an answer to the expansion of the livestock industry. This Government has made all kinds of noises but have

come with very few real applicable rules, regulations or legislation that would pertain to a coordinated, real effort to bring a much more civil kind of an approach to decision making in the municipalities. Any legislation that I have seen so far that has been brought forward by the minister only encourages further disagreements in that whole area. That is a problem.

Her Government should deal with this realistically. I think they should search out and find ways to bring forward legislation and regulations that would apply equally to all people and all producers in the province of Manitoba and all municipalities. How she does that is, of course, her prerogative. I mean, she is the one that will finally have to decide how they as a government want to deal with these matters, because I suspect that the civil disobedience that we have seen, or civil actions that we have seen in many of the municipalities and in large part in my constituency, in the R.M. of Piney, will be reflected over and over again in this province until this minister and this Government realize that they are going to have to make some legislative decisions and changes in regulation that will give comfort to the municipalities and indeed the proponents livestock operations in this province.

I ask the minister: Are they considering bringing any further legislation to bear that will deal with these matters in the near future, or are they just going to bring the manure spreader licensing bill forward? Some have actually said we should call it the excrement bill, or there is even a different word for it that we could call it, but this is the only real legislation we have seen.

Then, as I said, in Bill 2 it almost looks like the minister is trying to take total control of some of the measures, giving directions to farmers directly out of her office and getting farmers to report directly to her in her office. I find this absolutely unthinkable that any minister would have the audacity to try and force farmers to report directly to her. As I said before, when I visited Ukraine they were trying to get out of that system very quickly, and this minister is legislating us back into that era 70 years ago.

Can the minister give us some comfort that she is, in fact, or her Government is going to

come with some method of allowing the municipalities to deal equitably with this livestock development initiative?

* (11:40)

Ms. Wowchuk: I think we have to reflect on the first few words this member said in his statement. This member said: This debate about livestock has been going on for years. What is this minister going to do?

Well, the member has to remember that they were in government for 11 years and did sweet tweet on this. They did not do very much on this. Now all of a sudden in two and a half years we are supposed to solve all the problems. Well, I can tell this member we did a heck of a lot more than his government ever did.

When you look at the work we have done with regard to planning districts, the investment we made in planning districts. Since we have taken office and put those resources in, the majority of the municipalities in this province are now doing planning, which they were not doing under the previous administration. We have put more staff into the technical review process to speed up that process. We have put more staff into conservation. People are working with the livestock industry to ensure that it can expand sustainably.

The member talks about legislation and regulations and what is going to happen there. Are we going to do anything? Are we bringing in any legislation? Well, the member knows that we put forward the Livestock Stewardship Initiative. We did consultation, and there were many, some 40 recommendations that were made. We have worked through many of those recommendations. Many of the things that were recommended by that committee we were already doing before the report came out. Others we are moving on. This is an area that involves three departments and a very important industry. We will be, in the near future, making a decision on the balance of the recommendations out of the report.

I would encourage the member to look back at his record in government, when he was a member on the government side and this issue

was developing right in his constituency, and he did nothing. He did nothing to address it. Our Government has taken many steps to ensure the industry develops in a sustainable way and within a sustainable agriculture framework that we are providing leadership on.

I would ask the member to look at some of the brochures that have been put out, *Living with Livestock*, information that is put out for people within the industry, people who are not in the industry, where we provide them with information to better understand agriculture, better understand the value of the industry and that rural people and agriculture and the hog industry can live together in harmony.

I would ask the member to look at his record on what they have done and what we have moved forward with to ensure the sustainable growth; but, ultimately, we know that municipalities have responsibilities and that there are guidelines that the Government puts forward and the industry has to expand with this.

I am really troubled that the member would once again bring up Bill 2, the security bill. We have had the discussion on it. We know that this is an all-party bill. There has been a lot of discussion between all parties. I believe his leader is on the committee, but maybe he does not talk to his leader about what is happening on this bill. We had the discussion yesterday where he raised a few concerns and we said we will be meeting again. He raised some legitimate concerns. But to imply that this is taking some unprecedented power into the minister's office is just a foolish statement by the member. He knows that, as in other pieces of legislation, the minister is put into the bill because the minister has the ultimate responsibility, but it is a delegated authority under legislation.

That was spelled out to him yesterday at a security committee meeting. We said we will meet again to discuss this. If the member wants to put it on the record, I will have to tell him again, he is wrong. This is not added power for the minister. It is a delegated authority that will then go to other people.

Mr. Jack Penner: It really never ceases to amaze me that the minister will be surprised that

I will raise a part or a portion of a bill that has been before the legislature now for at least a couple of weeks and that all the public has had access to and to make comment on. That she would be surprised that the critic for her department would even dare mention this in committee certainly surprises me, almost to the point of being a bit funny.

She also talks about the Livestock Stewardship program. There is one thing that I complimented her for and her department for, for initiating the livestock stewardship process. It should be done. I thought Mr. Tyrchniewicz and his committee did an excellent job of portraying what they had heard. The 43-some-odd recommendations that are contained in that bill in large part were good recommendations.

Yet the minister has sat for almost two years on those recommendations and not acted upon them. She tinkered with one very small section of the recommendations. Otherwise the industry has been left out in the cold dealing with the environmental lobbying that goes on in this province, dealing with such organizations as Hog Watch, dealing with the PETA organization and other organizations that are only there for one thing. That is to destroy our livestock sector and our herds. This minister, if she would have proceeded to act upon the recommendations that Mr. Tyrchniewicz made, all this uncertainty would have gone away and the farmers would have been given a clear direction as to what needed to happen. The municipalities would have had clear direction on how to deal with matters. Yet, today, they just do not know.

Today they sit there and wonder what is coming. That is what is causing the headlines in *The Globe and Mail* and other places, the headlines of RCMP officers having to come into council meetings to bring law and order in. It is uncertainty in legislation and law that is causing this. It is the Government's responsibility, not the municipality's responsibility, to cause action to be taken to give comfort to the industry and to the municipality. That is government's responsibility. Government created the uncertain atmosphere by allowing people input into the report, the committee. So they have raised false expectations, and then, at the end of the day, there is no action. That is what is at stake here.

Government should only undertake that kind of process if they were going to take action. What did we do, and the minister said before, in my tenure, we had done nothing. Well, let us look at the committee that was established to deal with the value-added industry in this province. That committee took upon itself to hold 33 meetings across this province, came back within a month and, within two months, had a clear-cut report with some very defined recommendations in that report, all of which the minister adopted within six months.

All of them were adopted within six months, and no uncertainty left there. What happened? Well, Madam Chair, we caused the expansion of the bean industry. We caused the expansion of the pea industry, of the chickpea industry. We caused the expansion of the beef industry, of the dairy industry, of the hog industry, and it was all done under a very regulated process. Then, when the feds came along three, four years ago and said we are doing away with the Crow, we knew. Many of you have heard me say this time and time again, if the Crow is ever changed, it will cause massive other changes to have to happen, and this Government has not done that.

This Government has not taken action. They have talked. They have had committees, and they have had reports and more committees and more reports but no action at the end of the reports. So I am asking the minister: When can the municipalities of this province and when can the livestock industry in this province expect some clear direction and vision from this Province of Manitoba?

Ms. Wowchuk: The member all of sudden is saying that the bean and the pea industry expanded because their government went out and did a value-added report. He said they did the report, then the Crow was eliminated, and all of this happened. Well, I think the member again had better check his record, because the Crow was eliminated long before the value-added report was done. Check your dates.

I would have to say that I would want to give a lot more credit to the farmers of Manitoba. The farmers of Manitoba lost the Crow. The farmers of southern Manitoba saw the sugar beet industry grow. They had land, and they are

very innovative. They found ways, and they found crops.

* (11:50)

I am not saying the Government did not do any work on it, but the member is wrong. The Crow was eliminated well before the value-added report or those 30 meetings took place, but, on the hog industry, the member is raising issues, and he is talking about us not doing anything. Well, I want to thank him first of all for giving us credit for doing the Livestock Stewardship Initiative, but I have to ask the member: Where were they for 11 years? Why did they not recognize that these issues were out there? Because there were RCMP officers at meetings before we took office. There have been conflicts with—

Some Honourable Members: Not in my constituency.

Ms. Wowchuk: Oh, no, the member says not in his constituency, but there were areas. This has been a heated debate for many, many years, but the member wants to put blinders on and pretend that this just happened over the last two years. It has been going on for some time.

Mr. Stan Struthers, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Mr. Acting Chairperson, we have taken a lot of steps. We did. We recognized the growth in the livestock industry. We knew that there was going to be growth. We wanted full consultation, and we did. We had over 200 presentations, over 100 written reports that came in, and our committee did a good job on it. They made many recommendations, some 40 recommendations. The member says we have not acted on any of them. Well, he is wrong again.

If you look at the number of recommendations that have been made and the number that we have acted on, we have acted on over half of them already. Well over half of the recommendations have been acted on. There are a few outstanding issues. Mr. Acting Chairperson, the member talks about input from and consultation with municipalities. I can tell him that we are working very closely with AMM

which is the organizational body for all municipalities on how we should move forward on the various issues. The municipalities really appreciate the work that we have done and the staff that we have made available to ensure that planning can be properly done. The industry also appreciates the additional staff that we have put in to ensure that the technical review process is speeded up.

Mr. Chairman, there are many issues that the member puts on the record that are not accurate. But he is right that we did the right thing by putting a committee into place and having consultations across the province because we know livestock is a very important industry in this province. We want to ensure that the growth is sustainable, and that is why we are acting on the recommendations.

I can tell the member that the few outstanding recommendations that are still there, we are working with the industry and with the municipal governments, and we will be making the balance of our position known very shortly.

You know, he talks about the length of time. I think we should take all the time that is necessary. This is not creating uncertainty. This is working through with the industry and the municipalities to see that it is done properly. Other provinces have taken much longer than we have when they have studied the industry. We will take the time we need to do it right, both for producers and for local governments.

Mr. Jack Penner: I am wondering, Mr. Chairperson, whether the minister is just telling us that there will be legislation brought before this Assembly before it adjourns. Is that what she is saying?

Ms. Wowchuk: What I did say, Mr. Chairman, is that we are working very closely with the industry and with local municipalities, with AMM, looking through the recommendations that are put forward and looking at what has to be done.

We will be making a decision in due course on the balance of the recommendations, but we are going to take the time we need to ensure that we do it right.

Mr. Jack Penner: Does that mean that there will be legislation introduced during this session?

Ms. Wowchuk: As I have indicated to the member, we are consulting with the industry and farm organizations, with municipal governments on the recommendations of the Livestock Stewardship Initiative, and we will be making an announcement in due course.

Mr. Jack Penner: Will there be legislation introduced before we adjourn this session?

Ms. Wowchuk: As I indicated to the member, we are in consultation with the industry and with municipal governments and other farm organizations as to the recommendations of the Livestock Stewardship Initiative and working through them, and we will be making an announcement in due course.

Mr. Jack Penner: Could the minister give us a list of the names of the organizations and industry representatives that she has met with or that government has met with through developing this pending legislation?

Ms. Wowchuk: I think the member is reading more into my comments than I said. He said pending legislation. What I said is that we are having discussions with municipalities, with people involved in the industry, looking at the recommendations that are there and are making decisions as to what steps should be taken to give the municipalities and the industry the tools that they need. We will be making an announcement in due course.

Mr. Jack Penner: Is the minister now telling me that there will not be legislation?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, what I said was that we have the Livestock Stewardship Initiative report that made some 40 recommendations. We have acted on many of the recommendations. There are still a few that require further discussion.

We are having discussions with people in the livestock industry and with AMM and other community leaders to determine what action we should be taking on the balance of the

recommendations. We will be reporting in due course on our direction.

Mr. Jack Penner: Could the minister indicate to this committee what the outstanding issues are that are still pending?

Madam Chairperson in the Chair

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chairperson, I believe we will be back in Estimates later this afternoon. At that time, I will have the opportunity to look at the recommendations and report to the member which of the recommendations we have not acted on yet.

Mr. Jack Penner: Madam Chairperson, what I would like the minister to do then this afternoon is give me a list of the outstanding issues that she sees as being impediments to putting forward legislation and/or regulations that are required in order to address this and give some comfort to the industry in this whole matter of livestock development.

Ms. Wowchuk: I want the member to realize that the industry is fully aware of the recommendations that have been put forward. There has been a thorough discussion with the industry.

The member is implying that the industry is not aware of what is going on. I want him to know that we have consulted and continue to consult with them as we move forward on these recommendations, and I will indicate to the member which of the recommendations we have not addressed yet.

Madam Chairperson: The time being 12 noon, I am interrupting the proceedings. The Committee of Supply will resume sitting this afternoon following the conclusion of Routine Proceedings.

JUSTICE

* (10:20)

Mr. Chairperson (Conrad Santos): Will the Committee of Supply come to order please. This section of the Committee of Supply has been dealing with the Estimates of the Department of

Justice. Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber.

We are on page 117 of the Estimates book, Resolution 4.1.

Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry): We talked about several things the last couple of days. We talked about the different organizational charts and the different components of the organizational chart. We talked about the Women's Advocacy. Aboriginal and community law, I want to touch on as well, going into several different aspects.

Before we do that, we were talking about the court system yesterday. We were talking about the kinds of things revolving around the police department in terms of some of the shortages they have, in terms of the child pornography. We talked a lot about that yesterday.

Today I would like to continue along the organizational chart, touching on the major issues, speaking on the major issues. I want to say I want to put on record that I do think we have one of the finest police departments in the world here in the province of Manitoba. That includes the municipal police, the Winnipeg city police, the Brandon city police, the RCMP. The people there who are working in these police departments are outstanding individuals who have met with a lot of challenges over the last couple of years.

The concern we should have within the context of the Justice Department is ensuring the streets are safe here in the city of Winnipeg and that people are safe in the rural areas, because that is what justice is all about, having a safe community where people feel they can live, work and play in an area where they will not be hurt, they will not be intimidated. Unfortunately, in this province at this point in time we have the highest homicide, the highest violent crime rate, the highest sexual assault, and it goes on and on.

Those stats are based on the *Juristat* that came out across Canada which held Manitoba up as being one of the most crime-ridden provinces in the country. I can appreciate the fact that members on both sides of the House have the challenges that are facing governments right now in terms of getting this under control. The

thing that puzzles me and I would like some clarification this morning on is whenever in the House in Question Period I bring up stats or I bring up numbers and I applaud the Government wherever I can, because there are some good initiatives that I have seen come forward and I give them credit for that, but I look at it as a partnership where we have to work together. I would like to take the justice area out of the political realm, and I would like to look at the problem that is out there and the needs that are facing the amount of money that is there. I would like to look at the safety of Manitobans and how we can work together, not to argue as parties across the House but to look at the problems we are dealing with, and that is basically the high crime rate and also the new crimes. We talked a lot yesterday about Internet child pornography. We talked about age of consent. We talked about things that are real issues here in the justice system.

The justice system is all about people, and the justice system, when we talk about child pornography, it is all about innocent children being violated. We have to protect them. It is the right thing to do. It is what we should be doing as government officials. When we talk about the high crime rate, we talk about it because in the province of Manitoba every time you pick up a paper, or frequently when you pick up a paper, the *Winnipeg Free Press*, *The Sun*, there is yet another shooting on the streets of Winnipeg, there is yet another stabbing, there is yet another horrendous violent crime that has occurred. This should concern not only the Government in power at this time, it should concern all of us, and we should all work together to try to find ways of making the public safe.

In one area you have heard me repeatedly say that I think there are two areas in particular that we need to deal with, and we need to face the realities and we need to problem-solve how some of these problems can be eliminated. The grassroots movement for any justice system is the people of Manitoba. They have to be partners in it. I applaud the Government in terms of the Lighthouses and the kinds of initiatives that are in the restorative justice side that are very helpful, very good in communities. The problem is that there are some realities that I believe are not being faced, that is, shortage of police

officers on the street, shortage of resources for police officers and a court system that is all locked up to such an extent that there are too many remands, there are too many bails given out without the kinds of checks and balances in place. There is a court system that needs some adjustments made in it.

Having said that, it is more for me to listen and to hear what the Government in power has to say, but there are some specific questions that I want to bring forward that impact in a huge way on the justice system here in Manitoba. The other day in Question Period when I repeatedly say I am concerned about the gangs here in Manitoba, it is May 2002, what I get is a history lesson going back the last two or three decades, a very defensive kind of reply. When I talk about gang numbers, I am told I am all wrong and come short of using the word "liar." That is the connotation that is there in Question Period. So maybe if I am wrong I would like the Attorney General to prove I am wrong. So I will tell the Attorney General what I have, and if I am misled, I would like to have it cleared up.

Now in the current Gang Unit Street Gangs Operational Report, I am under no false illusions. I think the scary thing about this whole thing is I am sure the Attorney General has these numbers. I am sure the Attorney General knows about this stuff. But I am wondering why this is not at least addressed and acknowledged, because when you address and acknowledge it, then you can do something to solve the problem. Now their gang membership database currently lists 42 individual groups, an increase of 11 groups over the calendar year 2000: 4 are outlaw motorcycle gang based, 31 are comprised of an active membership and 7 are comprised of inactive members and should be considered defunct. Generally, it can be stated that the majority of street gangs are either independent, localized groups or offshoots of the same group. The majority, approximately 1669, are members of or variations of the four main gangs in Winnipeg. Now keep in mind, this is from the Street Gangs Operational Report, and from the Gang Unit. I am just quoting this; these are not my numbers. This is not something that I dreamed up and wrote down. This is what I see, the hard cold facts. In order of size they are: Indian Posse 686; Deuce 654; Manitoba Warriors 278; Native

Syndicate 51. Madam Chairperson, this is an approximate 19% increase of the past year's active membership which stood at 1400. Active membership currently stands at 1901 individuals, an approximate 10% increase over last year's total of 1818.

Now inactive membership—that is no contact for two years—is 1748 individuals. In other words, these are the individuals that could be out there, that are out there, that have not had a charge made against them, have not had personal police contact. These 1748 individuals represent a 54% increase over the 2000 total of 1130.

Looking at, we talk about history. Constantly, members opposite are bringing up history. Now I have to say at this point the database in the last couple of years has become far more accurate. That I do agree. With the new technology and with the new emphasis on what we know about, the numbers could look larger or they could be, nobody knows for sure historically, how things really looked because the databases were not as well put together as they are in the year 2002. I must say, at this point, I am not in a contest of whether or not there were so many gang members when we were in power or so many gang members when the present Government is in power.

What I am just concerned about is the here and now, and how we can work together. It is not a contest. We have increasing violence here in the province of Manitoba. Our citizens are at risk, and we need to do something about it. When I say this, members opposite say, oh, you are saying something against our police department. That is nonsense. We have the finest police department in the country. My own son is a policeman. Give me a break.

I think what we need to do is sit down and talk about what we are looking at in today's world. In May 2002, the last *Juristat* out showed we were the most violent province in our country. There is something wrong with that. Going on, a historical overview shows that, and I will go back, September '96, there were 972 active gang members and zero inactive members; January '97, 1192 active members, zero inactive members; In March 1998, 1412 active members, 312 inactive members. Now you can

see, no matter what government was in, that the gang members were increasing because the world was changing. They were becoming more sophisticated.

The Hells Angels during this time were taking an active look at Manitoba. And guess what? They moved into Manitoba the year that the NDP became government, 1999. They were looking at it before that, but they felt they could move in.

* (10:30)

Talking about a little bit of history, there is a courthouse in the constituency of Fort Garry where the lights are out, the doors are shut, nothing happening. When we first came into office, and right now I can hear a member opposite saying it is a white elephant. I think maybe they have to open up that white elephant and do something with it. We have had reports this year of police officers being intimidated here in the courts in Winnipeg. We have had a police officer whose home was personally fire-bombed by a gang member. We have had personal intimidation that never hit the papers. We are in, and I would say at this point members opposite have made a political football out of the justice system. What I would like right now is neither one of us to do that. I would like to sit down and I would like to talk about what we can do to solve the problem. Our court system is backed up. That court house was put up and there were big trials in the offing until plea bargains came forward and a few other aspects, but it sure stopped things from escalating.

Now let us look at January 1999. Now if my numbers are wrong and these numbers are from the Gang Unit Street Gangs Operational Report, the current one, then you tell me that this is wrong. January 1999, 1596 active gang members—and by the way, the Hells Angels are in town by this time—591 inactive members; January 2000, 1748 active members, 1013 inactive members; May 2000, 1818 active gang members—those are people who have had personal contact with the police department—1130 inactive members. So that means they did not get caught because they did not have the personal contact. December 2001, 1901 active members, 1748 inactive members.

I want to go on in the report, because I want to read the full report out. Now Street Gangs Operational Report, take the kind of information based on the kind of reports that they have, the kind of charges that they have, and further on in the report it says: At face value, these stats appear to show gang membership has more than doubled in five years. The report goes on to say: This is not the actual case. The number of gang members is believed to have remained reasonably stable over this period of time. What has increased over the past years is the effectiveness of the various reporting systems within the service, enabling a far more accurate picture of gang membership or association.

You know, if I was playing politics, I would not read that into the record. I am telling you I am not playing politics. I am talking about the situation, because it shows here, as I said right at the beginning of my presentation today and of my questions beginning Question Period, that the reporting systems are becoming better; therefore, it is a more accurate picture of gang membership. The mean average of a gang member is slightly over 21 years of age. In actual fact in the majority of these groups, the age is between 21 and 24 years, therefore identifying this youth gang problem is incorrect. Only two gangs maintain an average age under 18 years. So the majority of these guys are seasoned veterans at this stuff. Less than 20 percent of the active gang members contained in the database are under 18 years of age.

Mr. Attorney General, when you have these stats and you have this information, this picture from the Gang Unit Street Gangs Operational Report, it is worrisome to me when the Attorney General of this province can tell the world, or try to tell the world that my statistics are inaccurate. Also, when the *Juristat* comes out saying that we are in seven areas—we are now in six areas, I understand—the most violent province in Canada, I think then it is time to address the problem, and I think it is time to take the politics out of the justice system and talk about this problem that we have.

Coupled with this, Madam Chair, the other part that I want the Attorney General to address is the police resources. I hear, ad nauseam, how much money, you know, historically we have

put into the police department. Well, I should say you should, because it is May 2002. Things are a little bit different than they were 10 years ago. Also, the Hells Angels have come to town. In fact, the Hells Angels are doing everything they can to set up shop in the district downtown.

What we are looking at, we are looking at more sophistication, more violence. We repeatedly hear 10 years ago you did not hear about police intimidation, even five years ago you rarely heard about police intimidation, you rarely heard about some of the violent things that are happening on the streets here in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

The Attorney General always says the police complement is up. I think he has ostrichitis. He is hiding his head in the sand. The Attorney General should know if I know; the Attorney General should certainly know that you are not taking into consideration maternity leaves, police officers who are ill, police officers who are on vacation. It is just a number. The police complement is not up, we are below. I think it has been one or two months this year when it actually has been up. I have been tracking it and I have been watching what is happening.

I think here in this House, we as politicians, no matter who is in government, need to take a look at the real situation, what is really happening.

I know yesterday when I was asking questions about child-friendly courts and victim-friendly courts, in actual fact when you got through the whole fluff, it was touted as a big thing, and we have one court that is there. We have another one in Brandon that is pretty good as well, so perhaps two courts. You know what? I do not fault the Attorney General for that. I mean, you cannot do everything, but what I would like to have is an explanation. If I am wrong, I stand to be corrected. If these stats here from the Gang Unit are wrong, I would like an explanation as to why they are wrong, but spare me the history lesson and the political blabber gab.

What I would like to know is would this Attorney General explain about the gang

numbers and explain about how we are going to decrease the violence on the streets here in the city of Winnipeg. In addition to that, there is one more element I have to add. I started it in question period and I would like to talk about it right now. That is the increasing violence in rural Manitoba.

* (10:40)

In the small village of Plumas, Manitoba, 120 residents gathered to talk about their fear they had out there because of the escalating crime spree that was going on. They were afraid for their property, they were afraid for their safety. So it is not my wish to see the pencils burning up with excuses or handing in the assignment saying, oh, yes, but we are all mistaken. A hundred and twenty residents, Mr. Attorney General, are not mistaken, they are afraid. They do not have enough police out there.

Speaking of that, I want to talk about Portage la Prairie. Portage la Prairie, it is a toss-up between Thompson police department and Portage la Prairie department, which one is busiest? It goes, first one is the busiest and the second is the busiest. They are two of the busiest places in the province of Manitoba. There is a high volume of people that go through Portage la Prairie. I say on this record right now that Portage la Prairie is 11 members under complement. That is the story, that is the facts, everybody knows about it.

It will be interesting tomorrow and today to hear how your stats are spun. There was a needs assessment done out there in that area. The workload is horrendous. I want the Attorney General to know that the police officers are working double-time. There is a tremendous amount of work to do out there. They do not have enough people, enough staff to take care of the area.

Let us talk about Westbourne. There is a community meeting now coming up in Westbourne. Guess why? The people in rural Manitoba are afraid for their safety. They are meeting to talk about the rising crime rate.

I have brought some pretty serious issues to the forefront. Madam Chair, this Government and this Attorney General have some choices. You can sit and spin and weave and get the troops in line to weave it in the political manner that you like to hear it, or members opposite can sit up and say this is the problem and this is what we are doing from this day forward to try and improve it.

I am hoping I am hearing about additional police resources out in Portage la Prairie, about the complement that is kept up to par in a real manner, not a superficial manner, and I want to see the acknowledgement that we have a gang problem here in the city of Winnipeg, that we do have the Hells Angels here and that we do have a big problem here in Winnipeg.

What I do not want to hear is the spin doctors. I already see the notes coming in from outside. What I would like to have is an honest dialogue on this. So I am listening.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Further to yesterday's discussions on child protection issues, I just have a copy of one of the mouse pads for the member that I was talking about yesterday with the rules for on-line safety. Again, I think it is important to share this with the member. There are many other materials that Child Find Manitoba has, but this is one material that I think is very innovative, to have that set out on the mouse pad itself.

I am so disappointed in the member who would call the child-friendly courtroom in Winnipeg big fluff because it is not thought of in that way by other jurisdictions or Alberta.

Point of Order

Mr. Chairperson: Does the member have a point of order?

Mrs. Smith: I have a point of order here. I have a high regard for Child Find. It is one of the finest organizations in the province of Manitoba. I do not want to start on a political dialogue in this House. Child Find is excellent. I do not think that anything is a big flop. Cyber line is not even up yet. Please rephrase.

Mr. Chairperson: There is no point of order when there are only disputes over facts. Points of order are violations of the rules of the House.

* * *

Mr. Mackintosh: If the member had heard me, I said that she called the child-friendly courtroom big fluff, and I am sorry that she thinks so.

I think the public will find that regrettable. Alberta would find that regrettable, who just came here to analyze it and went back to that province with plans to see what they could do to follow the lead of Manitoba.

Point of Order

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable Member for Fort Garry will state what is the point of order.

Mrs. Smith: The point of order is I want on the record that I do not think that the child-friendly court is a big flop. I said there is only one; there needs to be more. It is a very good initiative in many respects.

So the Attorney General is being very misleading in this regard.

Mr. Chairperson: I have stated again, points of disputes about facts are not points of order. As soon as one of the participants in this dialogue is done, you can have as much say as you can have say, but do not interrupt the one who has the floor on a supposed point of order which it is not.

* * *

Mr. Mackintosh: The member should check what she said. I believe she was saying that when it comes to child-friendly facilities, there was just a big fluff, that all there was was a child-friendly courtroom in Winnipeg, and I think that is unfortunate.

I described the hard work, the cross-divisional efforts that went into the design and the delivery of that courtroom as a priority of this Government. I do not see it as big fluff. I think it is very important. We never said more than what exists. There is a child-friendly

courtroom. There is a child-friendly waiting room in the Winnipeg courthouse. There are enhancements at Brandon, and there is the provision of screens to the regional courts. That has always been part of the record, nothing more. So, unfortunately, I see the courtroom and the waiting room as something that should be an integral part of a child victim policy. Hopefully, we can make enhancements to that. That was a start. It was Manitoba's first and I would hope for more support from the member on that courtroom. So I reject that notion. I think that it is a substantive change, particularly in the context of the other changes in protocol and the support service around the child victim support policy.

The issue of Portage la Prairie and Plumas and Westbourne has been raised. I want to commend the residents of Plumas for their interest and their involvement in looking to make their community safer and challenge and guard against any threats to their safety and well-being. I think we have to encourage that kind of involvement.

The member said earlier in her statements something to the effect all Manitobans have a role or should be involved to the extent that they can, but I think that community-driven grassroots initiatives are absolutely critical to how we move along and better protect our safety. I think that, for example, meetings of residents can very often lead to new programming in a community. I have seen that in my community, for example, one that has historically had to deal with many challenges on many fronts, but what I see is a new rallying of grassroots support for such things as community justice, for Neighborhood Watch, for Citizens on Patrol.

* (10:50)

That is why we have created a new partnership for support for Citizens on Patrol. The involvement of individuals is what the police have been asking for for many, many years. We have heard over and over again from police the statement that we cannot do it all ourselves. It is important that all Manitobans hear that from the police. The police are looking for partners. They will do what they can to support that. That is

why in Plumias we have the RCMP working with the community, working with the residents to see what positive change can be effected in that area.

I am particularly interested in how the Citizens on Patrol Program can help in that community as well as other communities in Manitoba. We are very keen to see more citizen patrols established, recognizing that we have some work to do just lending support to those that are already in existence and making sure that they have the ability to link with each other, share best practices, share techniques on recruitment, on training, patrol techniques, organizational techniques, fundraising techniques, and so on. The MPI contact person on Citizens on Patrol has been in touch with the RCMP. The RCMP will certainly be offering the assistance of the Citizens on Patrol central support initiative, should they wish to go that route.

I have visited with many patrols. I have been involved to varying extents with a citizen patrol organization in my constituency. I know that sometimes it is amazing to see what a difference even just one or two people can make in organizing and pulling together a citizen on patrol. The other options available for communities I think as well should be noted, whether it is Neighborhood Watch or community justice. I see these initiatives as being proven ways for neighbourhoods and communities to help to regain control, if you will, to take a greater role in public safety. I think that the old notion that it is someone else's problem when there is crime is discredited.

We are all in this together, and the justice system, after all, has historically been a partnership, but more has been a partnership among professional agencies, whether it be the police, prosecutions, corrections, and not as effective as it could be in partnering with grassroots or community-driven initiatives.

That is why we see citizen patrols, I think, having a vital role now, particularly partnering with law enforcement at the front end. In the town of Selkirk, for example, that is just one example, the citizen patrol has been very effective in part not just because of its great

leadership and the volunteer efforts of its patrollers, but because of its connection to the RCMP detachment. It has had an effective presence in that community, and I think, quite frankly, it provides some leadership around the province.

I see in my own neighbourhood, for example, the St. Johns Patrol, the Luxton Patrol, the Inkster-North End Patrol, the emerging Seven Oaks Patrol, as movements we should all be very proud of. We see these patrols going out maybe one or two hours at a time, at a time that is convenient for the volunteers and being able to link with the local police division.

For example, Inspector Blair McCorrister, who has recently been given new tasks and given a promotion, we certainly are sorry to see him leave the North End, but mind you, we are getting again another excellent law enforcement official Keith McCaskill in our division. I can tell you that Blair has just been a tremendous support for citizen patrols. About a year ago, there was a regional meeting of citizen patrols in North Winnipeg, and when I arrived at that meeting I was just thrilled to see not only the inspector there but about 10 or 12 officers, and they were there to show their support for citizen patrols.

I think too when it comes to not only consequences but prevention, community justice has a much greater role ahead of it. We have seen across North America governments of all stripes. I do not think there is an ideological dimension to it. I think it is just common sense that we have more local swift justice involving citizens for those lesser offences for which offenders accept responsibility.

I think that just makes the community safer, and likewise I think that communities that are looking for options in terms of what they can do to counter threats to public safety, community justice should be one option that is considered.

I know of individuals, so many individuals who have gotten involved in community justice and really fall in love with the work and make it often sometimes even a lifetime commitment. They find a real satisfaction in working with victims and offenders and other partners in the

community to deliver a strong and clear message to offenders that they are accountable for their wrong and will make right their wrong, but as well, deliver a message to victims that there will be accountability in that they are an important part of what must be a consequence for a wrongdoing.

Neighbourhood Watch is another program or, as it is known outside of the major urban areas, Rural Crime Watch, and again, we have eyes and ears for police not entirely dissimilar from the concept of citizen patrols. Recognizing that we only have so many police, it is therefore wonderfully beneficial when there are other Manitobans that are eyes and ears and can not only report activity but be there to prevent and give it a message to would-be wrongdoers, that the community cares about itself and that is organized and will take part in reducing criminal activity. So when it comes to the concern in Plumas, I certainly am concerned about any outbreak of criminal activity in that community or any other community, and that is why we think it is important that the province back up the RCMP at appropriate levels, that it also though be available to back up and support citizens when they choose options to get involved.

When it comes to Portage la Prairie, the member opposite, I would encourage her to look at the arrangement for policing in Portage la Prairie, which is one between the City of Portage la Prairie and the RCMP, under an RCMP municipal policing contract. That is the way it operates in many of the towns and cities of Manitoba and the Province is not a partner to that. That is an issue the city, by the way, is best positioned to determine the necessary level of policing resources to deal with.

I find it interesting the member would bring into this House, try to make a Portage civic issue one that is a direct role for the Province, because I think that the civic officials would wonder what contract the member is referring to.

* (11:00)

I can say in the area around Portage where the RCMP provincial policing service agreement has effect there is certainly a more direct

provincial responsibility. It is my understanding, for example, the highway patrol, I believe the complement was 11, if I am wrong, I will correct the record next time. I believe they reportedly are at full complement in that detachment.

When it comes to the level of policing in Portage la Prairie, it is my understanding and it is my advice, the advice given to me, that agreement that was brokered between the City of Portage la Prairie on behalf of its ratepayers and the RCMP stipulated 24 RCMP positions for that city. I am advised as of, I think, last week or two weeks ago it was at 23. The shortage of one, of course, the responsibility is between the RCMP and Portage to deal with, whether that is from a maternity leave or from a promotion or a transfer. My understanding is the reason they are short is because of a tragic incident involving one of those officers. There was a shooting of that officer. That is the background as it pertains to Portage la Prairie.

In terms of the city of Winnipeg, the City of Winnipeg has as one of its agencies the Winnipeg Police Service, which reports to and is accountable to the council of the City of Winnipeg. When it comes to issues of complement, training, recruitment, turnover, policies relating to maternity leave, transfers, that is within the jurisdiction of the City of Winnipeg, of course. We respect that jurisdiction. It is one that is set out under the framework of The City of Winnipeg Act. I know the incumbent mayor of Winnipeg is certainly very keen on looking for greater autonomy for not only Winnipeg but other major urban centres when it comes to decision making. It is important this Legislature respect that.

The RCMP budget, for which the Province has a more direct involvement, is with regard to the provincial policing service agreement, which I understand the member or her caucus has a copy of. The budget in 1999-2000 was, I will round the number to \$53 million. In 2000-2001, it was increased by 6.3 percent to \$56.4 million, to round out. In 2001-2002 the budget was again increased by 5.15 to \$59.3 million rounded up. This year in 2002-2003 the RCMP PPSA budget has again been increased. It is now up to over \$61 million. We will check to see. I understand too that there are other enhancements to the

RCMP budget for example with regard to DNA. There are other financial supports for the RCMP, whether it is FAS training, maybe other initiatives.

What we have seen is a continuous progress in increased funding. We have seen since 1999-2000 an increase just to the PPSA budget strictly under that contract of almost 16 percent. I think those numbers show relative to other expenditures not only within the Department of Justice but other areas of public financing that the PPSA budget is a priority for this Government. As a result of this funding and working with the RCMP we have been able to staff up and have an increased complement, which I know has been very welcomed by members of the force. But I think that we always have to remain vigilant and continue to work with the RCMP as our provincial police force.

When it comes to some of the other issues raised in terms of the Chevrier courthouse, that courtroom is built for over 30 accused. We then had a ruling which contained a statement to the effect that, and this was from former Madam Justice Krindle, Court of Queen's Bench, that trials should not have more than 8 or 9 accused. I do not want to get involved in hindsight on this, but what I am saying is that now there is a facility that has to be dealt with.

There are options. I understand the critic has had discussions with the minister responsible for our buildings on this. I can also advise her that there continue to be discussions with outside agencies about that facility and with government services involving the Justice Department. I would be pleased to have further discussions as the local member in due course when we have had full discussions with these agencies about that facility, because I do have an interest in seeing if that facility can be used in the interest of public safety. It would be good.

I also understand that whether it is market conditions or just because of the configuration of the building, there has not been an offer that has been acceptable to the Department of Government Services in terms of what their view of the market value is. So that is why I think there should be an ongoing interest in how the building can be used. As I say, there is some

interest and some discussions with outside agencies about the use of that building.

When it comes to gang numbers it may be helpful if the member opposite would table the report that she is quoting from. We can then discuss the gang numbers that she has in front of her. I can just advise her that according to the information from the Winnipeg Police Service Gang Unit, it appears that for the first time in many years there is a decline in active gang membership in, and our figures indicate that there has been a reduction over the last year. I find that encouraging, but not conclusive. So all I will do is continue to look for ways to support activities and initiatives to counter gang activity, whether it is street gang or Hells Angels.

The member opposite talked about Hells Angels. The Hells Angels began to make alliances in Manitoba with Los Bravos, I understand, some time ago. Information available to all Manitobans had indicated that Hells Angels had actually come into Manitoba back in the fall of 1997 and just continued to exert their presence. We have, in Manitoba, one chapter of Hells Angels. In Canada, there are thirty-four chapters and approximately 445 full-patch Hells Angels. Of course, around the world, there are about 2500.

In Manitoba, we have 10 full-patch Hells Angels, I am advised. That is not first-hand knowledge. It is the intelligence that has been passed on to me and, I think, has actually become information in the media. My understanding is that, of those 10, there are 7 that are currently facing charges in the justice system. That is according to information that had been passed on to me. In addition, though, there are, of course, many others that are involved in doing work for, or with, the Hells Angels.

* (11:10)

I want to recognize the tremendous work done by Winnipeg Police Service in countering organized crime in general and, specifically, outlaw motorcycle gangs.

I was disturbed to hear one of the counsel for the Hells Angels, a week or two ago, make the argument in public, on the airwaves, that the

Hells Angels were a motorcycle club and were not a gang. I think any words like these have to be countered and challenged, and Manitobans must never be left to think that this is, in any way, a legitimate organization. It is put together entirely for the purpose of crime, and its effect is to undermine the well-being of citizens around the world. It destroys the lives of young people and others with control and growth of drug sales and involves the exploitation of women around the world, the sexual exploitation of women. When we have comments like these being made, we have to ensure that there is no face of legitimacy put on this kind of organization.

Those were the issues, I think, that the member had raised.

Just to add, when it comes Hells Angels, for example, outlaw motorcycle gangs, it is a significant international challenge and one that local law enforcement deals with by way of local action and strategies often involving dialogue and partnering with other law enforcement and justice agencies.

I am very pleased that, in Winnipeg, and others have likewise said, the Winnipeg Police Service has just done an extraordinary job in countering this threat. I am very pleased, as well, with the Prosecutions' Gang Unit. I am just pleased that the structure is there for the specialized targeting of organized crime.

I am also pleased to see the partnering, the communication, that are ongoing between the Winnipeg Police Service, in particular their Gang Unit, and the Prosecutions' Gang Unit. That was what was contemplated when that unit was set up. If the member has any questions on the Prosecutions' Gang Unit, I would certainly be pleased to provide answers.

I just want to add what the member says about Portage la Prairie in the Legislature is certainly of concern in terms of any challenges they may have in regard to public safety. Allegations of gang activity of course are of concern. If the member does have first-hand knowledge or she has a concern that local law enforcement does not have that information, I would urge her to report that to the authorities.

I have had discussions with civic representatives in Portage la Prairie. They are concerned that statements being made have exaggerated or overblown what is happening in Portage la Prairie. I know there is some concern about that, for which the members will have to be accountable of course, but I look forward to dialogue with civic representatives in Portage la Prairie to see if there is something we can help them with.

If there is any information, whether it is gangs or auto thefts, it should be taken to the police as soon as possible. They will conduct the necessary investigation. Of course I would not intend to interfere with any investigations that are underway or could be undertaken. That is a long-standing practice of attorneys general in this province and I intend to follow that.

Mrs. Smith: On several things, talking about Portage la Prairie, I, too, have been talking to people in Portage la Prairie. So has the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Faurichou), who is extremely concerned about the situation in Portage la Prairie. The concern in Portage la Prairie is that everyone is well aware of the fact that there is the agreement between the City and the police. What the people are saying out there is that the Government needs to step in to assist them because there is not enough money in their personal coffers to be able to deal with the crime that is happening out there.

Neither myself nor the Member for Portage la Prairie have, in any way, shape, or form, overexaggerated, as the connotation from the Attorney General just came across the floor. The fact of the matter is there are real problems out in Portage la Prairie. The police are strained. They cannot keep up to the kinds of things that are going on. That is why it is brought before this House. That is why the Member for Portage la Prairie has also brought that before this House. It is a real concern.

I would be very pleased to table the report from the Gang Unit, the Street Gangs Operational Report for the Attorney General. I just have one copy on me now—do we need three?

As I say, I would like to, if the Attorney General has any extra information about the

gang members, I would be very pleased to have his numbers as well, because those are the numbers I have and these are the concerns I have.

Having said that, there are many aspects we talked about today that I think, quite honestly, there are some aspects we are on the same side, but it is puzzling. The rationale, I am talking about lack of police resources and I am talking about increased crime rate here in the province of Manitoba. I am talking about problem-solving it. What I am hearing is that everything is fine, full complement and, oh, everything is just great. That is not the case.

I at least am pleased to hear the Attorney General downplay—or, not downplay; that is the wrong word—acknowledge that the Hells Angels is a gang. It is not a club. It is something that we do not want here in Manitoba.

Having said that, what information I have is what information I have given to the Attorney General in the hopes that support will be given to these areas to help them. I agree that citizens' patrols are excellent. I agree that they are very, very important to have here in the province of Manitoba. I think they have been very, very helpful in many communities. It is something that we do need to work in partnership and enhance those kinds of tools that we have, those kinds of dedicated people who do go out and take a personal interest in the safety of the citizens in their areas.

I was talking to one gentleman out in the Portage area and he said: Well that is great, but if it is four o'clock in the morning and you make a call, and there are no cars available to come out and deal with the problem or there are not enough police available to attend to the problem, he says you do not get anywhere anyway. So what I am saying to the present Government is that it is not as simple as numbers on a page. The fact of the matter is, the workload is very heavy in the Portage area. They are 11 understaffed in the Portage area. Any crime that I do know about, I have brought to your attention. Members from this side of the House have brought these concerns. The member from Portage has brought these concerns to the minister's attention.

* (11:20)

Unfortunately, the Attorney General, I would hope, would acknowledge the fact that he is the highest person in the Justice Department, responsible for the well-being of the people of Manitoba, and so what I have brought forward is, these are troubled areas.

I do applaud the people of Plumias, the people of Portage and the people of Westbourne for getting together and trying to problem solve, but the police resources need to be looked at in a meaningful way because there are not enough out there to subdue the kind of crimes that we do have in some parts of rural Manitoba and here in the city of Winnipeg and in the city of Brandon.

Regardless of the fact that the minister has said that here in the city of Winnipeg it is the city's responsibility, could the minister please talk about the funding that we started when we were in government to shore up the complement here in the city of Winnipeg? I daresay now, in places like Portage la Prairie that is something the Attorney General might take time to look at in terms of supporting that area of high—there are a lot of people that go through that area, there are people that come from different parts of Manitoba and it is a centre of very high activity. Could the Attorney General acknowledge the fact that, because of this high area, there needs to be extra resources put into Portage la Prairie?

In addition, as I said before, I would like to hear also about the police complement here in Winnipeg. The funding has come from the Province so the checks and balances need to be in there from the Province as well to fund police officers here in the city of Winnipeg.

In addition, when we talk about positive change, the positive change would be the community justice and restorative justice issues are extremely important. It is a big part of the justice system, but when there is increased crime in a province, when there is increased violent crime—and also I might take a look at the retirements that are expected by the year 2003 in the police department. I do not have my paper here but my understanding is, it is upwards to 70 percent. So what we are looking at is needing

more police officers on the street in a province that has increased crime concerns.

I also want to put on the record that I do not believe, in any way, shape or form, that the court friendly area for children is a piece of fluff. I think it is very important. What I think is I was talking about the news report and the great deal of spin centred around the child-friendly or victim-friendly courtrooms. I think it is a very positive thing. I think there should be many more of them. I think the product has to actually deal with the problem at hand. We need more courtrooms that are child friendly, more courtrooms that are victim friendly because this is a problem throughout Manitoba. I also said that I know this kind of thing in the courtrooms cannot be done overnight, but I know that victim intimidation is a concern across the province.

I know the town of Selkirk. The Attorney General talked about the town of Selkirk, the Citizens on Patrol. All this is extremely good, and something that members on our side of the House agreed with and started with years ago, and I am very pleased to see the Attorney General continue and enhance it and develop it. It is extremely important and that is a great part of it.

As I said, the component that is very weak right now in this province is having the backup, having the police resources there to back up the citizens who are on patrol, the people who are talking about the kind of problems that they have within their communities.

I would appreciate it very much, having tabled the Street Gangs Operational Report, any additional reports that the Attorney General has in this area. I would like to have those numbers as well. If the Attorney General could be forthcoming in that documentation, it would be very helpful because what I am bringing forward is what I have in my hand, what I believe to be true, and what I see on paper. So anything else, I would be very pleased, and these numbers raise grave concerns.

Also, the Attorney General must be concerned as he reads the paper almost on a daily basis of the violent crimes that are happening here in the city of Winnipeg, and the increased crimes in some parts of rural Manitoba. Portage

la Prairie is one that we have spoken of simply because it is a very busy centre and there are not enough resources out there. The resources are needed to shore up that area.

Having said that, I would like to go on to the Law Enforcement Review Agency, if the Attorney General could give some overview as to how that particular agency operates and who is on it.

Before we start directly into that, could I just put on the record I would like to have, in hard copy please, the listing of all the staff and the personnel in the Department of Justice. I know here in the Estimates some of the salaries are listed, but I would like to have the specific salaries for each individual also, please. In addition to that, I would like to have all the political staff that have been hired over the past two years, and I would like to know what their role is and what their salaries are, please. So, if we could go forward then into the Law Enforcement Review Agency and talk about that particular agency.

Mr. Mackintosh: I am not sure I discern what the concern of the member was on the child-friendly courtroom announcement, because she refers to it as a spin. What is critical often in many announcements, particularly around victim issues in making announcements, is that the announcement can often by itself serve as a reminder and an assurance to victims or survivors that the justice system takes their complaints and issues seriously.

When it comes to child victimization, it is, I think, particularly important, albeit challenging, to assure families that the justice system will treat them respectfully, that there is a system there for them, that the matter is not simply a dark secret within a family that should be kept there, that it is a crime and a serious crime for which the justice system will attempt to seek accountability based on the evidence and law.

When it comes to the child-friendly courtroom, of course, we announced it publicly. I believe that was the extent of it. We announced what we had put in place, bearing in mind that that may in and of itself mean that a family here or there may come forward that otherwise might

not have come forward for fear of further victimization at the hands of the justice system or defence counsel or the accused. So that is all I can say on that issue.

* (11:30)

On the Law Enforcement Review Agency, that is at pages 44 and 45 of the supplementary information book, the agency is not a police agency of course. It is independent and investigates complaints about conduct of municipal police under the jurisdiction of The Law Enforcement Review Act, and, of course, the principles of natural justice.

Back in the fall of 1997, as a result of increasing concerns on the part of the public, opposition, police services, and the former administration, KPMG was retained to get a better understanding of what constitutes an acceptable workload for LERA. That report was received in January of 1998.

In March of that year, George Wright was appointed acting commissioner and more recently was appointed on a permanent basis commissioner. The permanent staff consists of that commissioner, the registrar, two investigators. It has its own budget of course and office accommodations. The commissioner submits an annual report to the minister concerning the performance of his duties and functions.

The commissioner, as the member will recall, reports to the ADM of the Criminal Justice Division. The LERA and the commissioner I understand from even recent conversations with law enforcement officials I think has turned a corner. I think there is a new respect for LERA's administrative functioning. I have heard most recently from the Winnipeg Police Association representatives, for example, and from several others that they are pleased in general with the way that LERA is currently operating, although we are looking at anything we can do to better deliver this service.

Indeed, I know that in the works right now is a request for filling a vacant position at LERA. That is going through the internal processes right now to ensure that we maintain our commitment to the Law Enforcement Review Agency. I

understand that LERA now has an extensive Web site that is linked to the Justice Department's home page. I might just add that, of course—the member, I am sure she appreciates this—I would never comment on specific complaints that are under investigation by LERA or that may be before a Provincial Court judge.

I wonder if the member could clarify her request for information on employees of the Justice Department. There are 2341 employees of the Justice Department. I mean, did I understand her right that she was asking for a list of all the employees of the department, or were there specific divisions or categories of employment that she is interested in, or, for example, is she interested just in the management team, however that may be defined?

Mrs. Smith: I was talking about the minister's specific staff, the political staff that the minister has hired over the past two years with the salaries. I am quite familiar with the regular ADMs.

I also have one question about any special assistants that you have hired in the last couple of years with the names and the salaries, not the whole 2000 obviously.

No, it is specific to when the minister came into government and specifically since last year since I took over the portfolio.

I would like to know all the political staff. Maybe I will extend that a little bit. I would like to know all the political staff who have been hired since the minister came into office. I would like to know any special assistants who have been hired on the political side. I would like to know their roles and responsibilities and their salaries.

I am quite familiar with the regular people who have been there running the Department of Justice in each of their areas, I must say in very good ways, very competently. I do not need the whole 2000. Is that what the minister is asking me? Is that a little clearer to you or what other information does the minister need?

Mr. Mackintosh: That is great because that is a big difference of 2300-and-some people. But as

Justice Minister I have the two political staff: the special assistant Janis Bermel, who came into office when I did, and the executive assistant Pauline Riley, who came in just a little bit after but, as well, has been there since I have been in office. The executive assistant does not do Justice Department work, though, but does, of course, the liaison with communities and my constituency. It has been the practice for as long as I know for that position. The special assistant is a liaison between myself and the department and other community organizations. I think the job descriptions probably have not changed over the course of administrations. The deputy nods. He is the one who sees this on a daily basis.

The salary ranges for the classification for the SA are \$45,300 to \$50,838, and the executive assistant for the class the range is \$41,703 to \$47,207. As I recall I think actually the special assistant to myself is receiving lower remuneration than my predecessor's SA, just in case the member thinks she has something there. I do not think any review of comparison would help on a political argument there. That is the information that has been provided to me on the SA and the EA.

* (11:40)

Mrs. Smith: Just to clarify with the Justice Minister, I am not looking to get anything. What I am trying to find out is the new people on staff and what their roles and responsibilities are, because the focus in the Justice Department has somewhat changed from before. I want to know any new deputy ministers, any new person who has come on board since the minister has come into power, and to know what their roles and responsibilities are.

That helps me to see the emphasis the Justice system is taking, whether it be restorative justice, whether it be victims' rights, whether it be that kind of thing. I think the minister and I are on two different wave lengths here. I am not looking for political mileage. What I am looking for is taking a look at the stream of where the Justice Department is going.

Mr. Mackintosh: The Justice Minister has the two political staff provided. Those two individuals I named earlier have been there roughly since I came into office. The deputy minister has been

in office since, I believe, about 1993. Mr. MacFarlane came to Manitoba Justice from the federal Department of Justice, a highly respected individual who is a senior among deputies and doing an exemplary job.

In terms of the other divisions I should note, and I should have noted this when we did the organizational chart overview, but what is not clear or obvious from the sheet is that one of the divisions has been eliminated in our first year of office. There is an ADM and a division called Civil Justice. Civil Justice had reporting to it: Family Law was one; Constitutional Law; Legal Aid; Manitoba Human Rights Commission; Public Trustee as an SOA. There may have been another one.

As a result of an eagerness to reduce senior management costs and to look for more efficient delivery of programs in the department, that division was eliminated and those functions that reported to the ADM at the time have been distributed. You will see where they are now on the organizational chart.

With regard to the Manitoba Human Rights Commission, that, as well as the Law Reform Commission, Chief Medical Examiner and Public Trustee, report to the special advisor to the deputy attorney general, Mary Humphrey. I might add Mary Humphrey, an invaluable individual in the department, has been in the deputy's office since 1998 and came into the public service in 1976.

In terms of the other ADMs, Pat Sinnott, the ADM of Finance Administration has been here for how many years, Pat? *[interjection]* Since 1979. You are a real survivor, Pat. Congratulations. The ADM for Legislative Counsel, Val Perry, is a new appointment that was done as well by a direct appointment, I can advise the member, but it was done in consultation with the Opposition. Val had been acting Legislative Counsel for a brief period when Shirley Strutt was doing other tasks for a while, and has been a senior Legislative Counsel for quite a number of years. So that probably was information that the member was looking for.

An Honourable Member: Give us the new people.

Mr. Mackintosh: New. Well, Irene Hamilton was appointed ADM of Courts in January of 2000. She started with the civil service in 1991. As I recall, she came from the position of Public Trustee, and, before that, she worked for the Liquor Control Commission.

Then, in the area of Corrections, Jim Wolfe is the ADM. Mr. Chair, Jim began work with the civil service in December of 1987 and was appointed— *[interjection]* Then you are having fun, you know. Jim was appointed to his current position in October of 2001. As I recall, he was in an acting role as the ADM before that permanent appointment. That was done, as well, as a direct appointment I recall. There were consultations with the Civil Service Commission on that one. Jim, like all of them, does an exemplary job, and he certainly has a rich background in the area of Corrections in Manitoba.

Yes, there have been a few changes when you go through the list. Greg Graceffo, the ADM of Criminal Justice, came into the Civil Service in November of 1990. Greg was permanently appointed the ADM of Criminal Justice in April of 2001.

Jeff Schnoor, his appointment was in 1998 as the Policy Development analysis director.

Some of these other organizations that may be of interest; the chair of the Law Reform Commission, Cliff Edwards, and he has been in that position since 1994. The Human Rights Commission, Dianna Scarth has been there since August of 1996. Doctor Balachandra, who is the Chief Medical Examiner, but that is since July of '99 as well. The Director of Public Trustee—that director was appointed since coming to office—that is Anne Bolton. That was a competition, permanent appointment, which became effective April of 2000. She has been with the public service and, I think, with The Public Trustee for most of those years, if not all of them, since 1980. I do not see, among those agencies, any other recent changes. There are Civil Legal, Constitutional Law and Family Law—all the appointments there predate us being sworn into office. Deborah Carlson, for example, is the Acting Director of Constitutional Law. That was

effective October 2, 1999. So that was just three days before we came into office. That sets it out.

* (11:50)

Mrs. Smith: Mr. Chair, I must say that the Justice Minister has a fabulous team of people there. I know, by name, a lot of these people and have talked to members on this side of the House about the level of expertise and competency that is in the Justice Department. I think that is very reassuring, especially in this day and age with the new challenges. I think the Attorney General can attest to the fact there are lots of new challenges in the area of the Justice Department. I absolutely commend the staff. It is fabulous. I know some of these names, like Rob Finlayson, Jim Wolfe and Greg. I mean I could name all of them. They are exemplary. It is just great to see them here. Working in the Department of Justice with the advice that you have as an attorney general certainly strengthens the area.

Having said that, the Law Enforcement Review Agency, LERA, I would agree with the Attorney General, LERA, is an extremely strong organization, a strong agency. Could the Attorney General tell me who is heading that right now? I knew, but I cannot remember.

Mr. Mackintosh: The member may not know some of the history around this. I know there had been some difficulties identified in this area going back under the former administration. There was a change of leadership there. Mr. George Wright was appointed on an acting basis to head up LERA in March of 1998, as I recall. He then performed in that capacity until he was permanently appointed as the Commissioner, and that was a direct appointment, in June of 2001. Mr. Wright came into that position on an acting basis with a mandate to, for lack of a better phrase, clean up the mess and, as I understand it, has done so. I say that based on third party information, as well. I was just out in Brandon the last week or so. Again, I heard positive things about LERA now. There has to be confidence in LERA by both the management teams of our municipal police forces as well as our municipal officers. It appears that that balance is being maintained by Mr. Wright. But it was because of his commitment and his track record that he was permanently appointed. Just a

note for the member that Mr. Wright was brought in under the former administration, on the interim basis, to clean up the mess.

A decision was made when we were working with Mr. Sangster who was the ADM at the time on this one, and I had visited with Mr. Wright, and I had been asking around with the police officials about how LERA was going, and I think Mr. Wright has done just a great job. I was very pleased, by the way, as well, to see him networking out there. He was at a dinner function in Brandon a week ago, and I know is well respected. So that was in June of 2001 when he was appointed, and I note that he began work with the public service of Manitoba in October of 1995. So if the member has any recommendations or advice on LERA, we would certainly take that under consideration, but we do hope we can fill a position there right now. We are trying to do that on an expedited basis, again to give a clear message that we want to see those complaints dealt with fairly and on a timely basis.

Mrs. Smith: I would agree with the Attorney General. There is no doubt that Mr. Wright is a very, very highly respected gentleman and is doing a wonderful job. LERA seems to be functioning in an extremely positive manner. It is a very important aspect of the Justice Department. Well, I guess it is really independent of the Justice Department in the purest sense, but he has done an extremely good job, and I highly commend him for his work.

Looking at the org chart, just to clarify, as I said before, if the Attorney General could provide in hard copy the new people that have come on board in terms of political staff, so I could see who they are and what their function is. I did have a question as to the reconfiguration of the org chart. When the Attorney General started to explain the part that was previously missing, that explained, I guess, part of what I was trying to get at, because the emphasis has been very strongly, and I think rightly so, on the victims' rights area and other areas that with any new Attorney General who comes in, there is

always a rejigging, as it were, of the org chart. You can see from the chart quite clearly the direction the Justice Department is going under the direction of the Attorney General.

I do not know if I want to start a big topic at this point in time because we are nearing the end of our time. I think we have about four minutes, Mr. Chair, so I will not do that. But I want to put on the record again that I very strongly support the court-friendly initiative. I think that it is very good. I will put on the record that I think that it needs to be extended and expanded. True, sometimes when press releases come out, you consider it to be a major initiative and you expect to see many court-friendly sites across the province. In actual fact, we have one. I think, as the Attorney General put it earlier, sometimes these press releases, I will agree, can bring people's attention to the initiative and give hope to some people who have not seen it previously.

I would put on the record that I would like to see an expansion and extension of this particular initiative because I think it is very important for victims. I think it is very important for women, and I think it is very important for children. So I think it is something that has to be addressed because there has been a gap there. We will be going into the dollars-and-cents part of that at a later time.

I would like to also take a look at the Prosecutions side when we sit down again. There are some questions that I have there that might help you to understand the kind of staff that need to be present. We will also be looking at Corrections and some still on the Criminal Justice side as well. So we have a lot of work to do.

Rather than start a major topic at this time, I think I would move that we call it twelve o'clock.

Mr. Chairperson: The hour being 12 noon, pursuant with the rules, I am interrupting the proceedings of the Committee of Supply, with the understanding that the Speaker will resume the Chair at 1:30 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 30, 2002

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