

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

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

**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Ninth Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	N.D.P.
BLADY, Sharon	Kirkfield Park	N.D.P.
BOROTSIK, Rick	Brandon West	P.C.
BRAUN, Erna	Rossmere	N.D.P.
BRICK, Marilyn	St. Norbert	N.D.P.
BRIESE, Stuart	Ste. Rose	P.C.
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CULLEN, Cliff	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary, Hon.	Concordia	N.D.P.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	P.C.
GRAYDON, Cliff	Emerson	P.C.
HAWRANIK, Gerald	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
HICKES, George, Hon.	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
HOWARD, Jennifer	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Garry	N.D.P.
JENNISSON, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar, Hon.	The Pas	N.D.P.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARCELINO, Flor	Wellington	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McFADYEN, Hugh	Fort Whyte	P.C.
McGIFFORD, Diane, Hon.	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	N.D.P.
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Carman	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
RONDEAU, Jim, Hon.	Assiniboia	N.D.P.
ROWAT, Leanne	Minnedosa	P.C.
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	N.D.P.
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield	P.C.
SELBY, Erin	Southdale	N.D.P.
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	N.D.P.
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, September 27, 2007

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill 10—The Family Maintenance Amendment and Inter-jurisdictional Support Orders Amendment Act**

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), that Bill 10, The Family Maintenance Act and Inter-jurisdictional Support Orders Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'obligation alimentaire et la Loi sur l'établissement et l'exécution réciproque des ordonnances alimentaires, be now read a first time.

**Mr. Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable Attorney General, seconded by the honourable Minister of Finance, that Bill 10, The Family Maintenance Amendment and Inter-jurisdictional Support Orders Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Speaker, this bill will assist individuals in dealing with recalculations as well as dealing with inter-jurisdictional awards to help Manitobans to recover maintenance and other support payments. Thank you.

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

**Bill 17—The Firefighters, Peace Officers and Workers Memorial Foundations Act**

**Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation):** Mr. Speaker, I move seconded by the Minister of Labour and Immigration (Ms. Allan), that Bill 17, The Firefighters, Peace Officers and Workers Memorial Foundations Act; Loi sur les fondations à la mémoire des pompiers, des agents de la paix et des travailleurs, now be read for a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Lemieux:** Mr. Speaker, this legislation establishes three new foundations that will create tributes in memory of peace officers, firefighters and

workers who have lost their lives on the job. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Bill 209—The Historic Trans-Canada Highway Act**

**Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler), that Bill 209, The Historic Trans-Canada Highway Act, be now read a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Hawranik:** Mr. Speaker, this bill recognizes the historic significance of Provincial Trunk Highway 44 as the first Trans-Canada Highway in Manitoba.

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

## PETITIONS

**Provincial Trunk Highway 2—Glenboro**

**Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

As a result of high traffic volumes in the region, there have been numerous accidents and near misses along Provincial Trunk Highway 2 near the village of Glenboro, leading to serious safety concerns for motorists.

The provincial government has refused to construct turning lanes off Provincial Trunk Highway 2 into the village of Glenboro and onto Golf Course Drive, despite the fact that the number of businesses along Provincial Trunk Highway 2 have increased greatly in recent years.

We petition the Manitoba Legislative Assembly as follows:

To urge the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Lemieux) to consider implementing a speed zone on Provincial Trunk Highway 2 adjacent to the village of Glenboro.

This petition is signed by Dale Naismith, Kim Robinson, L. Blaine and many others.

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

#### **Provincial Trunk Highway 10–Forrest**

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

Provincial Trunk Highway 10 separates two schools and residential districts in Forrest, Manitoba, forcing students and residents to cross under very dangerous circumstances.

Strategies brought forward to help minimize the danger pose either significant threats to the safety of our children or are not economically feasible.

Provincial Highway 10 serves as a route for an ever-increasing volume of traffic, including heavy trucks, farm vehicles, working commuters, campers and the transport of dangerous goods.

Traffic levels are expected to escalate further due to projected industrial expansions.

We petition the Manitoba Legislative Assembly as follows:

To urge the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Lemieux) to act in this situation by considering the construction of a four-lane highway that will bypass around the village of Forrest.

This petition signed by Catherine Wilcox, John Howden, Valerie Robertson and many, many others.

#### **Provincial Nominee Program**

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

Immigration is critically important to the future of our province, and the 1998 federal Provincial Nominee Program is the best immigration program Manitoba has ever had.

The current government needs to recognize the backlog in processing PNP applications is causing additional stress and anxiety for would-be immigrants and their families and friends here in Manitoba.

The current government needs to recognize the unfairness in its current policy on who qualifies to be

an applicant, more specifically, by not allowing professionals such as health care workers to be able to apply for PNP certificates in the same way a computer technician would be able to.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Premier (Mr. Doer) and his government to recognize and acknowledge how important immigration is to our province by improving and strengthening the Provincial Nominee Program.

This is signed by D. Ferrier, H. Regaldo, A. Sarte and many, many other fine Manitobans.

#### **TABLING OF REPORTS**

**Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives):** Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to table the 2006-2007 annual reports for the Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation and for the Food Development Centre.

#### **Introduction of Guests**

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to Oral Questions, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today Angel Stoyko, Lionel Crowther, Carol Wilson, Deb Woodman, Alex Forrest and the executive members of the United Firefighters of Winnipeg who are the guests of the Minister for Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Lemieux).

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

#### **ORAL QUESTIONS**

##### **West Side Bipole Power Line Environmental Study**

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, the Premier, by his directive to Manitoba Hydro, which is our province's most valuable Crown corporation, is going to create \$500 million in debt for the next generation of Manitobans. He's going to waste 100 megawatts of precious clean energy which entirely negates all of the wind power currently in existence in Manitoba and at least half of the capacity of a Minnesota coal-fired power plant.

His proposal is to run a west side line that is going to go down the west side of the province in the vicinity of eight First Nations, two provincial forests and Riding Mountain National Park with no

environmental study, no consultations on the west side and no consideration for what's in the best interests of Manitobans. Half a billion dollars in debt, no environmental study, impacts on west side communities, Mr. Speaker, and the reason he has provided is that he's worried about pressure from foreign activists.

So my question to the Premier is: Why is he allowing American activists to bully him into selling out the people that he was elected to represent, the people of Manitoba?

\* (13:40)

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, any transmission line of any site has to go before a Clean Environment Commission. It will study the impact of the proposed transmission line. It will not be a decision that we would second-guess because, as a quasi-judicial body, it will study the issues of First Nations. It will study and evaluate the issues of the heritage rivers, two of which obviously are on the east side that we considered in terms of our preference, one of which is on the west side, which, of course, is the Red River. It already has an existing transmission line across it.

It will consider the fact that on the west side there are 90 years of mining, highways, economic development, as opposed to a majority of the boreal forest on the east side. It has not had development, Mr. Speaker. It must consider, under section 35 of the Constitution, the views of any First Nations community. East, west or through the middle of the province the existing corridor has a considerable amount of loss through the Interlake with the existing transmission capacity. The new technology will have less loss. We may, as the CEO has indicated to us, have even greater potential for markets on the west side with Saskatchewan and Alberta.

But all of these issues the members opposite would know that the debt ratio has gone down under our government, and it's gone down because we have built dams. We are in the process of building more, but he makes statements about renewable energy. Mr. Speaker, they were ninth in Canada on energy efficiency when we came into office. The energy efficiency standard in Canada of independent evaluation has now got Manitoba No. 1 on energy efficiency. We closed down the most polluting coal plant in Canada that was operated by members opposite in Selkirk. The most polluting coal plant in Canada was closed down by our government because

we do care about the environment. We don't just talk about it, like members opposite.

**Mr. McFadyen:** The Premier has campaigned on running the line down the west side of the province. He says that he had a commitment and an endorsement from the people of Manitoba. Now he seems to be saying that maybe it will not be the right decision, and so he's talking out of both sides of his mouth. He's either in favour or he's against. We don't need the slippery flip-flopping on such an important issue, Mr. Speaker, so all his answer to that question does is demonstrate that he's directed the corporation to plough ahead with a decision without the benefit of environmental studies, which he has admitted have not yet been done.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier makes reference in his comments to power sales to Alberta, and I would encourage him to—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. McFadyen:** I would encourage the Premier (Mr. Doer) to read his clippings, because if he did, he would have seen a news story three weeks ago, September of this year, that Alberta is moving ahead with tendering for a nuclear plant to supply power to the tar sands, a nuclear plant in excess of 2,000 megawatts, Mr. Speaker. So he's dropped the ball. Alberta's moving ahead down a different path, and this whimsical, fanciful idea of power sales to Alberta when Alberta's going down a different path is a complete non-answer to the question.

Now, the Premier has said, and his Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) has tried to make the case that we're talking about untouched forest on the east side of the lake. The fact is—and I'll table the maps—there are three existing transmission lines that run through the east side, through the boreal forest, all of them through the boreal forest, all of them on the east side.

Yesterday, the Premier said in the House that there would be 800 kilometres of trees on the east side, much less than the west side, which is 550 kilometres, which is at odds with what the CEO of Hydro said in committee. When asked the question, the CEO of Hydro, Mr. Brennan, said a rough estimate of a length of boreal forest that would be traversed by an east side bipole 3 is 750 kilometres, not the 800 kilometres that the Premier said, and a rough estimate of the length of boreal forest that would be traversed by a west bipole is 800 kilometres, Mr. Speaker. This is Mr. Brennan:

800 kilometres on the west, 750 on the east. So, clearly the Premier needs to explain the discrepancy between what his Hydro CEO is saying and what he and his Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), who's known for making false statements, are saying in the media.

I want to ask the Premier: Given that he's proceeding with a policy of wasting half a billion dollars, wasting a hundred megawatts of power and cutting down at least as many trees on the west side as the east side, all because he has this idea of a Taj Mahal legacy and he's got visions of American activists, why won't the Premier put the interests of the people of Manitoba first and set aside his Taj Mahal fantasies and his fears of American activists?

**Mr. Doer:** There are so many factual errors in the preamble of the member that I want to start by correcting him. First of all, on the issue of stating a preference and making a proposal and the issue of decision-making for purposes of licensing, we were in favour of the floodway expansion. We put that forward to the Clean Environment Commission. That did not mean that the Clean Environment Commission was going to license what we were in favour of. We were in favour of expanding the dam capacity of Manitoba, and we proposed that the Nelson House-Wuskwatim partnership proposal on the Burntwood River go forward. That did not mean that the Clean Environment Commission was going to license it.

I am shocked that a member opposite, a Leader of the Opposition doesn't know the difference between a proposal that goes to the Clean Environment Commission and the licensing. In fact, Hydro itself, not just the government, reviewed the licensing obstacles for both routes, all three routes. The cheapest route is the Interlake route. The most accessible area is the Interlake route. The problem is it's the least reliable in the sense that the two lines or the third line would be too close to existing lines. But the cheapest route is the straightest line and we've always acknowledged that. Hydro themselves have identified licensing issues on the east side and, yes, on the west side.

The boreal forest area is a part of reviews. The numbers, I believe, are 580 on the west side on boreal forest and 800 on the east side. The access issues, also according to the CEO, the vast majority of access is already there with existing rights-of-way, with highways, transmission lines. I mean, you only have to go to either side to know the difference of

economic development between the two sides, Mr. Speaker. I want to make it very clear to the member opposite that—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh. Oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Doer:** I want to make it very clear that a proposal on the floodway did not mean a licence. A proposal on Wuskwatim did not mean a licence. A proposal on either the west side or the middle or the east side still requires a complete review of the Clean Environment Commission.

That is not anything else except consistency. I know that's a strange word for the member opposite. Floodway proposal licence, Wuskwatim proposal licence, west side proposal: Clean Environment Commission determines the environmental validity, and, by the way, Mr. Speaker, there are also issues that have to be dealt with by the PUB that deals with anything related to rates.

Both are quasi-judicial bodies and both will take an independent review of the proposals, Mr. Speaker.

\* (13:50)

**Mr. McFadyen:** The Premier's often said that turning up the volume doesn't make the song any better, and I heard a lot of bluster, the wall of sound from the other side, but within that wall of sound nothing even resembling a response to the issue or the question. It's the old cheap shot, the cheap shot artist whenever he gets onto an issue he doesn't want to have to respond, Mr. Speaker.

He has put forward a proposal against the advice of his Hydro executives. He's jammed it down the throat of the corporation against their advice. He's right; they've done the analysis on licensing issues. They've raised potential issues on the east side, and presumably they're looking at the fact that they've got eight First Nations, two provincial forests, Riding Mountain National Park and hundreds of kilometres of boreal forest on the west side proposal, Mr. Speaker.

So for him to presuppose and take a government position that they're going to waste half a billion dollars, 100 megawatts of energy without any study to back up the environmental case shows exactly how political and how flimsy this decision is.

Now the Premier says he's worried about boreal forest, and if we look back just before the election, in that flurry of pre-election spending that the

government embarked on, I've got a news release April 5, 2007. The headline is "Province moving forward on first leg of all weather road for the east side of Lake Winnipeg"—\$15 million. *[interjection]*

The Premier's the only one smart enough on that side not to clap at this stage, Mr. Speaker.

So the east side road going up Lake Winnipeg, they're going to build a road, 90 kilometres of pavement from Manigotagan to Bloodvein. They want to put in another 80 kilometres of pavement from Bloodvein to Berens River, 170 kilometres of pavement through the east side boreal forest in addition to three existing power lines, three existing winter roads. So to summarize, \$500 million in debt.

He's sending out his highways minister with a chainsaw along with the Member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson) to cut 170 kilometres of forest on the east side. He's sending his Hydro minister out with a chainsaw to cut 800 kilometres of forest on the west side. They're stoking up the coal plants in Minnesota all because the Premier is seeing ghosts of American activists, Mr. Speaker.

I want to ask the Premier: Why is he knuckling under to the loony left, to the American activists, defying common sense? Why isn't he standing up for the people of Manitoba?

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite, I'm quite surprised that he would call Xcel power the loony left. It's one of the major customers of Manitoba Hydro. It has to go before a regulatory body for the purchase of power in Minnesota. There are a lot of very active people in Minnesota but we're talking about customers. We're talking about commercial customers. I know members—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Doer:** You know, there's the member heckling. Mr. Speaker—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Doer:** They wouldn't know very much, Mr. Speaker, about commercial relationships because they did not build the Limestone project. They did not sell the Limestone power. They did not generate

the \$600 million to \$700 million that has allowed Manitoba to have the lowest hydro rate.

The only thing they did in office was mothball and then criticize, mothball and criticize, mothball and criticize. That's their policy. That's been clear to Manitobans. I would point out that we do have plans for east side roads. We're not also misinforming people to say if there's a transmission line, and this is what we inherited is a myth in 1999, there would be a \$400 million road. Hydro clarified that for us. It would be a very small investment.

We actually went out and told the truth to communities rather than misleading them. Also, Mr. Speaker, which is a very important point, when it comes to dealing with highways in remote and northern areas, it was this member that shamelessly went to Arthur-Virden and promised to take the same amount of money in highways which we've increased with bridges, take the same amount of money and take the money from the north and move it to southwestern Manitoba. Now he's told in an editorial if he wants to talk about it you're not fit to be Premier and don't ever show up in Thompson, Mr. Speaker.

### **Child Welfare System Policy Enforcement**

**Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Family Services has failed to establish clear priorities for our child welfare system. He has failed to enforce his own legislation. Yesterday, he stated that safety is job one, yet this policy is clearly not being put into practice. The minister's incompetence is failing our children.

Will the minister acknowledge that he's failed to enforce his policy and failed to ensure the child's best interests are put ahead of all other considerations?

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Housing):** Mr. Speaker, to reiterate what I had said yesterday, and I can expand on that one, the child protection system is in place in Manitoba to do just what its title says, and that is to protect children. First of all, there is legislation in place to provide the ability of the state, through agencies, to intervene in families, an extraordinary power. As well, there are powers in there for the courts, but throughout the legislative foundation of the child protection system is the very clear mandate and the overriding responsibility of child protection.

**Mr. Briese:** Mr. Speaker, a policy means nothing if it has not been put in practice. Gage Guimond's

safety and well-being were not put first. He was moved out of a safe foster home because other interests were prioritized.

I ask the minister: Since Gage Guimond's death, has he personally issued a clear, written directive to all Child and Family Service workers explicitly stating that safety comes before everything else?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Mr. Speaker, in the tragic death of Gage Guimond, which weighs heavily on all of us, allegations have been made and some very serious concerns are certainly the subject of independent analysis. It's very important that any loss like this, wherever that may be, be analysed with independent eyes and we ensure, if there was any misapplication, any faults, any gaps discovered, that they be addressed. We have to ensure that when there is a loss like this, such deaths are sentinel events, and we learn from them, correct matters, have accountability, and make sure we make a better job—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Briese:** Mr. Speaker, the minister's mismanagement of this issue is having tragic consequences for children. It is shameful. I will once again ask the minister, as I did yesterday: Will he take action today and enforce the policy? Will he issue a written directive and do whatever it takes to make it absolutely clear to all Child and Family Services staff that a child's well-being always outweighs his other priorities?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Mr. Speaker, safety is job one. It's insulting that the opposition is charging that child protection workers in this province do not follow the law, do not understand and follow the core foundation of the child protection system, which is child protection. That is throughout the legislation. It's the very foundation of it. Indeed, the Authorities legislation, when it was unanimously agreed to by this House, set out that child protection is the paramount concern.

Mr. Speaker, what this government is doing is making sure that the work that front-line child protection workers are obliged to do is backed up with front-line relief, with greater training, an information system that works, and making sure that the foster parents are there to ensure that our children are indeed well protected.

\* (14:00)

### Hollow Water Cottage Barricade Government's Response

**Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet):** Mr. Speaker, it's been two weeks since the barricades went up near Hollow Water and there appears to be no end in sight. The Minister of Conservation (Mr. Struthers) won't negotiate with Hollow Water until the barricades are removed, and the Minister of Justice will take no action on the illegal barricade.

So I ask the Minister of Justice: If he doesn't have the courage to enforce the law, why won't he at least ask the Minister of Conservation to negotiate the removal of the barricades?

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** On this side of the House, we've always felt that negotiating with people involved is always the best course of action. I'd like to indicate, Mr. Speaker, to do otherwise, in fact, as the Minister of Justice, would be inappropriate.

I want to quote from the Ipperwash inquiry, recommendation 71, page 357, volume 2: The power of the responsible minister to direct the OPP—and in this case it would be the provincial police force—does not include directions regarding specific law enforcement decisions in individual cases.

Mr. Speaker, the former premier of Ontario found out, unfortunately the hard way, that neglecting that particular—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Conservation (Mr. Struthers) stated yesterday that he's in no position to enforce the law. The Minister of Justice is in a position to enforce the law, and he uses that excuse as not directing the RCMP.

However, Mr. Speaker, in 2001, the Department of Justice directed the RCMP to conduct a criminal investigation in regard to the findings of the Auditor General in the Morris-Macdonald School Division, and I table for the minister's own use a copy of that government news release.

So, I ask the Minister of Justice: If he can direct the RCMP to conduct a criminal investigation of school trustees, why can't he ask for a criminal investigation of those responsible for erecting an illegal barricade?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if the member gets the point, but the RCMP are there. The



RCMP are there conducting their business as the RCMP should.

To quote from the conclusions of the Ipperwash royal inquiry: "... the provincial government had the authority to establish policing policy, but not to direct police operations." I'll repeat: "not to direct police operations." Mr. Speaker, it is not in the jurisdiction of the provincial government to direct police operations.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Mr. Speaker, according to section 423 of the Criminal Code, it is illegal to block or obstruct a highway, and I table for the minister's use that particular page in the Criminal Code.

The barricades erected by Hollow Water are clearly illegal, and both the Minister of Conservation and the RCMP Sergeant Doug Ashton agree with that statement.

Illegal activity, yet the Minister of Justice ignores it and condones it. What kind of message is he sending to Manitobans? The message he's sending to Manitobans is that the law can be broken without consequences.

So I ask the Minister of Justice: Why has he failed to enforce the law?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Speaker, if I had my choice between taking directions from the members opposite or the police, 100 times out of a hundred I would take my direction from the police.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I remind the Member for Lac du Bonnet that, for example, the Monnin inquiry found evidence of criminal wrongdoing by members of the Conservative Party but said there is no use prosecuting the members of the Conservative Party for their wrongdoings because they've been punished enough. They've been punished enough by the Monnin process. I just want to point that out to the member opposite in case he has a comment on that particular matter as raised by Chief Justice Monnin.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The honourable Member for Tuxedo has the floor.

#### **Hollow Water Cottage Barricade Cottage Lot Draw**

**Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo):** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday in Estimates the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Struthers) admitted that there's a problem with the cottage lot draw process. The process in the eastern area has been

delayed due to the illegal blockade. The Minister of Justice has refused to do his job, which is to ensure that the law of our province is upheld and enforced. As a result, many of the applicants in this process have been left in limbo.

Well, the Minister of Conservation agreed to urge the Minister of Justice to uphold the law so the applicants are not left in limbo. He knows there's a problem. Is he prepared to do something about it, Mr. Speaker?

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Mr. Speaker, the Prosecutions division of the Department of Justice is an independent body. It would be inappropriate for the minister to order prosecutions. It is also inappropriate, and I quoted earlier from the Ipperwash inquiry where their former Conservative Premier of Ontario was testifying and was found to be in error. It is not in the realm of a provincial government to order police to do their job. Police have the duty to investigate and to make determinations according to their abilities, and it would be wrong in the parliamentary system for any of us to do so otherwise or to order them otherwise.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I guess what the Minister of Justice is saying then is that it is the policy of this government not to ensure that the law is upheld when it comes to blockades in our province, because that's what he just said. The cottage lot draw process has been hijacked because the Minister of Justice is refusing to uphold the law and, as a result, many applicants in the process have been left in limbo.

The minister has asked everyone to be patient. The Minister of Conservation has asked everyone to be patient, but for how long? Until his Minister of Justice figures out what his job is, Mr. Speaker, to uphold the law in this province. How long will that be?

**Mr. Chomiak:** To quote further from the Ipperwash inquiry, and I quote from page 675: "Incident Commander Carson knew of the Premier's desire for a quick resolution to the occupation," as did other members of the OPP directly involved in the policing of the occupation. Quote: "This was unfortunate and should not have occurred," page 676. "The provincial government had the authority to establish policing policy but not to direct police operations."

Mr. Speaker, many of our ancestors came from a place, my father included, where the government told

the police what to do. We do not want to create that here in our democracy.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Well, I'm glad, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Justice has now just declared for this House and confirmed that it is in fact the policy of this government not to uphold the law when it comes to blockades in our province. That is extremely unfortunate, because there are many people out there, including residents of the Ayers Cove cottage developments who have expressed their concern that they may not be able to access their cottages to winterize them before freeze-up. If this were to happen, they could face costly expenses due to frozen plumbing. A spokesperson for the Minister of Conservation was quoted in the local paper as saying, and I quote: "We are asking for people's patience."

Mr. Speaker, could the Minister of Conservation please stand before us today and explain how long people have to be patient for in this process? Will they be able to have access to their cottages in time to close them up before the winter freeze?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Speaker, I've already stated clearly, the member may not recognize that there is a fundamental difference between the operations of the police and the operations of our parliamentary system. To breach that gap would be inappropriate and inadvisable. The police do their duty and I will listen to the police before I will listen to the member opposite. For example—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to quote again from the Ipperwash inquiry: "The power of the responsible minister to direct the OPP," in this case the RCMP, "does not include directions regarding specific law enforcement decisions in individual cases."

Mr. Speaker, to do otherwise would be to allow the government in power to direct the police to investigate whatever they wanted, and as I said earlier, many of our relatives and ancestors came to this country to avoid precisely that kind of directive, dictatorial power. It is our duty in this Legislature to preserve that difference.

\* (14:10)

## Manitoba Economy Competitiveness

**Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon West):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday in the CFIB's business barometer, they measured a tiny little thing called optimism. The CFIB has said that Manitoba businesses are less optimistic today and are less optimistic about the future than they were in late spring and early summer. However, our neighbours in Saskatchewan are optimistic. We're falling behind in all economic areas and now we're even falling back in optimism, which is a scarce commodity in this province.

Mr. Speaker, when is this minister going to stop looking in the rear view mirror and prepare Manitoba for the future? When is he going to start making our province competitive even with lowly Saskatchewan?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance):** *[inaudible]* characteristics as the member opposite. They always have to denigrate somebody else to make their point. In this case the Member for Brandon West has denigrated the province of Saskatchewan to try and score political points in Manitoba. If he's honourable, or wants to be honourable some day, he will immediately apologize for attacking the hardworking people of Saskatchewan, and trying to attack the hardworking people of Manitoba who have created more jobs in this province in the last seven months, contrary to what he said the last time he asked a misinformed question.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

There's two comments I want to address in the honourable minister's answer. All members in this Chamber are honourable members. All members will be treated as such. I ask the honourable member to withdraw that comment that he made.

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, I withdraw that comment.

**Mr. Borotsik:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your ruling. I appreciate that and, by the way, there was no denigration to Saskatchewan. Quite the opposite, by the way.

The minister can run, but he can't hide from the facts. Manitoba has the highest personal tax rate in the west, higher than Saskatchewan's. Manitoba has the highest corporate tax rate in the west, higher than Saskatchewan's. Manitoba has the only payroll tax in the west. Saskatchewan has none. It seems the

minister is in his perpetual state of denial; even Saskatchewan is eating our lunch.

Is the minister comfortable just sitting back and seeing our competitiveness erode?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, the relevant comparisons are the following: Our property taxes are far lower with our property tax credits in Manitoba than they are in the jurisdictions to the west of us. Our taxes on property for farmers have been reduced by 65 percent in the last budget, contrary to the experience to the west of us. Our small business tax rate is the lowest in the country, and we have guaranteed that it will stay that way for over 90 percent of businesses. The tax rate is the lowest in the country. The member would do well to read the budget and acknowledge that.

#### **Trans-Canada Highway Twinning Project**

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden):** Mr. Speaker, the incompetence of this NDP government is obvious to Manitobans through the minister of transportation and government services, as he broke his own 2005 promise to twin No. 1 highway west in 2006. Saskatchewan does have four lanes open today. He failed.

After eight years, and with only 50 kilometres to build over those eight years, can the minister today guarantee, with only a few more days of paving weather left in this fall, that this western section of Highway No. 1 will be twinned, paved and open this fall for the safety of all Manitobans?

**Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation):** Mr. Speaker, for the first time in our history we have a plan with regard to transportation and infrastructure in this province: \$4 billion over 10 years.

This question, coming from a Member for Arthur-Virden, when his leader, during the election campaign, announced to take money out of northern Manitoba, I say shame on him. He should have handed in his resignation as a critic to his leader for making such an outrageous comment.

**Mr. Maguire:** It's just too many broken promises, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this week, the minister said No. 1 would open, weather permitting. In 2005, the minister said it would open in 2006. In 2006, his Premier (Mr. Doer) said it would not open in 2006. Eleven kilometres of pavement have been unused on

that road for the last 14 months. Saskatchewan is using their four lanes as I speak.

Mr. Speaker, Manitobans are cynical. Can the minister be believed this time or is this just another empty promise like the NDP promise to end hallway medicine?

**Mr. Lemieux:** It's our government that has proceeded with the four-laning project to Saskatchewan. It will be completed this fall, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to inform the critic for the opposition in making a lot of statements with regard to a vision in transportation we're the government, Mr. Speaker, that has brought forward that \$4-billion, 10-year plan. The critic opposite has made a lot of comments with regard to his leader and where they're going with regard to transportation.

I just want to reiterate the fact, again: How can anyone in Manitoba, and we represent every corner of this province and build bridges and roads in each corner of the province, where they've ruled out, taken a big marker and crossed out the northern part of Manitoba and said they don't care about northern Manitoba. Take all the money out of the north, put it into the south. Shame on the critic. Shame on the critic of the opposition.

#### **Bill 203 Debate**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of Question Period, the Premier talked about the importance of our environment. The Premier had an opportunity this morning through Bill 203, The Phosphorus-Free Dishwashing Detergent Act, to actually do something about Lake Winnipeg. Passage of that bill would likely do more for Lake Winnipeg than the previous six years of efforts of this government.

We look to this government to demonstrate some leadership and respect the value of private members' bills. We ask the government why it is that they would not allow for government members to debate and ultimately vote on Bill 203 which would do so much for Lake Winnipeg.

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, today, we were involved in an environmental announcement. We were involved in Healthy Living. We were investing with the city of Winnipeg on the old Marconi line in northeast Winnipeg, a bicycle-walking path, that will be in that quadrant of the city,

ultimately, will go right up to the Perimeter Highway. So, certainly, we had our responsibilities and we take them seriously.

I think the idea of banning phosphorus is a proposal that we support and I want to make that clear.

Our first goal is to get a national phosphorus ban because—[interjection] The member opposite, when she's at the yacht club in Kenora, will note that the water in Lake of the Woods actually flows through the Winnipeg River into Lake Winnipeg. We actually also know, Mr. Speaker, that water from Edmonton, Regina, Calgary also comes this way.

We believe, Mr. Speaker, in the phosphorus ban, and we applaud the Liberals for raising it and we support it. But we desire to have a national bill, hopefully, in place soon. If not, we will bring in a more comprehensive proposal building on the positive idea that the members opposite have proposed, because we can go it alone in Manitoba and we're willing to do that.

The other issue, and I might want to raise that in a second question, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, may I have leave to finish my two supplementary questions?

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the honourable member have leave to finish his two supplementary questions?

**An Honourable Member:** Leave.

**Mr. Speaker:** Leave has been granted. Order. We're dealing with House business here and I need to be able to hear.

It's been agreed for the honourable Member for Inkster to continue.

\* (14:20)

#### **Private Members' Bills Debate**

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I'm, in part, encouraged by the response from the First Minister and would add to that. We have The Apology Act, and another government minister who has talked about the merits of that particular piece of legislation. So we have private members' bills that are there today that could make a positive difference in the province of Manitoba.

Why would the Premier not acknowledge that particular bill as his other ministers have and recognize the value to allowing these bills at least to go to committee where the public can provide input and Manitoba can show some leadership?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, to conclude my answer for the first question, the whole issue of cost is a very important issue. The phosphorus ban on the detergent is more expensive. The products are more expensive. They're coming down. The action of Québec noted two days ago that Manitoba and Québec are going to lead. We would prefer to have a national policy and Ontario and Saskatchewan and Alberta involved because we know the products will go down. We actually care about some of the more moderate income people.

So if we can get the ban, which we support, and the lower cost, which we support, that is a more ideal situation. We also are looking at bans on fertilizer for lawns in terms of phosphorus free. There're lots of good sales going on, but I would also point out to the member opposite, he does not need legislation to apologize in this Chamber.

#### **Phosphorus Free Dishwashing Detergent Commitment to a Date on Ban**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** I refer members to read Tuesday's *Hansard*.

Mr. Speaker, the private members' bills moved by the Leader of the Liberal Party suggests that the implementation be for January 2009.

Would the Premier (Mr. Doer) today make the commitment that he will have, if the federal government does not do it, an implementation date of January 9, where, in fact, phosphorus dishwashing detergent would then be illegal in the province of Manitoba? Would he agree to that?

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Mr. Speaker, we have no difficulty with moving towards those targets. As the Premier already indicated, we not only want to bring forward a bill that includes some of the aspects, or all of the aspects, of what members have brought forward, but we want to do more and we want to do it in a national interest.

And on that same line of co-operation, I wonder if the leader of the third party will ask his member from Inkster when he's going to live up to his commitment in this House that he's going to resign his seat, Mr. Speaker. If the investigation shows, and

it has shown, that there's no fault in this regard, will the leader of the third party now ask the member to resign his seat as the Member for Inkster said on several occasions he would do, both in this Chamber and outside of this Chamber?

### Introduction of Guests

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Before we move through Members' Statements, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us from George McDowell School 63 grade 5 and 6 students under the direction of Leah Moskaliuk. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald).

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

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Ramadan

**Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto):** I rise today in recognition of Ramadan, the holy month of the Muslim calendar. It is a time of worship and introspection for Muslims to commemorate the revelation of the Qur'an through Muhammad. During Ramadan, Muslims cannot eat or drink from the first light of dawn until sunset. The fast is then broken with a prayer and Iftar, a meal.

Manitoba is one of the most diverse provinces in Canada and is home to a variety of cultures, races and faiths. The Winnipeg Central Mosque on Ellice Avenue is an important pillar of our vibrant multicultural society and enriches the community through its continual cultivation of peace and respect. The mosque was officially opened in October of 2004 and is now attended by over 500 Muslims from throughout Winnipeg and the surrounding area. It is a religious centre for Muslims from over 40 countries, from recent immigrants to those who have resided here for several generations.

The mosque opens its doors to community events, schools, other religious groups, social organizations, media and political leaders. The mosque is managed by a council of dedicated volunteers who, with the support of community members, work to contribute positively to the cultural and spiritual fabric of the urban community.

I'm proud to be the representative in this House for such a culturally rich area of the city of Winnipeg. We should all be proud to live in a province where everyone is free to celebrate their beliefs and holidays. Manitoba's Islamic community

remains true to the core tenets of Islam while also becoming a key part of our cultural mosaic.

Mr. Speaker, I wish, with sincerity, a happy and peaceful Ramadan to all Muslims in Manitoba and hope that all prayers during this holy month are answered. Thank you.

### Hockey Day in Canada

**Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina):** The citizens of the city of Winkler, the many staff, parents and volunteers have developed a distinguished reputation in providing the community's youth with access to sports, most notably hockey. Yesterday this commitment was recognized at the national level with Winkler being named as the host of CBC's Gemini award-winning Hockey Day in Canada taking place on February 9, 2008.

The theme for Hockey Day in Canada this winter is "the journey," which suits well the city's history and role in sport. The recent success of a number of Winkler area natives, including Brent Krahn, Eric Fehr and Stanley Cup winner Dustin Penner and the continued support for the Flyers Jr. A team, echoes the larger evolution of Winkler from a small hardworking agricultural community to the thriving centre of opportunity that it has truly become.

Hockey Day in Canada will provide an excellent forum for the citizens of Winkler and the surrounding communities to celebrate their legacy of dedication and success in hockey. In between CBC's NHL coverage, the program will showcase local personalities and highlight their involvement in the hockey community. Popular CBC sports commentators Ron McLean and Don Cherry, as well as long-time favourite Dick Irving, will join a host of former NHLers for the day-long coverage of the event, which will also feature a match between the Selkirk Steelers and the Winkler Flyers.

Amidst the excitement, energy and exposure that will be sure to characterize this event and captivate the city, it can be easy to overlook what Hockey Day in Canada tells us about Winkler's journey as a community. The success of the city's young hockey players on the world stage and the vibrancy of the community's embrace of hockey demonstrate a history of a strong community foundation which has done an excellent job of fostering opportunity and of supporting its youth in sport.

Today I want to recognize Mayor Martin Harder and Deb Penner, Community Events Co-ordinator,

for the work that they have done in making this such a success. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### **Cole Choken**

**Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake):** Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise in the Chamber today to recognize the accomplishments of a young Aboriginal man named Cole Choken whose family hails from a community in the Interlake constituency, the Lake Manitoba First Nation.

On September 8 of this year, Mr. Choken completed a run for the prevention of diabetes on the steps of this very building which he began a thousand miles away in the city of Calgary, a mere 33 days prior to that. Following the example set by Terry Fox and the Marathon of Hope, Cole ran 40 kilometres a day, a feat very few of us can even begin to comprehend.

But his journey truly began a long time before that when, at 310 pounds, he realized he was quite likely destined to succumb eventually to diabetes as many of his family members already had. Obesity and a sedentary lifestyle are linked to the onset of type 2 diabetes, and Aboriginal people have a higher predisposition toward it than does the general population.

Cole Choken is a changed man because of his courageous initiative, and he should be held up as an example to us all. Each and every one of us has a personal responsibility to be as productive a citizen as possible to the betterment of our society as a whole. If we all performed to the same degree in our lives as has this young man, then truly the world would indeed be a better place.

On behalf of the people of Manitoba, I thank and commend Cole Choken for his accomplishment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

\* (14:30)

### **Dr. John Dick**

**Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Carman):** I would like to take this time to recognize an exceptional individual with Manitoba roots. John Dick grew up on a family farm near Culross with his parents, Rudy and Olly Dick, and five brothers and sisters. I attended school with him and can honestly say he had a love for learning, which was more than some of us did.

Today's he's a prominent cancer researcher. Cancer is the leading cause of death in North

America, and the results of Dr. Dick's research impact the lives of many patients and their families.

After many years of study and research, John successfully completed a doctorate degree from the University of Manitoba.

It was through his research work that Dr. John Dick discovered stem cells and its impact on the growth of cancer. With this innovative discovery, new therapies and approaches can be taken toward chemotherapy by targeting the stem cells as the root of cancer.

Over 115 articles in peer magazines have focussed on Dr. John Dick's research. In addition, *Time* and *Scientific American* magazines and the *New York Times* have acknowledged his impact on cancer research. His numerous awards include the Michael Smith award for excellence from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Robert L. Noble prize for excellence in cancer research from the Canadian Cancer Society, and he was awarded the Premier's summit award in Ontario, also being named a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada.

Dr. Dick now lives in Ontario with his wife, Lorna, and their son and daughter. He holds the position of senior scientist at the Toronto General Research Institute at the university health network. He is also professor in the department of molecular genetics at the University of Toronto and the Canada research chair in stem cell biology.

It is with great pride that I recognize and thank a most distinguished Manitoban and a Culross native. Dr. John Dick is a world leader in cancer research, and there is no doubt that his work saves countless lives.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### **India Day Celebrations**

**Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson):** I rise before the House today to congratulate the Indo-Canadian community of Manitoba on another wonderful India Day celebration at the Manitoba Legislative Building attended by over 500 people of our city.

This year's event served to commemorate the 60th anniversary of India's independence, which took place on the 15th of August, 1947. Since holding its first elections in 1952, India has become the world's largest democracy. With over one billion people, practising five major religions, diverse subcultures and 18 different official languages, India is also progressing very well on other fronts, Mr. Speaker.

This year was our fourth annual India Day celebration which was co-chaired by the Member for Fort Garry (Ms. Irvin-Ross) and myself. The afternoon began with the singing of both the Canadian and Indian national anthems followed by colourful dances performed by members of the Jhankaar school of dance, some of whom were as young as four years old. The 60th anniversary was also marked by a slide-show presentation depicting India and Pakistan's journey of division and independence, which brought back many sad memories of their division.

Mr. Speaker, I appealed to the people who attended the India Day celebrations to embody India's basic philosophy and message of non-violence and peace. India's success toward becoming an economic power of the world suggests that it is possible to achieve economic prosperity yet build a high value of humanity and social justice in a country. I am proud that we celebrate India Day at the Legislative Building every year.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that one of Manitoba's greatest assets is the diversity that immigrant communities bring to the province. I believe that celebrating our diversity through passing our culture to our children is one of the most important undertakings of this generation. Celebrations like India Day are a vital part of this process. I would like, therefore, to congratulate and commend India Association executives and other Indo-Canadian organizations, many volunteers who put much effort—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The honourable member's time has expired.

**Mr. Jha:** Can I take leave for just completing?

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Leave.

**Mr. Speaker:** Leave has been granted to the honourable Member for Radisson.

**Mr. Jha:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So I would like to congratulate many members, many volunteers of different organizations from Indo-Canadian groups who put a lot of effort and personal resources into making this annual event very enjoyable and successful.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

## COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

### INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORTATION

\* (14:40)

**Madam Chairperson (Marilyn Brick):** Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will now resume consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Infrastructure and Transportation. As had been previously agreed, questioning for this department will proceed in a global manner.

The floor is now open for questions.

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden):** Madam Chair, I would just like to turn it over to my Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler). He has a couple of questions.

**Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield):** I have one question, and that has to do with the twinning of Highway 15 from the Perimeter to 206. It's a very heavily travelled road. It's been discussed for a long time about twinning that section, and I was wondering how far along the department is with the planning of the twinning of 15 from the Perimeter to 206?

**Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation):** I thank the member for the question, and I'm sure he has an appreciation for the challenges that we have in Manitoba with regard to our infrastructure. We know it; we've recognized it; we put a lot of money towards it. And, as was proven yesterday, with our announcement on bridges, we're not prepared to just stand still with our feet in concrete. We're willing to move ahead and put more money into bridges and into our infrastructure.

The department monitors our highways and, I think, the reference that's being made on Highway 15 as going from the floodway essentially to Dugald, and not just from the floodway to 207. Our department has looked at this particular stretch of highway. We've monitored the traffic counts, for example. We're continually monitoring this particular stretch of road. But, as the Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler) will appreciate, there are a lot of highways that have a lot of traffic on them all over the province. It's not just Highway 15. Yet Highway 15 continues to receive regular maintenance, and I know he's aware of that. But what

he's asking for is to add two more lanes, or make it four lanes, which is, of course, very, very costly.

But maybe I should also stress that our five-year plan, or that \$4-billion 10-year plan, is not just talking about building new; it's also talking about renewing our roads and our bridges. It's not just about building new. That's something that every year we go through a whole process of reviewing requests from each area, each territory, if you will, on their priorities, and what they see is something that we should be looking at.

But all I can say at this point is that the department continues to monitor that road, doing all the things to make sure they ensure it's safe, safe as humanly possible, and not necessarily going ahead with twinning at this time.

**Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Carman):** The question is for the minister and in regard to No. 2 highway. I just want to warn him, to start with, please don't throw your shoulder out patting yourself on the back for the work that's going on there. We do appreciate that, and there haven't been any complaints due to construction this summer.

The highway is scheduled to be rebuilt in three sections. It's being done right now, Elm Creek to Fannystelle, and then Fannystelle just east of Starbuck and then on to Oak Bluff. Have the contracts been let out yet for the next phase, or if not, when will they be?

**Mr. Lemieux:** Well, I thank the member for the question. PTH 2 and 3 are going to be receiving, over the next number of years, almost \$60 million worth of work. Certainly, it's not about patting myself on the back, even though some people are saying we should be taking credit for it, I really look at this differently, quite frankly. This goes back to 2002. We did the consultation process, went around the province, and the MLA for Transcona (Mr. Reid) and the MLA for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) and the MLA for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen) were part of that committee. They spent a lot of time talking to Manitobans as to what they need to do.

Madam Chair, 2 and 3 consistently came up as highways that people felt needed some work and we recognize that. We've seen it. We've heard from the R.M.s of Macdonald and others. We've addressed McGillivray Boulevard. We've tried to put—I can't recall just off the top of my head the amount of money we put into McGillivray, but we're also looking, as was pointed out, into 2 and 3. So almost

\$60-million worth of work. I hesitate to even say that it may be even more than that, depending on what happens with asphalt. I mean, that's the kind of investment we're talking about that's going to go into 2 and 3.

Have tenders gone out yet? No. No, they have not.

**Mr. Pedersen:** Can you give me a time frame for when tenders usually go out? I understand there will be a public process for when they go out, but what is the time frame for those tenders, so that we can watch for that?

**Mr. Lemieux:** Well, I don't want the MLA for Carman to get tired of hearing about the process, the 2020 Vision process, going back to '02, but I need to repeat this because at that time, what came out of the recommendations were essentially three things: One, put more money into roads and bridges and to renew the infrastructure plan overall; No. 2 is try to tender a little early if you can for the benefit of the industry. Get it out in the fall if you can do that. Also, the third one was—well, it was tender, more money and also, I think overall, is allow Manitobans, give some kind of advance notice. Have some planning over more than just one year; have five years or ten years.

So that's what we've done. So we've lived up to each one of those. So just to let the MLA know that we have an ad schedule that goes out, generally, I would say, around or before Grey Cup as a kind of a measuring stick to let the industry know what projects are going to go out. Then we tender the jobs out into the new year.

But this project is broken up as rightly pointed out by the member. It's broken out into phases. So just the next phase will go out. The actual tenders won't go out until the new year. Okay.

**Mr. Pedersen:** Madam Chairperson, for the minister, I have one other question in regard, when he mentions Highway No. 3 and the R.M. of Dufferin. The highways infrastructure department have had many discussions with the R.M. of Dufferin about a turnoff at their industrial park just east of Carman. Is there anything that I can take back to the R.M. of Dufferin in regard to what's happening there, highways department's position on that?

**Mr. Lemieux:** Well, I had the former MLA, Mr. Rocan, at my doorstep almost on a weekly basis talking about this, but I could give you the letter that I sent back to the R.M., that the policy has always been if that industry built on our highways, they



would be responsible for turning lanes. A good example of that would be, let's say Wal-Mart in Winkler and so on, could be a co-op store in Lorette, where they've had to pay essentially for their turning lanes. That has always been a policy, that if you're going to build on our highway system, the companies and businesses should be prepared also to put turning lanes in.

\* (14:50)

Having said that, I believe as a Province there are exceptional times, because we believe that transportation plays a dual role, not only making sure that the roads are safe and so on, but also it's an enabler for industry and for business. It's important for trade and so you wouldn't want to hinder a grain elevator or some site as a result of them looking at let's say \$150,000 to make turning lanes. They would look at this as not enabling them to build there.

So there might be occasions where one would look at it but this is not one. I mean, I sent a letter back. I want to be forthright about this. I sent a letter back to them telling them, no, there really is not an opportunity for this. If they want turning lanes—and actually it's probably even more than that now. I understand it's becoming so busy that they really almost need turning lanes or they're going to be required to put them in. I know this is not going to make them very happy. This may give them some heartburn at the fact that it's going to cost them some money. But there are some safety issues around that particular area.

I can provide the member with a letter that I've sent to them, but I just want to reiterate the fact that there are no changes with regard to the policy, in a sense, with that corner.

**Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris):** I'm not exactly sure how far the minister explained or talked about Highway No. 2, because as the Member for Carman (Mr. Pedersen) was speaking, he was of, course, speaking about No. 2 running through his constituency. It also runs through the constituency of Morris all the way into Winnipeg, as a matter of fact.

So I apologize if I'm asking the same question over again, but in terms of the rebuilding or resurfacing, hopefully rebuilding of Highway No. 2, is that project planned to go all the way to the Perimeter Highway?

**Mr. Lemieux:** The answer—the quick answer is yes. But the other piece that I did mention to the MLA for Carman was that McGillivray Boulevard, as we

know it, or Highway No. 3 going into Winnipeg, has also received considerable amounts of money over the past—I would say this past summer. I don't know if that's been completed now; it was about a year ago. So the answer is yes.

But there is a continuation of that highway. It goes right into Winnipeg and that work has been done. I know the R.M. of Macdonald and others, not only are they extremely pleased with the work that's been done, but with most R.M.s, as I've discovered since 1999 being an MLA and Cabinet minister, that is not going to restrict them from asking for more. You know, it's what have you done for me lately in the arena of politics. But I understand that.

So we're continuing to have dialogue with the R.M. of Macdonald, talking about what do we do to address that particular corner. You know, is it going to be a cloverleaf? What kind of turning and access lanes are there going to be there? So the dialogue will continue but you're talking about cloverleaves that end up costing anywhere from \$30 million to \$40 million, just a rough guess. But it's big dollars. It's something that—yes, you want to take care of the safety side of it, but you also have to be prudent with regard to making sure that whatever you're going to do there it's going to last for, you know, 30, 40, 50, 100 years. Once you put them up they generally stay there for a long time.

So we are very pleased to be able to work on McGillivray and also do a lot of work on 2 and 3 as well.

**Mrs. Taillieu:** Madame Chair, yesterday we finished off the day and I was asking questions in regard to the—it's called a shoo-fly, but it's basically a detour around the culvert replacement that's happening on Highway No. 1. I don't know that we finished that conversation because I was asking how much that's costing to do that and the feasibility of doing it that way as opposed to diverting traffic onto the opposite side of the highway, possibly as was done in the case on Highway 75.

Then the length of time of the project, how long can you expect that the work will be going on there?

**Mr. Lemieux:** I'll give a short answer. I believe I'm repeating what I said yesterday, that only one side is being replaced. People are looking at it.

I hesitate to talk about monies because, I believe, on this particular project, we haven't tendered that out. If you tell someone, oh yes, it's going to cost you \$500,000, well, guess what the tenders will come

back at? \$500,000 or more. So I believe we haven't tendered that out yet. We haven't put a dollar figure attached to it.

I'm not sure if the MLA is asking how much the detour would cost to put it in. Because I can't—I'm not prepared to talk about how much it's going to cost, or the investment it's going to take to replace those box culverts because the tenders haven't gone out yet.

I guess, just on a clarification, is it the cost of the shoo-fly or the detour? Or is it the cost of what is it going to take for a couple of those culverts?

**Mrs. Taillieu:** It appears that work has begun on that project. Construction has begun there in building that shoo-fly because there is a lot of gravel work that's ensuing right now.

I guess I'll ask the question in a general term then. Is it more feasible to do it this way?

I'm wondering about the feasibility and the cost of doing it this way as opposed to diverting traffic down the other side of the highway, and that would take into consideration the length of time that this needs to be in place. So, for example, if it only needed to be in place for a couple of weeks to replace the culvert, does it not make more sense to divert traffic rather than build a new section? I guess, in generalities, that's what I'm asking.

**Mr. Lemieux:** I'm not an engineer, and not many of us around here are. But there are a few that point out to me that, often—you're correct, it's cheaper to divert the traffic to the other side, but not in the case where there are high volumes of traffic like No. 1 highway. Often the department will use another route or a bit of a diversion to guide traffic around, or a shoo-fly just to divert the traffic, and spend the money doing it.

So I think I would be safe to say, even though I don't want to give a specific dollar figure of what these tenders will be at, including the work that's going to divert the traffic and the road that it's going to take to do that, it's probably anywhere between \$4 and \$6 million, the whole project that we're looking at doing: a couple of box culverts in two different areas and including the road that's going to be used to divert traffic.

So the answer is, it's usually less expensive to put traffic over on the other side, but not where there's large volumes of traffic.

**Mrs. Taillieu:** I understand that the minister has announced a number of projects ongoing with bridges in the province and funding for bridges.

I'd like to specifically ask about the Baie St. Paul Bridge out near Poplar Point, actually. There was weight restrictions put on that bridge quite some time ago which causes the local population to have to drive about 10 kilometres out of their way. So, of course, that impacts on their ability to haul grain, et cetera, and the school buses, and all of that.

So can you just update me as to what's happened with that particular bridge?

**Mr. Lemieux:** I know not all Manitobans are aware of the great announcement we made yesterday with regard to putting more monies into bridges. But I'll use this opportunity just to let people know that may not be aware of it.

\* (15:00)

The announcement was putting more money into bridge inspections and also rehabilitation and fixing bridges: an extra \$125 million going into our \$4 billion, 10-year plan. That was all part of the Vision 2020 consultation group led by the MLA for Transcona. But, having said that, on this particular stretch on this bridge, we met with the R.M. and met with and consulted with community members. They expressed the importance of this bridge. We have tried to do what work we could, and the long and the short of it is that it's not satisfactory. We can't just, if I can use the term "nickel and dime," to try to fix the bridge. We're going to have to do a better job of it, and I'm not sure if we're going to be tendering that out in this tender schedule and putting that out, but it's something I know that we've looked at, of doing a better rehab job on that particular bridge. If it's not going to be part of the tender schedule that's going to go out before Grey Cup or around Grey Cup time, we'd certainly be looking at it in the very near future as opposed to at the end of the five-year capital plan. It would be in the earlier side.

As the MLA points out, it really needs some work, and it's something that our department has been in close conversation with community members as well as the elected officials in the area.

**Mrs. Taillieu:** Can you just indicate where it might stand in the queue?

**Mr. Lemieux:** Well, currently, if you take a look at the document that we've put out, our five-year plan, I don't believe it's listed there, any part of the plan.

There are a number of different bridges and structures that are on that plan. I don't believe that it is there, but this is the flexibility that's also built into that five-year budget, and it has to be there because there are structures that are coming up. They may be recognized for work by our inspectors. This is one that people have been monitoring on an ongoing basis, so we're looking at doing it. I think realistically probably in the year of '08 we're looking at doing some major work on that particular structure.

**Mrs. Taillieu:** Well, I thank the minister for that answer. I know that there is a number of roadways around the province that are needing attention. We know that, but of course it's incumbent on me to ask about the ones in my constituency.

As I mentioned yesterday, I know there's been extensive work done on Highway 75 and there's more to come, but I'd like to ask the minister about the plans for the town of Morris, raising the highway on the north entrance to the town or whether there are plans to go around the town or where that particular project stands at this time.

I know there have been conversations about a lot of different studies as to what's the best thing to floodproof that area, but—

**Mr. Lemieux:** Well, to date I haven't received an update as to what study or what people are looking at. I'm looking forward to receiving that because we said we were hoping to be able to have more information by the engineers and people who are looking at it by this fall.

I mean, if you're technical about it, I think winter starts on December 21, but I won't play games with words, but I'm hoping that in the very near future I'm going to get some information on it. What we're looking at is, do we actually raise Main Street?

Now, Main Street in Morris needs to be done. You know the Premier has mentioned this repeatedly. We've met with the mayor. We've met with Mr. Martens, Herm Martens with the R.M. of Morris as well. I think everyone is in agreement. We need to do it. It's part of 75. We've committed to doing Highway 75 and doing a better job, and the member is correct. There's a huge discussion going on, I understand, in the community. Do you have a bypass going around the community? Do you raise the bridge? Do you raise Main Street?

Main Street needs to be redone. What that means, not being an engineer I'm not sure exactly what that means in technical terms, but I think all of

us are in agreement it's a major community right on Highway 75 and we're going to do something about it. This maybe ties in also, just to put it into perspective, when we talked about the box culverts on the west side of Headingley.

Highway No. 1 has about 12,000 vehicles per day going on it. Highway 75 south and Highway 75 south of Winnipeg has about 5,000 vehicles per day. So, when you take a look at the traffic, even though No. 1 highway has more than double the amount of vehicles, Highway 75 south still is our major artery to the United States. Minnesota, North Dakota have also deemed this I-29 being a major route coming north too, bringing goods and tourists, quite frankly, into the province.

Morris, I don't have any specific information today, what is going to happen or what the recommendation is to happen, because we made a commitment to the mayor and to council and others that we would try to keep them in the loop; when we had some more information to let them know that—kind of the way we're going to be proceeding—we'd be letting everyone have that information.

**Mrs. Taillieu:** Thank you, Madam Chair, and thanks to the minister for that answer. I just met with the mayor and the council this summer, and that's one of the questions that they are still mulling over as to what will happen there.

Another question that they raise: when the reconstruction of the Highway 75 going through the town occurs, they will need to do extensive repairs of the town infrastructure that is under the highway because that would be the time to do it, is when you're doing the highway. They express some concerns about having the ability to be there with—in terms of the money needed to do that. So it, I think, would be very beneficial to know a time frame so that they can prepare for that eventuality. So, if the minister does have any kind of time frame in mind, or in the future will have, I'd appreciate if he would let me know or at least let the town of Morris know so they can prepare for that.

That is not a question, actually, but I'll continue on. Having acknowledged Highway 75 and Highway 1 and Highway 2 and Highway 3, I also have to speak on Highway 59 that goes straight from, well, all the way through your constituency, Mr. Minister, and—

**Madam Chairperson:** Excuse me, just for a moment. I'm sorry, I'm just having a hard time

hearing the Member for Morris, so I have to ask committee members just to allow the Member for Morris to be heard. Thank you.

**Mrs. Taillieu:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'm speaking about Highway 59 and the need to twin that highway, I suppose, all the way down to the border. There are a number of communities down there and, certainly, travelling down Highway 59 all the way down to St. Malo, where there is a provincial park that is very well frequented in the summertime, both from people from Manitoba and around the province, but from other areas out-of-province and from the States. Recognizing that Highway 59 has, I think, a huge traffic volume, and it is single-lane, and there has been a number of accidents there—and I know that there has been some twinning of Highway 59—I'm wondering if the rest of Highway 59 south is in the five-year plan.

**Mr. Lemieux:** Well, let me just say that I believe, since we became government, I think it was close to \$35 million spent on Highway 59. I think it was \$14 million one stretch. I think \$17 million the next stretch. I'm just using rough numbers, but we've spent quite a bit of money, invested a lot of money into Highway 59 south.

It currently is, just south of Ile des Chênes, Manitoba. But the MLA is correct. There's a huge amount of traffic, but the traffic really tapers off after Highway 52. The turn-off, as you're going south, if you turn and go east to Steinbach, right from that corner, the traffic goes from the thousands down to the hundreds. So there's a huge drop, and there's always been a discussion as to do you twin it to St. Pierre and then do you bypass St. Pierre, and then go to St. Malo; do you keep going to the border.

\*(15:10)

There are huge implications on what they're going to be doing in the United States because, in my previous comments with regard to 75, the states of Minnesota and North Dakota, a lot of them are using I-29 as their major north-south now. I know as the Province of Manitoba we've said that we believe that, well, that Churchill is at the northern end of the International Mid-Continent Trade and Transportation Corridor. Down in Monterrey, Mexico or Manzanillo, Mexico is at the south end, and there's an artery or the spine of North America goes down the centre; 75 and I-29 and I-35 make up that corridor.

So our intent is to look at not only tourism, but trade and the esthetic driving of our citizens and others, so that is where we've put our focus. And I have to tell you that because Morris is in the physical landscape of where it's been built, they are in a low spot, and when there's any kind of high water, the water tends to stay there, as I'm advised, longer than elsewhere. People have argued, is there a different way to bypass or to go around Morris and do you fix those roads up, including Highway 200 has been mentioned by a number of the local citizens. Highway 59, in fact, it has been argued, do you take the new Letellier Bridge that's going to be built there some day and head east and then get to 59 and head north. So you are actually bypassing a lot of the flood areas, because Highway 59 tends to stay dry a large portion of the time.

But huge amounts of dollars have been spent on not only Highway 59 but Highway 75. Large investments by our government, and we've made a commitment in the five-year plan to look at Highway 59 north to Grand Beach and we're working with Brokenhead First Nations community at looking at twinning. And I don't want to belabour the point, but a lot of dollars have gone into investments in our infrastructure in the province, and it all started—well, it didn't all start, but a great deal of it had to do with the consultation process that the MLA for Transcona (Mr. Reid) led along with the MLA for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen), the MLA for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar). That had a huge impact on the kinds of guidelines and direction that were needed to put together a plan for the first time in Manitoba's history, a multiyear capital plan that had the dollars to back it up.

I appreciate the question coming from the MLA for Morris (Mrs. Tailleu). Both she and I and others have met with many elected officials and citizens and—how can I put this? Everyone wants a four-lane highway and, you know, in reality, even today in Question Period the MLA for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire) was asking about a four-lane highway and when is it going to be done, and it will be done and completed this fall. But I believe what we're going to be caught in, in the next number of years in our history, is that we need renewal of our system. It's the highways that exist, the bridges that exist. I believe that's where the pressures are going to be for us in Manitoba. So I just want to put that on the record as well. Thank you.

**Mrs. Taillieu:** Yes, I think that we recognize that there are a number of roads and bridges that need attention, but if you don't lobby for them and bring

them up, then they don't get attention. That's kind of the way it goes, so we have to keep asking for specific areas.

I want to ask a question in regard to signage on the highway, any highway. I have been informed that an R.M. wanted to put up a sign "Engine Retarder Breaks Prohibited," and they ordered three signs and the cost of the signs was \$112 each. They wanted to put up these signs because of the sound from the trucks as they slowed down, and it was annoying, I suppose, to some of the local residents. However, the Department of Transportation said they couldn't put up these signs, but they had to order the same sign through the department and that same sign that they bought was \$900. So I'd like to ask the minister why he wants to charge the R.M. \$900 for a sign that they really only had to pay \$112 for?

**Mr. Lemieux:** Well, again, you know, people can just put up some broken down, old, wooden sign up on the side of a road, or sometimes you need—

I'm not using this as what they were going to do. No, it's not specific to any particular group or this particular community. But there are specifications, whether it's reflective material on a sign that's needed for safety—for the average citizen, you may not think much about signage and, if much thought goes into it, but a lot does. The amount of wording on a sign, the reflective material on the sign, the dimensions of the sign, that's really important.

So you might be able to pick up a sign for \$112, but in reality the sign that's going to last there for a long time and be the proper sign that drivers can see for safety reasons might be the \$900 sign, and that's the reason why departments like Transportation have experts that know and study this area of safety. It's an important area.

**Mrs. Taillieu:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Can the minister say what company they use for their signs, for the Department of Transportation signs?

**Mr. Lemieux:** Well, thank you, and I've been advised that the department certainly will be acceptable of signs as long as they meet certain specifications, and that's what I was trying to get at with regard to dimensions, wordage, reflective material on the sign. The Conservative government of the 1990s, my recollection anyway, privatized signage and so about every five years we tender that out, so it's the low bid that gets the sign job. I believe currently it's located in Dauphin. But it was privatized by the Conservative government of the

'90s, and it's low bid that gets it, and about every five years it goes out.

**Mrs. Taillieu:** Well, thank you. I will check into this further and bring further information to the minister. I have been informed by the municipality what company that they ordered the sign through and I've heard that company's name mentioned around the table here, so I know it's one that the government does business with. So I will confirm with them specifically why they were ordered that they could not use the sign that they ordered which cost them \$112. They had to order a similar exact same sign, according to what I was told, but they had to get it from the department of highways, or Transportation, I should say, and it was going to cost \$900. So I will be bringing further information to the minister on that and hopefully we can come to some arrangements that are agreeable to the municipality.

Just one more question. I know that there has been some discussion about the intersection of the Perimeter Highway and Highway 330 which goes south to La Salle because of the railway crossing there, the gas storage facility there. On the other corner there's an anhydrous facility, on the other corner there's a seed plant and a lumber company. So there's the intersection with—and many people have said that that intersection is kind of like an accident waiting to happen.

Of course, we did have a very serious accident there with a car-train not that long ago, but that particular area does seem to create some concern, and I'm wondering if there's any plan to perhaps do some controlled intersection or lighting at that intersection of 330 and the Perimeter Highway.

\* (15:20)

**Mr. Lemieux:** I thank the MLA for Morris for the question. This does raise a question, and I think it's a serious question about development just outside of Winnipeg in many ways. You have the community of La Salle which is growing. You have a lot of other communities, one that I live in just outside east of Winnipeg. They are growing and they have huge infrastructure needs that come along with it. You have communities like La Salle and you have other communities where you have turning lanes that break up in a boulevard area where you have a break between both lanes going east and west.

There are some challenges about turning lanes like that and I know when we're able to do the—you know we're looking at doing some work there. I don't

think we're talking about lights necessarily but we're certainly talking about doing some work at that particular intersection, at least at this point.

**Mrs. Taillieu:** Thank you Minister. I'm glad to hear that there's going to be some attention paid to that particular intersection, but just to clarify, the people that met about that intersection were not residents of the town of La Salle. They were the people that have the businesses on the corners that I was just speaking about. They were very concerned because of the safety, because of all of those particular things that I just mentioned at that corner if there was some particularly bad accident where there was a train, a car, there's gas there, there's anhydrous. It just poses the perfect storm in the right conditions, and why I'm bringing it up is not to do with the development or anybody that wants to live outside the city of Winnipeg. They have every right to do that. It's not about that. It's about that particular intersection and the safety that it imposes. It compromises safety for anybody travelling that section of highway, whether they're from Nova Scotia or New Brunswick or Alberta or somewhere from Winnipeg. It's that intersection with all of those things around it that cause me to be concerned and not only myself but the people that are representative of the businesses around that intersection.

One further question I'd like to ask the minister is: In regard to the \$40 million that was designated for the refurbishment and rebuilding of the Manitoba Developmental Centre in Portage, how much of that money has flowed?

**Mr. Lemieux:** I'll have to let the MLA know when I'm able to have that material. I don't have any government services people with me at the moment.

**Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose):** The questions I want to deal with are in a lot of urban centres in rural Manitoba the highway is the main street or goes through the town. When there are any major repairs done on those highways, there's usually some very old infrastructure of the municipality and under it, water lines, sewer lines, those types of things.

Firstly, I'd like to know how much co-ordination you do with those communities when you're planning to do some work on those roads, and also, if you give enough heads-up to those communities so that they can maybe get some infrastructure funding or something in place to—these are very costly projects. If you don't replace these aging infrastructures that are under those highways, the year after you put them in you're cutting them to replace stuff. So I'd

like to know what co-ordination is done, how you work around those problems.

**Madam Chairperson:** I just wanted to clarify for all members that questions that come through need to go through the Chair. Thank you.

**Mr. Lemieux:** Well, the question is an important one. In the consultation process of 2020, that was one thing that came up, some lead-time planning. We've heard a lot of rural municipalities, towns, villages and communities in Manitoba, including AMM, say that for the first time in Manitoba's history they actually have a five-year plan rolled out, a vision as to where we want to go. Now granted, a lot of communities who may not appear on the five-year plan may not be overly joyed at this point, but there is some flexibility built into the plan that can address some emerging needs. That means it could be a structure, a bridge or some other particular structure that needs to be addressed related to Infrastructure and Transportation, and we can do it.

When I refer to a document, Manitoba's Highways Renewal Plan 2007-2011, that we put out with \$2 billion for five years and then \$4 billion for the 10 years, that's why that plan is truly important. Municipalities asked the MLA for Transcona (Mr. Reid) to, please, have a five-year plan put in place and the money to back it up and try to get the tenders out early, so people know where they're going with regard to a plan and a vision. We've got that now, and, now, of course, the challenge is to be able to have the industry able to gear up fast enough to be able to meet all the money that's there and the projects that have been laid out.

So we're pleased to have the plan and I know that the municipalities and towns and villages and cities in Manitoba are as well.

**Mr. Briese:** What I'm trying to reach with the question is, is there co-ordination between the departments of government when we're dealing with infrastructure which falls under rural development and highways? Is there some co-ordination in the departments to try and work those projects at the same times?

**Mr. Lemieux:** The good example might be that there are some communities that are looking to do sewer and water, for example, and we'll defer a project. In fact, some people will tell us, you know, we want to repair our sewer line and we need to do that for whatever reason, be it age or other reasons. It can be the expansion of the community, whatever their

reasons are. We'll defer a project and work closely with the community to be able to do that.

The departments, all departments, do have a communication network that's built between people within government, within those departments, that talk to each other to try to co-ordinate it. I don't know if the MLA has an example of maybe where this hasn't happened. I would sure like to be apprised of it because, you know, it's not perfect. No system is ever perfect. You just hope that you're able to do the best you can to make everything work and work in a co-ordinated way, in a way that you're not, well, a term that's used is a "throwaway." You don't want to build a project necessarily and then have to come back and dig up a new road that you just paved because someone, a year later or two years later, has to dig it up to put a sewer line in.

So the answer is, yes, people work closely together and hopefully with those communities as well. But I think the key, quite frankly, is when we're talking about the Department of Infrastructure and Transportation, one of the main reasons why—I believe the Premier (Mr. Doer) pointed this out—Infrastructure and Transportation was put together—and, in fact, the Heavy Construction Association and the industry have asked that we do that. Why exactly was the co-ordination of this? Not only to co-ordinate activities in infrastructure but also get a better bang for your buck because you will know what's going on with regard to tenders in many different areas and you can get a better handle on the money. That was kind of a key point.

If my recollection is correct, it may not be, but that was pointed out, I believe by the Premier at the time when we made the new Department of Infrastructure and Transportation. It was co-ordination of activities also taking a look at the tendering and having a better view of infrastructure and the cost overall.

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa):** I was quite interested in hearing the minister talk about flexibility and a five-year plan and all those good things, but I have a couple of questions that leave me to question whether there is that five-year plan in place.

\* (15:30)

As he's aware and highways staff are aware, the Highway 2 bridge was closed for a good part of this year. I was approached through one of my meetings with councillors in the R.M. of Oakland and the

Town of Minnedosa, or the Wawanesa area, that there was some discussions regarding the bridge maintenance. I just need some clarification from the minister if this is proper process. The bridge is obviously going to need to be maintained and repaired, but is it common practice for discussions to occur regarding Highway 340? I guess to get around to the question is this individual was approached by the minister's department saying that if the community of Wawanesa and the R.M. of Oakland take over the maintenance and repair of the bridge on Highway 2, then he could see what he could do to make sure that 340 is given a higher priority in being paved. I find that rather concerning. The bridge was repaired. We really appreciate it, but we need to be talking about— is this part of the new announcement that came out on bridge repair and support? Is offloading the responsibilities to municipalities?

*Mr. Daryl Reid, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair*

**Mr. Lemieux:** I thank the member for the question. We are, as was mentioned, putting more money into bridge infrastructure repairs and inspections, and a new announcement that adds more money to the provincial budget. But I have to say that, with regard to that particular structure—in fact, there are a couple of structures there on No. 2, also 340—that one is, I use the term, a heritage bridge. It's a beautiful old timber bridge, it was, and the community has been in discussions with the department about exactly that. If they take it over, is there something else that the department could do, whether that's asphalt work or some kind of other work, because if the community wants to preserve that heritage bridge and keep it, that's something that is really important?

I know there are other works in the region that are taking place and I just want to put on the record, just for the information of members of the Chamber and others who are listening. Today the MLA for Minnedosa brought a petition in about the community of Forrest. We met with the community of Forrest; consulted with them. We looked at an underpass under the road and overpass No. 10—what should we do there? We have made a commitment that we're going to bypass the community of Forrest, and we're going to do so, I believe, starting next year, with its land purchase and design.

So I appreciate the member getting petitions from residents, but I hope the member would also clarify with those residents that want to put their name on a petition that it's a done deal. The Province is doing it, and we're going around Forrest. We're

also looking at possibly passing lanes on No. 10 north. So, not to take away from the petition that's come in to the Chamber, but it's already done. We're doing it through consultation, through the community. Well, it's a done deal. I know the member is saying it's not done when I'm telling the member if she takes a look at the five-year capital plan, it states right in there that we're going to be doing it. So she can bring in as many petitions as she likes and that's great, but please inform the people that are signing it that the Province is doing it and it's going to be done.

But, with regard to those bridges, we look forward to working with the community, and when we had to close down that road, we made some changes not to force traffic to go down No. 3 and go further south. We allowed traffic to use restricted roads and lifted those restrictions to have truck and trade travel at a different road, even though we lifted the restrictions or increased the restrictions amounts in order to assist trade. Also, I contacted the mayor, I believe it was, of the community when we had to do that, and he understood that this occurred fairly quickly and that he appreciated the quick response to what we were doing.

**Mrs. Rowat:** Just so that the minister is clear on my question, the bridge in question is No. 10 bridge and—I'm sorry, on No. 2 highway, the bridge on No. 2 highway is the one that was in question when the municipality was approached to say: If you take over the maintenance of that bridge, we will look at paving 340. I take issue with those types of things happening, because if you do have a five-year plan, this community has been working really hard to have 340 paved. Yes, the petitions have come forward, but they've come forward through individuals within the community, and it's their right to put a petition together and have the government aware that this is something that they want government's attention to. I believe it's their right through a democratic process.

Now, I guess the question to me is why would the department want to be looking at trying to offload the responsibility of a bridge, especially when the government thumped its chest on how important and how committed it was to the bridge infrastructure and how much money they were pouring into it, and in the same breath they're trying to offload the responsibilities of a bridge within a community onto a municipality. Then putting out a carrot saying: Well, if you consider this, then we will look at 340, which is something that the community has been fighting for. The community of Shilo, the

community of Wawanesa, Shilo residents, people through PPCLI have been writing and requesting this to be considered. If it just takes one conversation, a meeting outside of a meeting, to make that happen, I'm really concerned.

I believe that this should be done in good faith. There should be a plan, and I've indicated during the election that I don't really believe that there is a plan, and this has just confirmed that. There seems to be a question of flexibility here.

With regard to the people in the petition on Highway 10 and around the Forrest area, the only reason that that community put together this petition, Mr. Acting Chair, was because the minister did not want to meet with the community. They'd asked for meetings over and over and did not receive a response back from the minister. So they felt that this was one avenue that they could take to respond to the inaction of this minister in not wanting to meet with them. So the petition was actually created and implemented and presented because there was no communication being provided to the community at the time that they wanted to discuss what the Province was presenting.

I was at the meeting that the minister references when he met with the community and looked at the underpass concept. At that meeting, it was clearly outlined by the community representatives there that an underpass was not an acceptable option. An underpass, with the water table being as high as it is, would not be a solution that would work within that community. But money was spent. Money was put out to do a study which the community says, and still says, was not required, that they knew right from the start that that water level was too high and would not be an option.

So back to that petition, that petition came forward because there was not an opportunity to meet with the minister to share their concerns about where this project was going and how it was going.

With regard to the status of the bypass at Forrest, I'd like to know what the status is on this project. There've been announcements made. Has land acquisition process started? Where are they at on this? Is this something that will be on target or is it going to be like the No. 1 highway where we see continual announcements with changes of dates?

**Mr. Lemieux:** Well, obviously, I've touched a sensitive button, and I know the MLA does a lot of hard work in the constituency. I don't want to take



away from that. But I also want to say, there's a number of questions that have been raised, so I'll try to go through them in a logical way.

Number 1, everyone has a right to bring petitions in no matter what political stripe is in government, and we accept that. I've never said that that's a problem. What I did say is that maybe the MLA wants to point out, when she receives the petitions, that the project has been announced, has already moved forward, and it's going to be done. Not only that, let me just point out if you'll check *Hansard*, on the one hand the MLA says the minister didn't want to meet. On the second side, she says: Well, I was there when the minister was meeting with the community.

\* (15:40)

If you want to check *Hansard* just to point that out, you'll see that on two sides of it; there are two mixed messages here. On the one side, the minister didn't want to meet with the community, and the second, she was present when the minister met with the community.

Not to make too fine a fine of it, but I take a great deal of pride in making my rounds and making my way around the province of Manitoba meeting with hundreds of individuals and municipalities, and this community was no different.

Also, the department met with the community trying to resolve this. And I think a good solution to this was the community said: Mr. Minister, we think that the tunnel may not work. The department, please listen to us. We don't think the tunnel will work or an overpass will work. And so we listened to the community. What we are doing is we're going to bypass the community and take the traffic away, from splitting the traffic between the two schools. I think the MLA would agree it's a great solution, but it was put forward by the community, and we're proud of the fact that we're doing this.

With regard to PTH No. 10 around Forrest, grade, base and pavement, it's approximately \$2 million in 2008 and '09, plus land acquisitions of another \$200,000, plus utilities \$400,000. So it's about a \$2.5-million project that's going to take place, and I believe the residents of Forrest are going to be truly pleased with this. And I also take exception with regard to Highway No. 1, the twinning going west. That highway is going to be opened this fall.

Also, the MLA for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire) mentioned how Saskatchewan opened the highway. That's not correct. They opened it for a short period of time, as I understand it. I've been advised to do work on the other side. It's currently not open. If the MLA for Arthur-Virden wants to go check today to see if it is open, they just opened it up temporarily.

But, having said that, I just want to clarify the record just to make sure that the record is clear. As a minister I take a great deal of pride meeting with people, and I don't want to take away from the Member for Minnedosa's hard work as an MLA. I know she does, but I just want to point out that I work equally as hard to represent the citizens of Manitoba and the portfolio that I have.

**Mrs. Rowat:** No. The minister is incorrect. He met with the community representatives. That would be the stakeholders way back in, I guess, a year and a bit ago. They had additional questions. This was a community group that had questions of the minister when the decision was made to do the bypass. This community had made probably three or four e-mail requests, three or four telephone requests. They then approached me and said: How do we get the attention of the minister? He does not want to meet with us.

This is coming from the community. This is their decision, and this is how they felt they wanted to communicate, and they believe that the deal was not done. They needed to have input in what they wanted to see happen within their community and feel that they were not being listened to.

I appreciate what the minister is saying, and I will stand by my community in saying that they felt that they were not being represented. So I will stick to continuing to put that petition forward because that is what they've asked me to do. I do consult with them before I go into session, and that was their choice, and it was their petition. As a representative, I'll read that petition until we run out of those petitions.

As for the status of the land acquisition, could you tell me where you are at specifically on that project?

**Mr. Lemieux:** As I said, I didn't want to put too fine a point on it, but there has been a lot of consultation. The petition says: Would the minister please listen and the government of Manitoba and bypass the community. We are doing it. We've listened, and it's going to happen.

With regard to land acquisition, I believe there were a number of homes that need to be acquired, a piece of land to the west, on the west side of Forrest. I understand that those negotiations are ongoing, and I understand that they're quite successful, so I don't believe that land acquisition will necessarily be a challenge. Sometimes it is. Whether you're building a new bridge or repairing a new bridge or trying to replace that bridge, sometimes land acquisition is a challenge, as well as building new roads or twinning highways. I understand there's a lot of co-operation here. It's not a case where people feel they've won a lottery just because it's been announced that there's going to be a new highway to bypass a community. I understand there's a lot of co-operation from the parents, from the community, from the landowners wanting to get this done.

We equally want to ensure the safety of the students and the people of the community of Forrest. Forrest is just literally five minutes away north of Brandon, and there are a lot of people who work in Brandon, whether it's a new shift at Maple Leaf or at a growing community like Brandon, and they like the idea of being able to commute back and forth. We recognize that, and we want to ensure that safety is paramount.

If I could just add, Mr. Chairperson, that the department here—and the minister's not patting himself on the back—the department has really listened to the community. When they said, could you put up those speed signs, not just, don't put up a sign that says slow down to 80 or 60 or 50; could you put a flashing speed sign, like a radar sign. When you're driving up, it's a reminder to traffic: put on the brakes, because there's a reason to slow down. The department has made that, as I understand, more of a permanent item until we can get the bypass completed, just to, again, be of assistance to the community.

So I believe we're working with the community; we've taken their suggestions; we're doing everything we possibly can, humanly possible, to try to address this and expedite it as fast as we can.

**Mrs. Rowat:** I guess I'm getting a non-answer for the status of the land acquisitions. There's none that have been completed, but it looks like there's been discussions. I know that the resident on the west side of the highway is not overly excited about acquisition and that, but I'm just going to leave it as, it's on my radar screen, it's on my community's radar screen. I'll continue to ask questions on that and

watch the progress of that, but we are being optimistic in that area.

Just a maintenance issue on Highway 2 coming through the community of Souris: there were some repairs done on that highway, and I've had calls from town council, and also, residents within the community of Souris, who are very disappointed with the work that was done. Highway 2 goes right through the community of Souris. It's been extremely patchy, an embarrassment to the community leaders there. If the minister would be so kind as to have a look at that and review that, I think that it needs to be looked at again before fall gets too far along the road. I live in that community, and I do agree with the municipality or the town on that. It was actually brought up by the R.M. of Glenwood, as well as the Town of Souris at both of my meetings, so you know, please—you're doing some work on the highways in around the communities. Please have another look at that and give it consideration.

**Mr. Lemieux:** Well, I thank the MLA for Minnedosa for the suggestion. We'll certainly take a look at it. I'm not appraised of what is the work that's taken place there specifically, but we certainly will take a look and make some inquiries with regard to Souris, and take a look at the area.

I know that as a department, the department in the Brandon region, in the Brandon area, they'll work very closely with the communities and they'll try to—not only when we put a tender out or put the money out—we want to make sure that the job is done right. Sometimes, even, the municipalities are able to piggy-back on what we're doing, because there's a paving crew there or there's a company there doing some work. They'll often have some of their streets done and so on. So we try to work closely with the communities and try to work with them in a way to figure out what's the best advantage for the taxpayer overall, and sometimes it really works out; it's a real win-win for the community, to be able to do some extra work as well. It's something that we'll look into and certainly be able to get back to the MLA on.

Just a quick note, I mean, when I take a look at the Highway 10 plan overall over the next five years, I'm reminded that there's over \$60 million are going to be spent on Highway 10, and many would argue that that's not enough. But Highway 10 is an important artery going to the United States, back and forth and into northern Manitoba, so you know, again, the MLA raised the question with regard to land acquisition. I don't want to negotiate in public

and I never will. Those negotiations are ongoing, so I can't get to the specifics as to how much money is being offered, or not, or where they're at, but we'll certainly appraise her as we proceed, to try to keep the MLA in the loop as to where we're going.

**Mrs. Rowat:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

\* (15:50)

One other question: Rapid City, when I met with the community there, I learned something that was rather interesting, and I didn't realize, but every road going into that community has restrictions. So, at certain times of year when restrictions are in place, it's questionable how goods can come in and out of that community. A helicopter's not an option. I don't understand how every single road going into that community can have restrictions, and I don't know how that community can do business with, you know, trucks coming in. I don't know if the minister is aware of that and if his staff are aware of that. Do they have some options or solutions for that community? Because that's a big challenge.

**Mr. Lemieux:** I'll try to be courteous in my response, but I believe the MLA is incorrect again with regard to this issue. I don't think all the roads are restricted. I'll try to be fair on this answer. I pointed out that the MLA is incorrect; at least I'm advised, I think; I believe.

But it's something that all MLAs take suggestions from their local elected officials, and sometimes the elected officials are not clear as to whether they know at a particular time whether a road is or not, so I always give the benefit of the doubt to all the MLAs asking questions. They're doing the work on behalf of their communities, and sometimes the communities, when they pass on information, don't have the exact facts, you know, in an up-to-date way. So I will ask my department, and possibly, before my Estimates are complete, I'll be able to answer more fully and then the MLA will be able to pass that information back to those communities. We're certainly taking a look at it right now just to see if you're correct. If you are, it is a concern, no question about it, but I've been advised that that's not the case. I'll try to get back to you through this forum in the next while, while I'm doing my Estimates, to try to clarify that.

**Mr. Maguire:** I just want to reiterate what the Member for Minnedosa has just indicated. You know, we're talking about at Rapid City, with the map in front of me that I have, it's dealing with

Provincial Road 270 and Highway 24. I think those are the ones that would be restricted heavily in the springtime.

Mr. Chair, I have a number of questions that I want to go through with the minister's concurrence today. We can move along quickly on those, and one of them deals with a circumstance around the Brandon airport in regard to air traffic in that area. I know there are a number of questions. I'd provide him with an opportunity to provide us with an update on the situation with rural airports around Manitoba, with Brandon's airport, also with the city of Winnipeg and the new airport authority here, his role in any of that that he wishes to comment on at this time as well.

But the situation with Brandon is one of developing further business opportunities in that city. It's one of safety, and it's one of being able to use the medivac better. I'm talking about whether or not the government would consider an instrument landing system in Brandon, an ILS system for the city of Brandon. It would meet the needs of the whole surrounding area.

I'm aware that NAV CANADA is supposed to be the one responsible for capital investments, I believe, in that kind of a situation, but if they aren't willing to do that, there is another area that the Province is then responsible for maintaining and operating along with the city, and I wonder if the minister has ever had anyone approach him about the Province being involved and putting up the capital and having someone else deal with the operating because, perhaps, the operating might end up being a greater cost than the investment in capital. I would just ask the minister to comment on that if he could, as well as some of the other airport projects that he has.

**Mr. Lemieux:** Well, No. 1, the Province is not responsible for Brandon airport. NAV CANADA or Transport Canada may want to infuse or inject monies into Brandon airport. There was a day when Canadian Air used to fly into Brandon, and I think many remember it fondly, those days that you could actually go into Brandon, fly into Brandon.

There are a lot of important issues around that because the community of Brandon is growing, and it's not going to stop. It's going to continue to boom and grow. I know that many who have flown into the Brandon airport, it's in very good condition. At least I understand, since the last time I've gone there, but there was a day when Canadians—there used to be

regular flights from a national air carrier into Brandon. I think people look upon those days fondly because, if you're going to be a major player in a major city, people expect to have regular air traffic, and this is not just traffic flying inside of Manitoba, but actually international.

People used to be able to take flights out of Brandon and go to the United States, as I understand it, or go longer distances more west than east, or east and west, but you had an option and Canadian was actually looking at that and it's regrettable that those kind of things have happened.

The Province of Manitoba, certainly, at this time it's certainly not prepared to inject huge amounts of money into Brandon airport. It's something that Transport Canada offloaded a lot of those airports onto the municipalities in those communities and they took them over. Now, lo and behold, what happens a number of years later? they find out there's a huge bill with repairing their airstrips or the navigation systems and so on.

So maybe the MLA can speak to Mr. Tweed. He's, I believe, on the transportation—I don't recall the proper name coming out of Parliament to Canada, the transportation committee of Canada. He's the Chair, and this may be an opportunity to talk to Mr. Tweed about what the current, the new Canadian government is going to do about the airport in Brandon.

As a provincial government we're responsible for, I stand to be corrected, I believe 24 airports in the province of Manitoba. We are proud of the fact that we're doing as much as we possibly can to assist those airports and to work with them to ensure that not only on the esthetics side that landing strips and the airports are well taken care of. Indeed we actually have staff at a number of those airports which NAV CANADA or Transport Canada certainly are not putting staff there but we have taken it upon ourselves to have staff at the airports. We also put a lot of money into the upkeep of those airports. So we're proud of the fact—now I know talking about airports in northern Manitoba might be a sensitive issue, talking about the North, but I'm not going to go there.

I know the MLA for Arthur-Virden well, and he has a good understanding of the north. That's why I made my tongue-in-cheek comment at Question Period today about I was shocked and dismayed that he wouldn't tell his leader that he was making a huge mistake by pulling all the money out of the north and

bringing it to the south, because he knows the north very well, including Flin Flon, which he's very familiar with.

So I will just move on to talking about the 35 airports that the Manitoba Airport Assistance Program has detailed out, and the assistance program is essentially just for operating grants that we provide. Maybe I'll just end my long-winded answer at that. We provide them with operating grants to a lot of these airports and I believe there are 35 in total.

**Mr. Maguire:** I appreciate the minister's answer. I guess the only caveat I'd put on that is that I would urge him to look at the situation in Brandon. I have mentioned this to the federal member that he referred to as well, Mr. Tweed, who's the chair of the transportation committee of Canada who's very aware of it and would certainly be looking at it. I would encourage the minister if he has an opportunity to look at it with him, I'd be glad to meet with the two of them if he wishes as well and I know others who would be amenable.

The Brandon Flying Club as well as the City of Brandon are very much in favour of the situation with ILS there. Of course, you're well aware that the city put extra funds, actually the city saved a bunch of money, about a quarter of a million dollars by putting their share of the extended runway, the cost, into it back a number of years ago prior to 9/11, I believe. I believe it was in the year 2000 or 2001 just prior to 9/11 when Westjet was flying into Brandon. The runway needed to be extended for further service and the federal government put money into that at that time, and to save the city money the mayor at that time, Mr. Atkinson, agreed to put funds, City funds up, so that the work could all be done while the equipment was there. That saved, my understanding, the City of Brandon about a quarter of a million dollars at that time.

\* (16:00)

The City wants this type of thing, of course, as the minister just announced. It's a growing city. I realize that this would take funds, but I'm asking the minister if he would look at—help us negotiate with the federal government through his transportation contacts—the system of ILS for the City of Brandon, mainly because of the health reason. The situation there, of course, allows, if you can get an ILS system into Brandon, you can land at 250 feet visibility as opposed to over 420, I believe it is, and you can land at three-quarters of a mile visibility instead of, I

believe it's a mile and a quarter that you require under other circumstances. It's ironic that there are only probably a few times, but if you're the one who needs a medivac and it can't get into Brandon to land, then that's why I'm—that's mainly the reason why I would like to see this done. There's all kinds of economic reasons, but from a health perspective as well, it's important to look at this scenario.

My colleague from Pembina has a couple of questions that he'd like to ask, and I thank the minister for his time on that last statement that I made. Thanks.

*Madam Chairperson in the Chair*

**Mr. Lemieux:** Well, I thank my critic for his informed view with regard to the issue on Brandon airport, and I know that my former colleague the MLA for Brandon West, raised this and talked about it on numerous occasions, being a strong advocate for the city of Brandon, and I know the MLA for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell) is certainly aware and has been, many have approached him with regard to it, but we're talking about huge dollars. I don't want to downplay the fact that, yes, it would be nice and so on, but, you know, we're talking about such large—I mean, we're talking about such large amounts of money, quite frankly, to take a look at this project that, you know, at this point, the Province of Manitoba is certainly not prepared to do anything.

But let me just say this. I will and I would like to take up the MLA for Arthur-Virden's (Mr. Maguire) suggestion to meet with himself and Mr. Tweed, the Chair, to discuss not only this issue, maybe some other issues related to transportation. But, you know, this one that you suggested, I think when our schedules are able to match, I think it's a good suggestion. I will look forward to that and maybe to have a discussion about Brandon airport and other issues related to transportation that he, being the Chair, Mr. Tweed, there are other transportation issues that we may want to talk about at the meeting too. Thank you.

**Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina):** Madam Chair, I know that the minister and I have had this discussion before, but I guess I would like to have an update and since we have last talked about Highway 32, the traffic counts have not gone down and, in fact, they've increased. So the minister has indicated they've gone down. That is incorrect. Obviously, he doesn't have the right information in front of him.

So Winkler, being one of the fastest growing communities in rural Manitoba, also within the R.M. of Stanley, it also being a route provincial highway leading toward a port of entry, which is Walhalla, I am just wondering if he could give me an update as to where they are at with the four-laning of this section of the highway going through the city of Winkler. I know that he also met with the City of Winkler, the mayor and some of the council members, just a few weeks ago, but if you could give me a status of where they are at right now, I would appreciate that.

**Mr. Lemieux:** Well, I've always looked forward to working with the MLA for the area, and also I am very pleased that the new school that we built in Winkler is a point I guess I made yesterday to a lot of the MLAs that were around the table, that sometimes we isolate departments and say, well, what have you done for me lately? But, in fact, for example, like communities like Steinbach, where you put a CT-scan in the community, you know, you take a look at a new personal care home, or the community of Winkler where we did a main street or a street for the community. It was their street but we did it and this goes back to the minister that was from Thompson, our MLA for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) did that work. Also, you know, and the new school I mentioned, of course, a multi-million dollar school that was opened not too long ago.

The MLA is correct and because of, and I would argue to a certain degree, maybe to a large degree, the success of our immigration program. The Minister of Labour and Immigration (Ms. Allan) of the Province of Manitoba leading the vision of bringing new residents to Manitoba, new peoples coming to Manitoba, has had a huge impact on the community of Winkler and the area. The R.M. of Stanley and others know this well. I have met with the community on a number of occasions, and we've agreed that we need to discuss and keep the dialogue open and keep trying to work toward possible solutions. They've made suggestions, well, why don't you do this stretch of highway? I believe it was \$10 million, a number that was thrown out at one time. Why not do it in phases, or do it in pieces, if you can't do the whole works all at one shot? So we've been looking at all the options.

What is the proper answer? What is the real solution for Winkler's challenges? I know the community is growing and, arguably, whether Winkler or Steinbach grows faster. I'm not sure which one, but I just know that I'm more familiar

with Steinbach. Obviously, I live closer to Steinbach than I do to Winkler. I've been to Winkler many times, but I know that there's a huge growth going on in the Winkler area and Steinbach area. So the MLA is correct, this growth is not going to stop due to our immigration policy as well as the attraction of employment in that community. No, I wasn't mentioning that the traffic numbers have gone down. I was referring to something else; I was referring to the five-year capital plan where we've got some land acquisition money there.

Obviously, it's not enough, but we are trying to proceed, and the City said that they would assist if there are any dilemmas or challenges around land acquisition. They said they would try to assist from their side. I'll raise the point again, where people, if they know that some road work is going to happen, they all of a sudden feel that they won a lottery somehow, and the value of their land has all of a sudden overnight kind of skyrocketed the moment they feel that the Province is going to do some road work. So I appreciate the offer from the City of Winkler to try to help us when we're going to be looking for land acquisition into the future.

**Mr. Dyck:** And the answer is? There is none obviously. Just for clarification, this government did not build a personal care home in Winkler nor in Morden. We're waiting for one, but it hasn't happened yet. You know, Steinbach and Winkler are far apart. Maybe you need the map. I know that it's tough to get from one place to another because of the road system we have.

Just to carry this forward a little further, it was certainly a non-answer. I just simply wanted to know what the status was, and obviously there is none. The minister is not prepared to do anything, which is pretty straightforward. I do, however though, want to ask one more question, and that is on Highway 201. This provincial road was taken over by the Province. The R.M. of Stanley was maintaining it and looking after it, and when they were not able to come to a resolution as to the cost sharing, that's when the Province took over the responsibility. I know the minister has had a number of calls.

I've had many calls about dustproofing. It's the village of Osterwick that needs to be dust proofed, and I also know that the department has taken a change in direction as far as putting gravel on. They've stopped putting on the gravel and moved it toward shale. So I just want to know what the minister is prepared to do regarding the dustproofing

of that area and just assisting the people with the amount of dust that they are receiving within the village.

**Mr. Lemieux:** Well, thank you very much, and I generally appreciate the comments made by the MLA, but he read far too much into my previous answer that I gave him. I just said I was very proud of the fact of all the work we've done in the southeast as well as the southern region—like a personal care home in Steinbach, CT scan in Steinbach. Also, in the community of Winkler there are huge needs there as well. We know that, and there's a big, brand-new, multimillion-dollar school just built and opened in Winkler. So I was just making the point that there are huge needs. The community is growing; infrastructure challenges are there.

So we are open to suggestions, and we're trying to approach this in what exactly we can do for the community of Winkler, because the community is going to continue to grow. We, not that long ago, had a Cabinet meeting and a caucus meeting in the community of Winkler, in the Morden area; had a chance to talk to a lot of business owners and community members. So I just want to clarify the point that we are listening to people, and good suggestions are coming forward on how we can help out the community, the city of Winkler on their infrastructure challenges.

\* (16:10)

Just with regard to 201, we met with a number of people not that long ago, some from the R.M. of Stanley and the administrator and others, talking about 201 and possible lighting around a couple of corners on 201. It was a bit of jog southwest, I guess, of Winkler. We're looking at the warrant right now, and this is out of our Portage la Prairie office. We have a new gentleman there that's the head of our Portage office, and he was in attendance at the meeting. We're trying to work with the R.M. of Stanley, not necessarily putting RTAC on all the roads. They know that that's not feasible. The traffic counts aren't there. But yet, with regard to dustproofing and trying to make the roads passable, because there's a lot of traffic on them, we said that we would look at a lot of these issues on the dustproofing aspect. There is also the lighting at the corner of 201, I can't remember the other intersection, of 32 and 201, and I think there was an intersection where they asked to have lighting. I stand corrected on some of the roads, but I'll certainly get back to the MLA about that particular

corner. Maybe the R.M. of Stanley and others have even raised this with their MLA.

I'm certainly aware of where Winkler is. I've been to Winkler many, many times and met with their community leaders and, as well, our government has met with their community leaders. So I know that with our new award-winning map we have now in Manitoba—we have received an award for this map—tourists in Manitoba can find their way. In fact, even northern Manitoba has been put on this map, which I'm pleased to say.

**Mr. Dyck:** I want to thank the minister for those comments, and rightfully so. When he was the Minister of Education, we did get a school built out there. I have a number of times said that we're very grateful for that. On the other hand, we still have 900 students in huts, but I realize that's a different minister. So we need three more schools of the same magnitude built now. So that is some of the growth that's taken place.

Coming back to the comment you made about lights. I believe it's the light on 201 and the road leading into the village of Schanzenfeld. That's where there's a school known as Southwood School. I know the minister has been out there as well. There was a young child killed at that corner several years ago. I know that the R.M. has asked for a light there. In fact, they've have gone as far as asking for a speed reduction just in that area, and I know that it is problematic when you do that. I don't minimize that fact. But that is the corner that the minister is talking about.

The other one I'd like to come back to is the 201. They're not asking for RTAC. I mean, that would be the nice way to go, but I think the community realizes the cost of that. What they're asking for is, I believe, it is something like a two-kilometre, maybe three-kilometre stretch straight west of Osterwick to have just, simply, dustproofing put onto there. It is really bad. I've been out there a number of times and, I must say that since the Province has put this shale into there, it does generate a different kind of dust that is very nauseating and just sort of drifts right in through the community. So I would appreciate it if the minister could look at that.

Again, I know that the minister has indicated that they're looking at Highway 32. I know that it's a safety issue as well. There are a lot of cars on there. If there is anything that can be done to expedite the four-laning of that, it would be much appreciated.

**Mr. Lemieux:** The MLA knows the issues well, and he is correct. I was just taking a look at the map. That is the corner exactly that they mentioned that they would like to have something looked at. We agreed at the meeting, actually, with the R.M. of Stanley, to take a look at that intersection, to take a look at the warrant to find out whether or not it's possible for lighting, and so on, at that corner.

Also, with the dustproofing. This was mentioned by the R.M. as well. It's a kind of a shale. It's the kind of dust that can get into cracks of vehicles. If there are different levels of dust, this one is bad, and has been pointed out. In fact, our department said they would look at this because of the kind shale material that was put as a top level on this road.

So I thank the MLA for this, but we have agreed already, through our meeting with the R.M. of Stanley, but I appreciate you raising it once again. I currently don't have an update for you where that's at, but I know we have a new team leader in Portage la Prairie now, with the retirement of Bob McKay, and he has taken it upon himself to work with others to look at these issues, and the elected officials as well as the administrator. We agreed that, you know, there are certain things that we might be able to move on. So I look forward to an update from my own department on this as well.

**Mr. Maguire:** I just wanted to ask the minister, there's a bridge in north of Melita that I've asked a number of times over the seven or eight years that I've been MLA, Jackson Creek bridge, in regard to, right on 83 highway, as to the issues around that bridge.

It's my understanding that most of 83 highway is of an RTAC nature, and if this bridge was completed at least, or updated. I've been told that there was research going on for new kinds of pillars and foundation piles and that sort of thing for this particular bridge. It's been patched at least a couple of times this year in regard to the top of it, and I wonder if the minister can tell me the status of that bridge, whether it's on any foreseeable plans.

I didn't see it on the five-year plan, and I would like to bring it to the minister's attention again that this one is a bugbear, if you will, for the further development of the town of Melita and the further use of 83 highway. Can they give me a status report on what they see to do with that bridge in the future?

**Mr. Lemieux:** I thank the MLA for the heads-up, if I can use that term. I know we've talked about this actually, I believe, one other time about it.

Because of the additional influx of the—you know, this is where the additional \$125 million we were talking about in additional monies to our budget will be a huge boost. I believe it's \$430 million now per year. It will be a big boost for inspections and will also assist us in taking a look at structures like this. And I know the MLA has an appreciation for how many there are in the province, and it leaves us with a challenge, of course, on renovations and work that needs to be done. But I'll make a commitment to the MLA and my Infrastructure and Transportation critic that we'll be taking a look at this closely. As I said, the influx of more dollars for inspections and renovations hopefully will be able to assist us.

Again, you know, it's a call that's made by the professionals as to what structures receive attention when; what level needs to be done with regard to the attention paid to it; whether or not further inspections, monitoring, all those kinds of things. I know he's aware of that, but I do appreciate him raising that particular structure.

**Mr. Maguire:** I just have a question in regard to the southwest 2, perhaps in regard to the contracting and the mowing of ditches in some municipalities.

I know I wrote the minister a year ago, and there was some work done within a reasonable time frame in regard to mowing the ditches in both Edward and Arthur municipalities, I know, in the southwest around Pierson, Waskada. The highways that I would look at right now that I know they're concerned about are 452 north of Waskada to No. 251 from Waskada all the way over through the Lyleton area, and 256 north past Pierson. There has been no mowing done on those roads this year in regard to shoulders, and there is no shoulders. I know I've mentioned it to the minister in a letter before. I appreciate his response to that.

I checked yesterday. There has still been no mowing done in that area. Then, August, the municipalities were told that they were mowing up by Russell, would be moving down that way. You know, kids are back to school on school buses, and there's a lot of deer in that area now. There's always been a lot of deer in that area, and I guess with no shoulders virtually on, particularly 256 at all, it's a pretty dangerous situation, unless the farmers just happen to cut the grass for hay in those areas. On

256, I had the opportunity of being down it myself in late July, and if it hasn't been cut since then—and that's the indication that I've had—then it could be fairly dangerous. I just wondered if the minister could give me an update on when that will be done.

\* (16:20)

**Mr. Lemieux:** I thank the MLA for Arthur-Virden for the point he's making with regard to safety. Let me just share a personal experience. This summer I went to attend a memorial service, and on the way back ran into a bear. A bear came out of the ditches and the grass was a little bit high. By the time I saw the bear—I won't use the language I used then, but that's all the time I had to just say the words I did, and bang, I hit the bear and killed the bear, smashed in the front of my van. Air bags popped and it was quite an experience. So the point I'm trying to make here is that the cutting of the ditches and so on is an important safety issue. We all know it. Deer are also a problem, and so for all of those travelling our roadways, safety is paramount for us. So I appreciate your point you're trying to make.

Let me just say that a lot of our ditches are mowed twice a year; once, let's say, in the early summer and once in the fall. We try to do it on a regular basis. We often contract this out. It could be to farmers or other people with the type of equipment that's necessary to do the job. I'll endeavour to ask the department the status of what's happening and I'd be pleased to get back to the MLA from Arthur-Virden about this. I know he has an appreciation of these 19,000 kilometres of roads that the Province is responsible for, and, yes, we don't always get to them in an expedited way, but generally we do get to them. It may be still on the drawing board to have some of these ditches addressed, so we'll look into it.

**Mr. Maguire:** Madam Chair, the citizens of that area are not concerned that it won't be done before freeze-up; they're just concerned that it hasn't been done all summer for the second year in a row. And one of their suggestions is maybe to turn the cycle of mowing into a—putting them a little earlier on the agenda at least for one year. They'd like to see it perhaps—they be moved up on the agenda a little bit instead of always being the last ones in the fall. It's two years in a row now I know that this has happened. So I want to thank the minister for his response to that, and I know he'll get back to me in either a—if he can just write me a note on that, I'd appreciate that.



Speed limits. I just wanted to know, the Premier has referred to—you know, we've got a number of highways that are being twinned. The minister made a comment that we'd go up to 110 on some highways in Manitoba at some point. Then it's cut back to a number of areas, and I wonder if the minister can give me an update on what his thoughts are and what he plans to do when we get Ontario border to—or when we get No. 1 fully twinned and open. Is it his plan to match what Saskatchewan and Alberta have done in the speed limit on No. 1 at least to 110? I know he's referred to that, the Premier has, and of course there's the Perimeter Highway and 75 as well.

**Mr. Lemieux:** The MLA is correct that the Premier has made these comments, but I have as well and others with regard to increasing the speed limit to 110 and trying to ensure that there's some cohesiveness between Alberta and Saskatchewan and Manitoba. It's something that we're currently working on. We are looking at the issues around Highway 1 and 75, and I believe the Perimeter Highway surrounding Winnipeg are the areas that we're looking at. And we are looking at the issues related to vehicles coming onto our highway. There are stretches of road that we have in Manitoba that are far more—there's more congestion, is the word I'm looking for, with regard to the approaches to our No. 1 highway as opposed to what Alberta has and what Saskatchewan has.

So it's something we have to take into consideration and one of the key areas with regard to transportation safety is safety, safety, safety. We're cognizant of the fact that there are maybe issues related to safety, and we want to ensure that we address those as well, and I know Saskatchewan feels the same way and so does Alberta.

One cannot legislate common sense. That's been pointed out on numerous occasions. We have various reasons why drivers get into accidents, why accidents are caused, and it's not always because of the speed limits on highways. It's not always because of the type of road they're travelling on, because it's not four-lane or not because of the quality of the road. There are occasions where it's the driver, and there are other reasons for it. So it's not just the road.

But the MLA for Arthur-Virden is correct, that we are looking at a highway speed of 110. This still has a process to go through. The Motor Transport Board, Highway Traffic Board, sorry. Yes, Highway Traffic Board that has to have an application to it to also take a look at the highway, but once the

highway is opened, the portion going to Saskatchewan, I believe there has been a commitment made that we would be looking at that speed limit increasing so there's some cohesiveness. We hear this from all ministers of transportation and also from other provinces, whether it's dealing with regulations dealing with transportation of goods, but there has to be some kind of cohesiveness between the provinces. Manitoba is willing and certainly, indeed, wanting to work with its neighbours.

**Mr. Maguire:** Just on a more administrative issue in regard to the minister's department and some of the travel that the minister would do, it's not left on me that the Minister of Transportation has to travel, but I was just wondering if I could get a comment from the minister as to whether he has been on any transportation meetings across the country or in other parts of North America with the Premier (Mr. Doer), travelling with him at the same time, and if he can give us any details on those.

**Mr. Lemieux:** Well, I've been fortunate, very fortunate, actually, to be able to be one minister that has been connected to the international transportation gateway, mid-continent transportation gateway, that we are really promoting for trade. There are occasions where I've made trips to the United States. I have made a trip, not long ago, to Fort Worth, Texas, where there was a NASCO meeting. I believe the MLA, the critic for Transportation, is familiar with NASCO. It's an organization that's responsible for really this super corridor that we're talking about. We are a member. Manitoba's a member of it, and I, as a representative of the government, attended.

It's important to have Manitoba's views, as he's aware, on not only our national scene but international scene if possible, and there's always the federal-provincial territorial ministers' meetings, where we meet with Minister Cannon or his designate, where all the provincial ministers get together to debate and talk about issues with the federal minister and ministers from the provinces and the territories. Those are always happening. Those are regular meetings that you try to participate in.

I am actually a very strong advocate of the western transportation organization called WESTAC. WESTAC is an organization that deals with a lot of issues surrounding transportation and infrastructure in western Canada, and currently Manitoba is the chair. I am currently the chair of WESTAC. Each provincial minister in the west, excluding B.C., has an opportunity to chair WESTAC. So, on occasion, I

have to travel with regard to WESTAC, and I'm sure the MLA for Arthur-Virden would appreciate that Manitoba has a voice at that table, and we are able to ensure, in fact, it wasn't at the pleasure but at the request of the federal government when the Asia-Pacific gateway announcement was made in Vancouver by Prime Minister Harper, that western ministers of Transportation were asked to attend, and we did so because we are supportive of the Asia-Pacific gateway strategies. We just want to be part and parcel of this gateway strategy, and we want to ensure that our own gateway leading into the United States, for example, as one, is given true consideration that we can work with the federal government on.

So there are occasions where the Minister of Transportation actually travels outside of Manitoba, but the member is correct. We spend a lot of time driving miles and travelling throughout the province looking and checking out the infrastructure and the roads of the province and dealing with meetings with different elected officials and different interest groups related to infrastructure and transportation around the province.

\* (16:30)

**Mr. Maguire:** Would the minister be able to share with me any times, as I pointed out, that the Premier might have travelled with him, and would he be able to point out any times that the Premier might have had an opportunity to travel with him and whether any of—just to outline administratively whether the Premier would've covered travel costs in his department or whether the minister's had the occasion to cover the Premier's costs in his department or vice versa? Can you just outline how that works, for me?

**Mr. Lemieux:** Well, I'd be pleased to talk about the travel. That's important, I believe, to the—as it was with previous governments, and I think the MLA for Arthur-Virden is aware of this, that ministers on occasion have to travel and meet with organizations outside. Let me just highlight, not only did I highlight the Dallas-Fort Worth meeting which is dealing with the international mid-continent trade and transportation corridor, but also there was a meeting in Ottawa of the Canada Russia Business Council to which I was invited and attended. We met with the Russian ambassador, also with Mr. Levitin, the Russian transportation minister of Russia, to deal with issues around the Port of Churchill, for example, and also deal with possible flights. We call

it the Arctic Bridge concept, and the Arctic Bridge concept to us means there are two pieces to this: there's one by air and there's one by marine. The one by air is the one that would be flying, for example, from Russia into Winnipeg and vice versa from Winnipeg to Russia. We have had conversations and dialogue along those lines.

We've also had conversations around marine traffic, possibly shipping, not only just leaving the Port of Churchill, but coming into Churchill. This is something that we've raised at the federal level about having Churchill given more consideration. Right now it's our only deep-sea arctic port, and we think there are huge advantages around Churchill. So we've met with the Russians, the Russian ambassador. We've met with the Russian transportation minister. The Russian ambassador was up to Churchill to see the Port of Churchill and has a good idea of what the Port of Churchill is all about.

So there are many occasions where we have chances to travel and meet people outside of our country to improve transportation issues or deal with transportation issues but also improve trade. There's a real link, of course, between trade and transportation on many different fronts, and, again, I had already mentioned about WESTAC travelling to Vancouver on occasion and having to travel outside of Manitoba, even though the majority of the time was spent travelling on Manitoba roads, and the work of a Transportation Minister is here. So these are really important.

I just wanted to bring up to date my critic about at least these areas where I participated in, and I certainly look forward to other possible meetings. I know there's a WESTAC meeting coming up; usually it's a couple of times a year, but also there's a federal-provincial-territorial ministers meeting coming up, and I look forward to meeting Minister Cannon.

**Mr. Maguire:** I appreciate the minister doing his job and having to travel and represent us in Manitoba through those venues, and I certainly don't have a problem with that. I wanted to, though, I guess, just directly ask the minister, as far as he knows, in Infrastructure, Transportation and government services, he would not have picked up any of the Premier's (Mr. Doer) costs of travel in his department.

**Mr. Lemieux:** Well, I mean, you know, the Premier's had an opportunity to have questions posed to him and he deals with issues related to his area.

There are occasions where we've met at NASCO, NASCO meetings with the Premier. I know that I am familiar with my travel, of course. I'm not familiar with other ministers' travel and where they go or where they've been, unless we have that conversation or whether there are overlapping issues.

But, quite frankly, I'm really proud of the fact of the role Manitoba has played nationally in Canada with regard to promoting transportation. The western ministers of transportation—and a lot of it had to do with the dialogue between us. As the MLA for Arthur-Virden knows, not only in the world of trade or just in the world of human relations, when you meet, often partnerships are formed because of personal relationships that you do make by virtue of meeting other people and the sharing of views. All the premiers of the country have really taken a page from the western ministers. We came up with a western transportation vision on where we felt transportation in the country should go. The premiers have really gone with this particular document that the western ministers have put forward and worked on with their staff. This is something that Manitoba, I believe, has been able to promote a lot of issues related to our trade by virtue of being able to meet with other western ministers as well as my other colleagues in other provinces.

**Mr. Maguire:** I don't have any problem with that. I guess I should have asked the minister how much dollar value, perhaps, how much of the Premier's travel costs are in his department. Maybe I'll ask it that way. Has the minister covered any of the Premier's travel costs to any of these meetings on travel that he's been at, or any others? I'm assuming you wouldn't be covering them on any other jurisdiction. Just curiosity. I'm an eternal optimist. The minister's always the one that said he may not be in that seat forever so when I become the minister of transport, I've got to know what I'm doing. So if he could provide me with the do's and don'ts of what I should be doing as far as he knows, has his department picked up any of the Premier's travel in his department, that's all.

**Mr. Lemieux:** One do's and don'ts is I would recommend that you don't take money out of northern Manitoba and put it into southern Manitoba in transportation. Secondly, I just want to say that—No. 2, the MLA for Arthur-Virden's going to have to wait a long time before he becomes that minister, and No. 3, trade and transportation and travel are really important, I believe, to this province.

Not only do you have the minister responsible for trade interacting with other provinces or states south of us, but Manitoba has taken the lead on the international mid-continent trade and transportation corridor. I'm not shy about saying that I've been waving the Manitoba flag in Kansas City and also in Texas, not on a regular basis, but I usually go once a year or so to Kansas City to have these kinds of issues discussed and try to make sure that people are very much aware of our issues.

We are dealing now with, we've talked about the MIG strategy, and our strategy, quite frankly, is dealing with our mid-continent international gateway. We have a council. We have people—Transportation has taken the lead on a lot of these issues, and we need to be able to be where the action is. Currently, Kansas City, for example, who has become a very good friend of Manitoba, has an inland port. It's called SmartPort, and they have rail, air, people working together in a cohesive way to ensure that it improves trade.

Also, the Mexican delegations are also feeling that this is truly important because they're trying to tie in with what Kansas City is doing. So here we are working closely together, Manitoba being at the top of this corridor, cities in Mexico being at the southern end, and all the people in between on I-29 and I-35 are wanting to be part and parcel of this huge initiative. I certainly don't apologize for the fact that we're working diligently to ensure, not only myself but possibly other ministers. I'm not aware of what their travel schedule is and so on. I'm sorry, I'm too busy to be doing that, but I do appreciate that on occasion travel is important.

**Mr. Maguire:** I appreciate that. I'm assuming that there's some travel in there by the Premier. It wasn't a tricky question. I was just wondering how much it was.

I wanted to just make another couple of comments on a couple of issues, one around bridges and that sort of thing. I know that the minister has just announced \$125 million over four years to help with inspections in that area. I know that they're inspected yearly in those areas.

I wonder if the minister could make available—I know he's mentioned that he does have an open government, and they have put on Web sites a number of postings of information. I know that there are listings in the pamphlet, the brochure that the minister has just pointed out. But I wonder if he could provide me—I know that the City has

announced something in the nature of 9 or 10 bridges that they have cited in the city, within the city limits, in regard to repairs. I wonder if the minister could provide me with a written list of the bridges in Manitoba that the Premier referred to, the 63 bridges that would need immediate repair, or that would look at immediate repairs around the province of Manitoba and in northern Manitoba, all of those being in rural and northern Manitoba, and if he could make that available to me.

\* (16:40)

**Mr. Lemieux:** There is a brochure that lays out our five-year capital plan, and that's our vision and that's our plan for the first five years, 2007, 2011. It's entitled *Manitoba Means Business*, and it's Manitoba's highway renewal plan, I believe that those bridges are all listed within the document, and I'd be pleased to be able to give the MLA this particular document. It lists all the bridges.

As we know, starting in 2002, the consultation process that took place, at that time people did raise concerns about our infrastructure overall where there were culverts or roads or bridges. This came up, and there was a demand of \$3 billion over the next 10 years and that's what the consultation process revealed. We introduced a \$4-billion investment into our infrastructure, a billion dollars more that was pointed out in the consultation process.

Again, I just want to remind the people around this table and to put it on the record that, without the hard work of the MLAs from Transcona, Flin Flon and Selkirk and doing the hard work that it took to do the consultation with rural municipalities, other elected officials, First Nations communities, members of the population, citizens of Manitoba, we would not have been able to put this guideline or plan together. We are appreciative of that and this \$125 million. No pun intended, but we're not standing still with our feet in concrete. We are moving ahead and moving forward with regard to projects.

We added this \$125 million because we feel that there's a need there for more inspections. We feel there's a need for more renovations or renewal to our bridges and infrastructure in the province, and I am pleased that the opposition recognizes that. Let me just be partisan just for at least one time. This is the first time, it's a historic amount. It's a historic amount and one time, one time, well, since I am Minister of Transportation-Infrastructure and Transportation. I'd like to hear from my critic in the opposition say, you

know, that Manitoba now truly has a plan and a vision for Transportation or Infrastructure and Transportation in this province, because there was none before.

We're very, very proud of the fact that we do have a plan. We do have the money to back up that plan. We're putting our money where our mouth is and there's a lot of work to take place. So, with my partisan comment on our vision and our plan, we just want to make sure that the federal government also has an equal vision and plan and also is willing to put their money where their mouth is too.

**Mr. Maguire:** I appreciate the minister's answer. I appreciate it's historic, and I appreciate the fact that the federal transfer payments are at an historic level in Manitoba as well. It continues to allow the government to do many of the things that they're doing without having to be as penny-wise perhaps as has happened in historic levels as well. It's a plus that the federal government of the day is able to continue those transfer payments for the Province of Manitoba, and I appreciate that the minister in his wisdom is using it wisely in his estimations to provide as much—I believe that the minister is trying to do the best he can with regard to the dollars that are available around the province. It's always a tight job.

I wanted to get through the Estimates today if it would be possible at some point, and with the minister's co-operation I think I'd just like to get a couple of things on the record here, or a couple of questions before we do that. One of them would be, I know that he and I have had correspondence with a company called Airmaster and they've had concerns about a contract, request for quotations, RFQ number 15U0012689, just for the record and it's around signs. I'm not even sure of what all the tender was for, but it's stop signs in the province of Manitoba.

I know that there was a delay some years ago. Is it normal that contracts like this go out for five years?

**Mr. Lemieux:** A similar question came, maybe not identical but came from the MLA for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu) talking about signage and so on. I mentioned to her that we do tender out certain signage on a five-year basis. It was the Conservative government of the 1990s that—well, you could debate whether or not that was a good thing or not—but, nevertheless, privatized the sign acquisition. We do tender out for signage about every five years, and on different types of signs as I understand it. The

current contract is with a company, I believe, in Dauphin. It was the lowest tender, and they got it.

The issues of signs are very important, and I wasn't meaning to point out the issues about signage when the MLA for Morris raised it, but you can get various types of signage. I mean, you can get ones that are a hundred dollars, you can get ones that are a thousand dollars, but there are certain specifications, and if people want to get certain signs and meet those specifications, they're certainly entitled to go and buy them. But if Highways is going to be doing them or Transportation is going to be doing them, we do tender out. I've been advised, anyway, by my department officials that about every five years we do that, and, currently, a company out of Dauphin has the contract.

**Mr. Maguire:** Yes, Madam Chair, it's Signal Industries, at Dauphin, I believe, that's had the contract.

I know that this tender had come up a year ago. It seemed to get cancelled without being accepted; the original tender that was re-tendered this spring. I know I wrote the minister a letter some time—I believe it was March—and it was re-tendered. It was not accepted, and tenders weren't announced prior to the election. Shortly after the election, they were. Signal Industries was the successful candidate again.

I know Airmaster had a concern, and a suggestion, I think, too, that perhaps this tender should be divided in some ways so that it would make it easier for other companies to tender, rather than perhaps one company from out of the province—whose ownership is out of the province—getting the tender all the time. Particularly in a fairly large contract where a small portion of it seemed to be under specific signage situations.

One of those, when Airmaster spoke to the department people around the highway department, was that there would be—they were pretty much assured that there'd be no proprietary specifications in the tender, but there were in this particular case, around the circumstances for some of the materials in the signs. They said that this was a material that was in common use. As it turns out, it was not. This material hasn't even been accepted by the—the initials are the ASTM, it's the American Standards Testing Materials, and I have that correct, but it's the ASTM, anyway. They haven't even accepted the specific type of material that the Manitoba government has asked for in this tender. I just wondered why the Manitoba government would put the standard at a

proprietary level like that when nobody else in North America is using it.

Madam Chairperson, just for the record, it's the American Society for Testing and Materials, the ASTM. Thank you.

**Mr. Lemieux:** Well, I know we've been conversing on this particular issue, but you know, as a refresher for myself, I'll have to consult my department to get into the specifics, because I know my critic can appreciate that all the technicalities related to signage and so on, whether or not they have the reflective material, the type of material the signs are made of, all of those kinds of things is something I don't have at my fingertips with regard to signage.

\* (16:50)

So I'd be pleased—as he's pointed out, our government is very open, and we want to make sure that we continue doing that. I'll certainly be able to get back to the MLA. But I just want to reiterate that, again, it was the government of the Filmon years that privatized signage. You know, that can be a whole debate whether you like it or not, or whether the sale of MTS took place. You could debate a lot of issues with regard to privatization and whether or not it truly in the end had been a real benefit for Manitobans. I mean, I think that's the debate.

But, having said that, on the signage, I'll have to get back to the MLA. I know we have limited time, so I just want to make sure that the MLA gets all his questions in.

**Mr. Maguire:** As a suggestion, I would think that it would be probably a saving or it could be a saving. Maybe it should be tried as a saving, whether it's private or public, to tender these particular kinds of contracts on a biannual basis, or not maybe even every year, but a little less than every five years. I don't think you need a five-year contract to make signs. I know you have to gear up, but companies that are in that competitive business would have the materials now to do that at least anyway and the equipment to make them. So I throw that out as a suggestion on how to do that.

I think that this company is prepared to bid again at some point down the road, but they're very frustrated with the fact that they feel that their tender was very competitive, and it was refused because basically they were told that their \$90,000 bond was held for a considerable amount of time and they weren't notified within the 90 days that they weren't accepted. When they were notified that they weren't

accepted, it was because they hadn't handed in a duplicate copy of their package. So, with photocopiers and e-mail buttons today, I thought that would be a—I don't think the minister would accept that as a reasonable excuse as to why a company with a decent tender wouldn't get the job. So if he could make that available and take that into consideration—it's unfortunate that I don't have more time to deal with that area.

But I wonder if he could just comment on that.

**Mr. Lemieux:** Well, let me be to the point. It doesn't sound right. I mean, this just doesn't sound right. We have people within the procurement area that are professionals at what they do. But I'll endeavour to ensure that I get back to my critic on this particular issue.

**Mr. Maguire:** With that, Madam Chair, I'm prepared to go through the line by line or section by section. In fact, if you want to pass the Estimates book, and then we'll just go straight to the Minister's Salary.

**Madam Chairperson (Ms. Brick):** Resolution 15.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$73,483,200 for Infrastructure and Transportation, Highways and Transportation Programs, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2008.

***Resolution agreed to.***

Resolution 15.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$43,468,700 for Infrastructure and Transportation, Government Services Programs, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2008.

***Resolution agreed to.***

Resolution 15.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$168,170,100 for Infrastructure and Transportation, Infrastructure Works, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2008.

***Resolution agreed to.***

Resolution 15.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$10,878,500 for Infrastructure and Transportation, Manitoba Water Services Board, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2008.

***Resolution agreed to.***

Resolution 15.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,618,300 for Infrastructure and Transportation, Canada-Manitoba

Agreements, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2008.

***Resolution agreed to.***

Resolution 15.7: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$183,390,300 for Infrastructure and Transportation, Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2008.

***Resolution agreed to.***

**Madam Chairperson:** The last item to be considered for Estimates of this department is item 15.1(a) Minister's Salary contained in Resolution 15.1.

At this point, we request that the minister's staff leave the table for consideration of this last item. The floor is open for questions.

**Mr. Maguire:** Madam Chair, I just wanted to put on the record that I, as the opposition critic for this area, want to thank the department, the staff that was here throughout the Estimates process and for them to pass on to the rest of the department people that are not with us here in the building our thanks as Manitobans, for the efforts that they do throughout the year and all of the thousands that the minister has indicated that are in his department, of staff people throughout the province as well. I would ask that they extend our thanks to the rest of the staff in all of the departments, through Deputy Minister Horosko and others as well. So thank you very much for your efforts and time on that.

With that, Madam Chair, we are prepared to—even though there are hours and hours of more questions, just like there are miles and miles of more roads in the province of Manitoba to deal with that we could ask questions of the minister, I appreciate his response. I appreciate the answers that he is going to get back to me in written form. We'll continue to discuss a number of these issues as we move forward.

So, with that, I'm prepared to pass the Minister's Salary.

**Madam Chairperson:** Resolution 15.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$10,381,000 for Infrastructure and Transportation, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2008.

***Resolution agreed to.***

**Madam Chairperson:** This completes the Estimates of the Department of Infrastructure and Transportation. On behalf of the Clerk and myself, I would like to thank the critic and the minister for a very congenial first committee.

The next set of Estimates to be considered by this section of the Committee of Supply is for the Department of Justice.

Shall we briefly recess to allow the minister and critics the opportunity to prepare for the commencement of the next department? *[Agreed]*

*The committee recessed at 4:58 p.m.*

*The committee resumed at 5 p.m.*

### JUSTICE

**Madam Chairperson (Marilyn Brick):** Would the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will now consider the Estimates for the Department of Justice.

Does the honourable minister have opening statement?

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

No, actually, the department has prepared a very good opening statement but, in interests of time, I'm going to waive that opportunity.

I want to thank the department for taking the time and energy and I want to thank the critic for allowing us to plan this to the extent we have to best utilize the valuable time of all the employees here.

**Madam Chairperson:** We thank the minister.

Does the official opposition critic have an opening comment?

**Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet):** Just a brief one.

I welcome the staff here as well from the Department of Justice and thank them for their dedication to their department over the past year. I look forward to hearing some of the responses back from the minister to my questions and look forward to the Estimates.

**Madam Chairperson:** We thank the critic from the official opposition for those remarks.

Under Manitoba practice, debate on the Minister's Salary is the last item considered for a department in the Committee of Supply. Accordingly, we shall now defer consideration of Item 4.1(a) and proceed with consideration of the remaining items referenced in Resolution 4.1.

At this time, we invite the minister's staff to join us at the table and we ask that the minister introduce the staff in attendance.

**Mr. Chomiak:** I'll introduce the Deputy, Ron Perozzo, who is going to introduce all of the staff that are with us this afternoon.

**Mr. Ron Perozzo (Deputy Minister of Justice):** With us this afternoon is Pat Sinnott, the Executive Director of Administration; David Greening, the Executive Director of Policy Development and Analysis; Mike Horn, Executive Director of—I'm sorry, Assistant Deputy Minister of Policing; Don Slough, Assistant Deputy Minister of Prosecutions; Aurel Tess, is the comptroller for Corrections. Greg Graceffo, the ADM of Corrections, is at a ceremony honouring corrections officers at the Lieutenant-Governor's residence; he will come over as soon as he can; and Debbie Baker, the Executive Director of Winnipeg Courts.

We also have—perhaps Ann should come up—Ann Leibfried, the Acting Executive Director of Court Services.

**Madam Chairperson:** Thank you.

Does the committee wish to proceed through the Estimates of this department chronologically or have a global discussion?

**Mr. Hawranik:** Given the past tradition and the short period of time we have for the next hour-and-a-half, I'd prefer to ask questions on a global nature.

**Madam Chairperson:** Is it agreed that questioning for this department will follow a global manner with Resolutions to be passed once the questioning has been completed? *[Agreed]*

The floor is now open for questions.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Could the minister provide me with an update in terms of the prison populations in our provincial prisons, including the Remand Centre?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Madam Chairperson, 1,833, including youth; adult is 1,603.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Can the minister indicate as of what date those numbers were taken?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Today.

**Mr. Hawranik:** And I don't expect necessarily the minister to provide me with an immediate answer, but if he could undertake to provide me with an answer to the next question and that is the—would he be able to provide me with the numbers year over year, effective, say, the same date in the year, say, July 1 or August 1 since the year 2000?

**Mr. Chomiak:** We'll endeavour to get the member the stats going back on a set date, rough equivalent for about the last 10 years or so.

**Mr. Hawranik:** I look forward to that information and thank him for that. Can he indicate how many prisoners in provincial jails there are that are incarcerated because they are in remand?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Madam Chairperson, as we indicated in the pre-briefing prior to the trip to Ottawa that took place last week, we guesstimate somewhere in the vicinity of 70 percent of the population both youth and adult are in remand status.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Can the minister indicate whether or not that percentage of those in remand has changed over the years or, say for instance, since 1999 or 2000 and how they've changed over the years, year by year?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Madam Chairperson, I would say in general it's been varying since '95, but the numbers have increased as of late, primarily I think due to the fact that, quite frankly, one of the major criteria, an issue that was raised on the recent trip to Ottawa was the concern raised by both Manitoba and unanimously by all of the provincial and territorial ministers meeting in October last year in Newfoundland that the remand credits of two for one that have been established and utilized have resulted in a significant portion of the prison population utilizing the two for one status for a variety of reasons, which I'm sure the member is familiar with.

The ministers asked for changes to the Criminal Code so as to maximize the number of days that could be utilized from remand to individuals from a level of 1.5 to 1, or 1 to 1, which were the criteria that were basically used, and that is the position that's taken by Manitoba in this regard. The member may be aware that, recently, in a decision in Alberta, a provincial court judge provided a remission of 3 to 1 credit to an individual in Alberta. There had been situations in the past where judges in Ontario had given as much as 4 to 1 credit with respect to remand to time served. Clearly, there is a trend towards

remand for a variety of reasons which, as I said, the member is aware. The question that many individuals do not want to go over the two years less a day provincial sentencing, the fact that disclosure issues are often utilized in order to maximize time in remand, the fact that individuals know that the system works on that basis, et cetera, so there is unanimous agreement across the country to urge the federal government to change the procedures, which, we think in the case of Manitoba, would result in a drop of remand to general population.

\* (17:10)

**Mr. Hawranik:** Has the department conducted any analysis or study on what the department might expect for prison populations in Manitoba prisons, say over the next five or 10 years, to determine whether or not we have enough spaces in Manitoba?

**Mr. Chomiak:** There have been reviews done by the Department of Justice. At this point, there are some specific calculations that have made depending upon the effect of changes to the Criminal Code that are both under review, and some had been passed. There have been varying analyses that has been given to the department with respect to the population in prison, both in the youth and the adult sector, as a result of some changes that have been put in place by the federal government, or in the process of being put in place.

To that very point, in fact, on the last occasion when we had opportunity to raise these matters with the Minister of Public Safety, he indicated that—it was either the Minister of Public Safety or the Minister of Justice who indicated that resources would be provided because of the increased population demands as a result of legislative changes to the Criminal Code and the Youth Criminal Justice Act. Suffice to say that I can't give the member a definitive number because there is a range of numbers that we have seen depending upon which aspect of the Criminal Code is amended and to the extent to which it's amended. For example, the provisions on conditional sentencing, had they gone through as initially anticipated, would have resulted in a more significant increase in population versus the increase in population due to the amended form of the conditional sentencing that is going through Parliament at this point.

**Mr. Hawranik:** The commitment that you indicate made by the federal ministers in term of support of the Province because of changes, perhaps, to the Criminal Code that would affect our populations,



was that commitment made in terms of a capital expenditure, an operating expenditure, or just capital, or just operating, or were there any specifics you could provide me with?

**Mr. Chomiak:** No, I can't provide specifics. The tenor and the flow with which it was made was that during the course of discussions concerning the increased penalties and the increased punitive measures that would be taken under the Criminal Code, concern was expressed by all jurisdictions with respect to the impact on sentence populations, and the minister and ministers assured us that, in fact, they would take that into consideration.

The typical response in the fed-prov world is that the Province will end up with a disproportionate amount of cost associated with those increased sentences. But I have to say that discussions have been courteous and, I think, helpful with the federal government. We're hopeful that the increased rate of incarceration that will occur as a result of the changes to the Criminal Code will at least be proportionately met by the federal government. A lot depends on the course of legislation that goes through and the effect and impact that has, but I remain hopeful.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Given the analysis and study that your department has completed, as you indicate, of course, some of it will depend on Criminal Code amendments that are going to be brought forward by the federal government, but excluding those Criminal Code amendments, is there a general trend in the province which would show, in any event, an increase in prison populations?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Yes. I think that both Saskatchewan and Manitoba have the dubious distinction of having the highest rates of incarceration in the country, and going up.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Given the analysis and study that was done by your department, is it possible to obtain a copy of the results of that study?

**Mr. Chomiak:** The only reason I was cautionary in terms of giving you the range is that the information I saw showed a range. I will endeavour to provide the member with some reasonable guesstimates as to the population projections that we have in the system.

**Mr. Hawranik:** In terms of the study, of course, populations will depend on Criminal Code amendments, as you indicated before. Excluding those Criminal Code amendments, is there a

necessity, say, for the next 5 to 10 years, to increase the number of beds in our facilities? If so, how much, approximately?

**Mr. Chomiak:** "Study" is too strong a word to put on it. There's been reviews of populations, obviously, in order to anticipate. The member announced the expansion at Milner Ridge that is presently ongoing. Obviously, there's been an announcement of the development of a new women's correctional centre, and there's been some enhancements to existing youth facilities in various locations in order to accommodate populations. At this point, the major capital projects that have been undertaken that I'm aware of are the Milner Ridge expansion, the women's correctional facility and additional cells added in some of the locations outside of Winnipeg.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Getting to the Milner Ridge expansion, I've seen a news release by the government indicating that Milner Ridge is going to expand by 150 beds. From what I understand, isn't it a fact that the first phase will be only 75?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Yes, that's correct. It's also being viewed, and I stand to be corrected, that there is capacity for future expansion. Phase 1 will consist of 75 cells. There's also capacity; it's being structured in such a way in case there is need for increased capacity. That that could occur as well.

**Mr. Hawranik:** The first phase is 75, as I understand; the second phase likely will be 75 again because of the structure of the building, as I'm told. But can you anticipate when, or do you have any idea approximately when that second phase might occur?

**Mr. Chomiak:** I think the initial expansion is slated for the fall of '08. It is a moving target, and it's an ongoing discussion with respect to the advancement of phase 2 and the enhancements associated with that.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Can the minister advise whether any of the funds that are going to be expended for phase 1 or phase 2 will be coming from the federal government?

**Mr. Chomiak:** I don't believe so.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Is there any operating funds that may come from the federal government, as opposed to the Province?

**Mr. Chomiak:** No.

\* (17:20)

**Mr. Hawranik:** In 2003, the then-Minister of Justice, put forward new legislation regarding cross-border policing that would be put into effect. Can the Minister of Justice indicate if there's been any application under that legislation to date?

**Mr. Chomiak:** We don't have the specific numbers today. We can provide some specific numbers to the member. It has been utilized, and from what I gather from discussions with colleagues across the country, it's been quite successful.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Just for clarification, if I could get the number of applications under that particular piece of legislation, and the number of times it also has been approved since the enactment of the act. If I could have both of those as well.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Yes. I think we can endeavour to provide both those pieces of information for the member.

**Mr. Hawranik:** I thank the minister for that.

In 2003 also, the Minister of Justice introduced, and legislation was passed, regarding The Criminal Property Forfeiture Act to allow the seizure of property that was obtained through the proceeds of crime. I wonder if the minister can provide me with the amount of property, the value of the property, that has been seized under the act since the legislation was passed.

**Mr. Chomiak:** I think I've already stated publicly that we intend to amend that act in order to utilize it more effectively. The member may know that we've signed a participation or a co-operation agreement with Québec, Ontario, now Alberta and Saskatchewan. Most recently, B.C. is now coming on board with respect to sharing of best practices.

In starts and fits, the Ontario act has sort of had some difficulty. Québec has been more successful. We have not had occasion to use the act. We're going to amend it in order to make it functional so that it could work effectively in Manitoba, the major difficulty being that it's been difficult to have police services function under the auspices of the act and carry out their criminal investigations. So we are going to be looking at amendments to provide a different process in order to have the proceeds followed up on and relieve some of the burden from the police. We've had some difficulty doing follow-up in regard to proceeds.

**Mr. Hawranik:** I thank the minister for the answer.

In 2002, the Legislature also passed The Civil Remedies Against Organized Crime Act. Can the minister indicate whether there have been any applications under that act? I'm aware of a number of possible applications regarding withholding liquor licences. That's one of the provisions in that particular legislation. I believe that's been utilized, but I'm wondering whether or not there have been any other applications under that particular piece of legislation.

**Mr. Chomiak:** I'm not aware of applications, largely based on the same rationale indicated with respect to the previous act. I should indicate to the member that we went through a process of reviewing all of our processes and procedures with respect to criminal organized activity. There are 15 recommendations we've made to the federal government as well as a number of internal recommendations flowing out of the review of criminal organizations. Some of that legislation, some of those changes, will be coming before the Chamber this session, and several of the endeavours are on the agenda of the FPT meeting that will occur in November. We hope to move forward on several of those initiatives in the near future. But, with respect to the civil portion, I'm not aware of any applications under that process.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Just for clarification, the minister indicated that there will be some legislative changes before the Throne Speech, November 20, this year.

**Mr. Chomiak:** No, I anticipate changes that'll come forward post-Throne Speech.

**Mr. Hawranik:** There's a program called the Victim Companion program, I understand, in Justice. I wonder if the minister could give me some information in terms of the number of victims who've been assisted through that program.

**Mr. Chomiak:** There have been thousands of victims that have been assisted under our Victim Services program. The companion program is drawing a blank with me right now. The member is referencing *Hansard*, I believe, in asking this question. I'll have the officials check the specifics of the companion program.

**Mr. Hawranik:** I thank the minister for that. In 2005, The Criminal Notoriety Act was passed in the Legislature. Can the minister indicate if there's any applications under that legislation to date?

**Mr. Chomiak:** I have to apologize to the member. I missed the question, but having said that, while the thought is still in my mind, I should advise the

member the companion program is run by an NGO for which grant funding is provided. Some grant funding is provided from the Department of Justice.

Now, I'm sorry, the member asked—

**Mr. Hawranik:** Yes, I was asking with respect to The Criminal Notoriety Act that was introduced and passed in 2005 in the Legislature. I wonder if the minister can provide me with information as to whether any application—how many applications were brought under that legislation as of today.

**Mr. Chomiak:** There's been no applications, but there's a pre-condition on the application of that act, most notably that an individual who would want to profit from proceeds of crime, and we haven't had that type of situation come before us yet.

I should just quickly indicate to the member that with respect to some of the organized crime initiatives, in some cases the legislation is in its infancy in Canada which is why Bruce MacFarlane did the most extensive study probably done in the country with respect to organized crime and looked at best practices, consequently submitted a number of recommendations to the department that we are actually working on which will result in subsequent legislation and amended legislation.

For example, one of the fundamental issues that I think has to be addressed is the scheduling issue with respect to organized crime. It's been in the Criminal Code for some time and rarely been successful, in fact. I think it's rarely been successful as it stands in the Criminal Code now. We have asked for changes to the Criminal Code and there has been consideration given to whether or not one can do a similar type of activity under provincial jurisdiction and that's open to constitutional review as well.

So some of the measures that have been introduced have not been successful at this point, but that is not to say that they will not be successful in the future in an altered state or in a different environment as we learn through the process what will stand constitutional and criminal proceedings, procedures, what will and what won't.

**Mr. Hawranik:** I thank the minister for that answer. In 2001, The Fortified Buildings Act was passed in the Legislature. Can the minister indicate how many times that piece of legislation has been used, particularly relating to bunkers or anything else, or other fortified buildings in the province?

\* (17:30)

**Mr. Chomiak:** I understand 20 times.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Regarding the collection of outstanding fines and restitution orders in the courts in 2001, there was an initiative put out stating that there were new proposals to assist the government in collecting fines. Can the minister indicate, with particular reference to court-ordered fines in Manitoba, what are the outstanding fines at this point that need to be collected.

**Mr. Chomiak:** In total, since 2001, over \$42 million in outstanding fines have been collected through enforcement actions as a result of changes that have been made, including the changes in January '05 with respect to holds on renewals of driver's licence, et cetera. To August 31st of this year, \$4.9 million has been collected as a result of that process. Prior to the establishment of the fine collection unit in 2000, very little had been collected in outstanding fines, but since its inception, as I indicated earlier, \$42 million has been collected.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Presumably some of the outstanding fines would be written off on an annual basis. Can you indicate to me since 2001, each year, how much of those fines were written off in each year?

**Mr. Chomiak:** We don't have a definitive figure on that because often, when the court order is made, it is not closed until it is dealt with in full, and on many occasions it's dealt with as a result of the Fine Option program.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Do you have the number in terms of how much is still owing at any particular time?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Since the fine collection agency has been put in place, the total numbers I have provided have been the total outstanding fines collected. I don't have in front of me or see specific reference to outstanding fines that still haven't been collected, because of the nature of whether if it's the common notice or traffic notice, et cetera. So I don't have that data in front of me, and I don't know if I'm in a position to provide that to the member.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Are records kept? In other words is the data even available?

**Mr. Chomiak:** No, there is not a number that one could attach to it at this point because of the ongoing nature of the various kinds of fines that are collected and the nature of the fines that are collected.

For example, part of the new process is of putting holds on driver's licences, et cetera. The question would be is if the driver's licence is renewed, presumably the fine is paid. If the driver's licence is not able to be renewed and the fine isn't paid, it remains outstanding and essentially is a liability, but we don't have that specific data.

**Mr. Hawranik:** On occasion, the convicted sex offender, of course, is released from prison. They would have either served their term or would have served their term and go back into the community. Sometimes they go back into our rural areas of Manitoba, sometimes they stay in Winnipeg.

Can the minister walk me through the process by which residents are notified about sex offenders who are moving or taking up residence in any particular area?

*Mr. Daryl Reid, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair*

**Mr. Chomiak:** There is a process whereby the police services and the local authorities are advised, as well as information is put on the Web site with respect to sexual offenders that are released. That information is provided to the public in general and is followed by the specific authorities following a period of—

There are actually two registries: A current offender file and a second file that deals, after a period of time, the second file, which is the offender moves from the current file to the dated file, but that information is provided on a timely basis upon release to the authorities and put up on the Web site.

**Mr. Hawranik:** In Manitoba, we have an AMBER Alert program. I'm wondering if the minister can provide me with information as to how many AMBER Alerts have been issued since the enactment of that particular program.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Fortunately, there have not been any AMBER Alerts utilized in Manitoba. We are in the process of attempting to have a protocol established across Canada with respect to all AMBER Alerts. We've also signed a protocol, as I understand, with Minnesota and North Dakota with respect to their AMBER Alerts. But I think we've been very fortunate that we haven't had occasion to utilize AMBER Alerts in this jurisdiction.

**Mr. Hawranik:** In the past, there've been reviews regarding Crown attorney workloads in the province. Can the minister provide me with any update regarding the workload, in particular, for Crown

attorneys within his department? I'm not sure how they're measured. Whether it's measured by way of the number of files or caseload that they have or whether it's measured through the time that they spend overall. If he could give me a general indication about the current workloads within his department, how it's measured, and where it is to date.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Essentially, there are various levels of Crown attorneys in the province that have a variety of caseloads with respect to the numbers. The member may be familiar, during the course of negotiations with Manitoba Association of Crown Attorneys, some numbers were made public with respect to caseloads.

The two points that I want to point out are that we've adopted a case management system which has resulted in what had formerly been files that were, essentially, not being accounted for, being accounted within the number of cases held by Crown attorneys, so that they're assigned on that basis.

The other issue is that because of the circuit court nature of the system in Manitoba, disproportionate amount of cases, unfortunately, are assigned to Crown attorneys who are on the circuit caseload. So that results in a disproportionate amount of cases on some Crown attorneys. Suffice to say that despite the fact that we've increased by almost 40 percent, 38 percent, I think, the Crown attorneys in the province since we've come to office, the number of cases going through has gone up somewhat. The complexity of the cases has impinged dramatically on the workload of Crown attorneys, particularly the issues with respect to disclosure that have evolved quite significantly in the last few years.

I will get either the current numbers that were provided during the MACA negotiations or anything updated with respect to caseload numbers, although I have to caution the member that caseload numbers, as the member would know from his own practice, cannot specifically be determinative of the workload because senior Crown attorneys will have a fewer number of more complex cases, junior attorneys will have more cases. But the good news is that the overall process has assigned all cases to a—not 100 percent as the project moves forward, but for the most part, assigned all cases to specific Crown attorneys in order to deal with the issue of not losing intensity in a case and also familiarity with a case by specific Crown attorneys.

\* (17:40)

**Mr. Hawranik:** I believe the circuits system as you described it in Manitoba is likely, I don't believe, any different than it would be in Saskatchewan.

So I wonder if the minister could indicate—give me a comparable, perhaps, from Saskatchewan in terms of the number of cases each prosecutor would have in Manitoba as compared to Saskatchewan. Is that possible to provide to me?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Just two points, and this isn't a point of contention.

Saskatchewan is significantly different in terms of geographic dispersal of population than Manitoba. Saskatchewan has Saskatoon, Regina, North Battleford, Prince Albert and other centres and then La Ronge, and a few Lac Brochet, and a few locations. Manitoba has a number of central, 14 court points that then branch out to a whole number of circuits, if I remember correctly. The point I'm making is, structurally, Manitoba—

**An Honourable Member:** I see five regional centres.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Acting Chairperson, five regional centres and 15 circuits. But, structurally, at least from my experience, Saskatchewan and Manitoba are somewhat different in that regard. We don't have those comparisons of the caseload. I should add that, as part of the collective bargaining process with MACA, we agreed on a joint-council working body that would deal with issues of caseload, issues that were brought to my attention and which we review and which we are trying to work with, collaboratively with Crown attorneys in order to deal with the issue of caseloads.

*Madam Chairperson in the Chair*

**Mr. Hawranik:** The Turnabout program, that's a program dealing with children under 12 years of age and assisting children under 12 years of age. Can the minister provide me with information as to the intake volume of that Turnabout program over the last, say, 12 months?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Since its inception, I believe it's approximately 1,000 cases have gone through the Turnabout program. If memory serves me correctly, it's 150 to 200 roughly per year, that's what I recall from my late night reading.

**Mr. Hawranik:** I thank the minister for that information.

In terms of the young offender mentorship program, can the minister indicate how many mentors are currently operating within that program?

**Mr. Chomiak:** We have the Spotlight program. We also have the Intensive Case Management program. Spotlight utilizes mentors. I'm not certain if the Intensive Case Management utilizes mentors as well. We could try to answer the specifics when the ADM in that particular area arrives, if that's okay with the member.

**Mr. Hawranik:** I don't know, maybe we'd have to wait until the specific staff person comes back for this one, as well, but I just wanted to—perhaps the minister will be able to answer it anyway, just if he could provide the information, as well, as to how those mentors are obtained for the program, and what criteria are used.

**Mr. Chomiak:** I'm somewhat familiar with it, but I think we'll let the ADM, when he arrives, speak to that issue because he speaks very passionately on that issue in any regard.

With respect to the previous answer, there are six major court centres in Manitoba, with 56 current court locations.

**Mr. Hawranik:** In 2004, amendments were made to The Highway Traffic Act, which allowed vehicles to be impounded for 48 hours for the act of street racing. Can the minister indicate how often that legislation has been used since the legislation was enacted?

**Mr. Chomiak:** I don't think we have that data, but it does raise a point that the federal Criminal Code act has been amended with respect to street racing. That will be another amendment that we will have to bring forward to make our particular act jibe specifically with the federal act.

**Mr. Hawranik:** The minister may not have the numbers today, but if those numbers are available, can he undertake to provide them to me?

**Mr. Chomiak:** If we had them, we would provide them to the member. It's just that the process is outside of the regular court process. We don't have those specific numbers to provide. But I'll do a double-check to see if we have a ballpark on that. I think we might have said at one time some numbers, but I'll check. We don't keep it as a matter of course.

**Mr. Hawranik:** I thank the minister for that undertaking. If he could provide it, I'd certainly appreciate that information.

In 2002, forfeiture legislation was passed to seize and sell vehicles driven by impaired drivers. Can you indicate, under this legislation, how many vehicles—cars, trucks, snowmobiles, ATVs, dirt bikes, or whatever the definition of vehicle is under that particular piece of legislation—have been forfeited?

**Mr. Chomiak:** We don't have the specific numbers here today. We'll undertake to provide what's available.

**Mr. Hawranik:** I thank the minister for that response. We're getting a lot of information later, I suppose, but that's better late than never. I appreciate the fact that the minister will provide that information to me.

Does the minister keep any statistics on the number of active gang members in the province of Manitoba?

**Mr. Chomiak:** There is a general Canadian assessment public document that's made public every year with respect to gang members. The difficulty of pinning down a specific number is that it depends upon what's one definition. There is a definition of gang. Basically, it is several individuals involved in illicit activity. Having said that, for the most part, gang affiliation in Manitoba is loosely associated with street gangs that come and go and change as times go on, and vary as time goes on. So there was a yearly report done, which is a public document, an assessment done by the "CRIPCJKLM"—whatever the acronym is, it's provided publicly—that assesses, on a yearly basis, gang activity across the country.

The overall number for Manitoba is in the area—again, it's depending upon one's definition of gang. It's in the thousands. I'll endeavour to get the document. I think I carry it with me to make the point to members of the public how often we fail to acknowledge the impact and the extent of organized crime. I carry the public document with me in order to provide those statistics. I wish I could find it right now in order to provide it to the member. But I will provide the general public document. Now, having said that, it's a varying number and a varying target because of the loose association of street gangs and the nature. It's the Criminal Intelligence Service Manitoba. In 2006, roughly 30 gangs in Manitoba with several thousand in Winnipeg and several thousand outside of Winnipeg. That number varies, but that's the general number that was provided in the national document, Manitoba portion.

\* (17:50)

**Mr. Hawranik:** Could the minister indicate whether those stats are available on a year-to-year basis and when, for instance, if I wanted to search that document, that 2006 document that he has, was that information consistent for the year 2005 and probably onwards since, say, the '90s? Or was that something more recent that's been published?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Madam Chairperson, a couple things: First off, the actual surveillance and actual accounting of gang activity has only occurred in the last several years as a result of the fashion in which policing is now organized and the emphasis on dealing with organized crime. So I've seen reports for the last two or three years, if memory serves me correctly, before which—but there weren't specific public reports made in that regard. We have combined resources with both the local RCMP and the national RCMP to work on compiling that kind of information, both for the general public and obviously for internal use.

**Mr. Hawranik:** I would like the minister to provide me, and of course he doesn't have to do it today, but certainly at some later point, the names of staff that have been hired in 2007, 2008 within his office, unless he knows that at this point, and whether or not the ones that were hired for this particular year 2007, 2008, whether they were hired through a competition or whether they were hired through just an appointment process.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Madam Chairperson, I don't think that there've been any hirings since I've assumed office that were other than civil service hirings. In other words, I inherited the staff and staff years that the previous minister had, and the only positions that have changed have been some administrative secretarial positions in my office. For example, my secretary that was with me in my previous portfolio moved with me to my office and the previous minister, his secretary moved with him to his office, but there haven't been any additional hirings of any non-civil service staff in my office.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Can the minister indicate how many non-civil service staff he does have within his office?

**Mr. Chomiak:** I have a special assistant who was my special assistant and my predecessor's since '99; I have an executive assistant who has been my executive assistant since '99, and there also is a policy analyst that's in place with respect to House duties that the member knows well.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Would the minister indicate who the special assistant is, and the executive assistant?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Madam Chairperson, Janis Bermel is the special assistant and Evelyn Livingston is the executive assistant.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Has any position within the minister's office been reclassified or job description changed since he's been Minister of Justice?

**Mr. Chomiak:** No.

**Mr. Hawranik:** With respect to all civil service positions within his department, I assume that the minister is indicating that any changes to civil service positions within his department were filled through a competition as opposed to an appointment.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Yes, the affirmative, Madam Chairperson.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Are there any vacant positions currently within the minister's office?

**Mr. Chomiak:** None that I'm aware of.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Of course, 2007-2008 is only about a little over half through, but have any positions been relocated within the department from rural areas outside of Winnipeg into Winnipeg itself?

**Mr. Chomiak:** To the general question, no. There hasn't been any staff movement other than normal movements associated with retirements, et cetera, but there haven't been any relocations or matters of that kind.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Have there been any positions relocated say within different centres in rural Manitoba, say for instance, from Neepawa to Beausejour or other communities in and around rural Manitoba? Has there been some shifting of positions, and if there has been, could you provide me with details of that?

**Mr. Chomiak:** The only positions that we know of that have moved have been actually positions that have moved from Winnipeg, Crown prosecutors' positions or Crown and/or related court positions serving Winnipeg and north and rural areas. So there hasn't been any movement centrally. The movement that has taken place, to the best of our knowledge, has been to provide additional resources outside of Winnipeg.

**Mr. Hawranik:** In terms of ministerial travel, can the—I'm not even sure how long the current minister

has been the Minister of Justice. Perhaps he could fill me in as to when he became appointed as minister.

**Mr. Chomiak:** It was a year ago last week.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Since he's been minister, can he tell me—he may want to get back to me on that as well, but can he tell me how many out-of-province trips he's had, and the purpose for them and generally when he took them?

**Mr. Chomiak:** That information will be forthcoming.

**Mr. Hawranik:** I thank the minister for that.

In addition, when he made out-of-province trips, I'd like him to detail who went with him on those trips. Who paid for the trips is another issue that I would like him to deal with. In particular, as well, when the *[interjection]* Yes.

\* (18:00)

**An Honourable Member:** Have you paid for any trips for Executive Council?

**Mr. Hawranik:** Yes.

**Madam Chairperson:** I just have to bring you back so we can—honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet.

**Mr. Hawranik:** I think I lost my train of thought after that, but also, when the Premier (Mr. Doer), for instance, has travelled with the Justice Minister, who's paid for those travel costs, whether it came out of the Premier's budget or whether it came out of the Justice Department, and so on, and whether any executive assistants travelled along, and who they were?

**Mr. Chomiak:** There has been no travel from either special assistants or executive assistants since I've been in the portfolio.

The only occasion in which I had the pleasure of travelling with the Premier within the last year occurred last week to Ottawa. The delegation to Ottawa, as I recall, is the only occasion with which I, since I've been Justice Minister, have crossed paths with the Premier outside of the boundaries of Manitoba.

**Mr. Hawranik:** With respect—change of topic—with respect to red-light cameras and the photo radar system that we have here in Manitoba, can the minister provide me with, for instance, in the fiscal year 2006-2007, how much money was raised in court costs related to those tickets during that period of time? You may not have the information

immediately available, but certainly I would appreciate receiving it at a later point, if he can.

**Mr. Chomiak:** We will provide that information to the member; we'll provide it to the member shortly.

I note that the ADM from Corrections is here. Did the member want to discuss some of the specific issues that he raised about mentors in the youth program and other related matters?

The ADM is Greg Graceffo and he's just fresh from the awards ceremony at the Lieutenant-Governor's residence that we all were supposed to attend, but matters of the House come first.

**Mr. Hawranik:** I am glad to hear that the minister's priorities are right.

Just a couple of questions to the deputy minister. Turning to the young offender mentorship program, can the minister indicate how many mentors are currently operating within that program?

**Mr. Chomiak:** There are four mentors in the Spotlight Program that have been hired through the regular hiring process. There are a number of mentor volunteers involved in some of the NGO programs, Choices, et cetera, that the department operates.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Can the minister outline the process as to how, particularly the volunteers, how the mentors are obtained, and what checks are done on those volunteers prior to accepting them into the mentorship program?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Certainly, with respect to mentoring in programs outside of the direct Spotlight Program, the NGOs, our recipient organizations, have the usual criminal checks, child registry checks, et cetera, and there are instances—but, to the extent that we can control that, we do the usual checks that are available.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Getting back to the red-light cameras and photo radar question, the minister indicated that he would provide me with information, in particular with respect to the 2006-2007 fiscal year, as to how much money was raised in court costs related to those tickets. Could he also undertake to provide me with information as to where the money is going and where it's being spent, whether it's going to general revenue or whether it's going for a specific purpose?

**Mr. Chomiak:** All costs go to the general revenue and the fine surcharge goes to the victims' trust. The specific information we will provide to the member.

**Mr. Hawranik:** I understand, with respect to revenue coming into the Province from red-light cameras and photo-radar tickets, what comes to the Province would be court costs first of all, I understand. There would be a Justice surcharge beyond that, I understand, and also a Victim Service surcharge. I think those are the three items that are applied by the Province I'd like to have the minister undertake as well. Of course, he may not be able to answer today, but for 2006-2007, how much money was raised in Justice surcharges related to those tickets, and where that specific money that's raised, that Justice surcharge, whether that's earmarked for a specific purpose or whether that's going into general revenue as well.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Yes, we will provide that information to the member.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Thank you very much for that. Again, similar with Victim Service surcharges related to those tickets, how much is raised in '06-07, and where the money is going with respect to that as well, unless he can provide information today on that.

**Mr. Chomiak:** So, just for clarification, the three forms of revenue that are provided, the member wants to know the numbers and the purpose to which those funds have been allocated.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Yes, that's correct, and I appreciate that information.

I understand in '06-07, and the minister may not have that information, but from what I understand, the City of Winnipeg netted in red-light camera and photo-radar revenue just over \$11 million in fines related to those tickets. I recall when we passed that particular piece of legislation. In fact, it might have been in 2002-2003, somewhere in that neighbourhood, but I had just gotten elected just shortly before that, it came before the Legislature. I remember the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Faurchou) proposed the amendment with regard to ensuring that fine revenue would in fact go to the crime prevention activities and enforcement in a particular municipality—in this case, the City of Winnipeg—as opposed to going into general revenues. That amendment was accepted in committee, and it went forward into the legislation in third reading, I believe.

The City of Winnipeg, as I understand, netted \$11 million in fine revenues. It's provincial legislation requiring those particular funds to go to



crime prevention activities and enforcement. Does the minister track whether or not the City of Winnipeg in fact uses those funds for crime prevention activities and enforcement and, if they do, is it on an annual basis, and how is that tracked?

**Mr. Chomiak:** From my discussions with the City of Winnipeg, I think they would argue that, in fact, they use that money plus other revenue with respect to crime prevention.

**Mr. Hawranik:** So there's no specific tracking mechanism that you have to determine whether or not the City of Winnipeg, in fact, does use it? Or does the City of Winnipeg, for instance, give you an annual report saying they do use it for that? Are you checking? I guess that's the question. Do they give you an annual report? I know it's part of the legislation, and certainly provincial legislation, and it's something I believe that should be important enough to track to ensure the City of Winnipeg does use it for that purpose. I'm just concerned whether, in fact, the City is using it and whether or not the Province is tracking that?

\* (18:10)

**Mr. Chomiak:** With respect to our monitoring the distribution of the revenue that's derived from those particular fines and their utilization in prevention or remedial activities by the City of Winnipeg, I can't say that we have a specific line tracking of that particular item, but I can indicate that the City of Winnipeg would indicate that, in fact, they spend beyond the number the member has indicated in terms of crime prevention and related activities. I know that for a fact because I've seen numbers provided by the City with respect to the amount of money that they spend on those activities.

The salient issue is whether or not one considers recreation activities and expenditures, et cetera, as part of crime prevention, et cetera. I think most of us would probably agree that in whole or in part those kinds of expenditures are in fact crime prevention. But you do get to a difficult line if one were to attribute specific numbers to specific activities that suggest that those are crime prevention. How far do we go with respect to whether or not the after-school program or activities are crime prevention or not crime prevention?

I'm not trying to be difficult. It's just that I think the specific tracking of those numbers—it would be difficult to directly account for it, attribute in the fashion that the member is indicating following the

legislation. I remember that particular committee meeting as well.

**Mr. Hawranik:** My next question relates to the review of the East St. Paul police force, I believe, that the minister has undertaken. We have suggested at the time that The Provincial Police Act needs to be modernized. In fact, The Provincial Police Act, I don't believe, has really changed for decades.

Can I get any indication from the minister as to whether or not he's prepared to review the provisions of The Provincial Police Act in relation to ensuring that there is a uniform and appropriate training for all levels of law enforcement and security personnel in the province? Will he be reviewing The Provincial Police Act, or is it not on the radar screen for the minister?

**Mr. Chomiak:** We've stated our intention to renew the police act, and there has been internal activity as well as discussions with various people throughout the system with respect to a renewal of the police act. The time frame, I can't give the member a specific time frame at this point, other than to suggest it's fairly ominous on the radar insofar as it's clear that other jurisdictions have reviewed their police act, and it is timely that Manitoba renews its police act which I think dates back to the 1930s.

Yes, it's going to happen. Yes, it will occur. There will be announcements and activity taking place in the very near future.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Has any decision been made in terms of the process by which the review is going to take place, what kinds of groups and individuals you will be consulting, or whether it will be a totally public process going around the province to talk directly to the public, or whether he's just going to be consulting within his own department and within the ranks of the RCMP and within the City of Winnipeg? Is there a specific process that he's decided yet within which he would review that act?

**Mr. Chomiak:** No. I'd be interested in the member's recommendations in regard to consultation process.

**Mr. Hawranik:** I'd certainly be happy to provide that to him when the time comes, when he's ready to do that. I'd certainly want to have some input and I thank the minister for that.

The minister has recently committed to review the operations of the East St. Paul police detachment. Can the minister indicate when that review will be complete? I understand that it should have been

complete already, in accordance with some of the information I had, and if it isn't at this point, does he have a target in terms of when that review will be complete and available?

**Mr. Chomiak:** I think, publicly, I stated that there would be review undertaken. It would not commence until after the court matters had been dealt with, and that is still pending. The intention is to move as quickly as possible following the decisions that are still pending before the court, and that's the status of that particular review.

**Mr. Hawranik:** So I take it from the minister's answer then that the review hasn't started yet, and the process will start then after the court process is complete. Have the terms of reference for that review, the criteria to be used for the review, has that been established yet?

**Mr. Chomiak:** The information that's been made public is the information that is still accurate, and that is that we will consult with the municipality involved and information will be made public following the completion of the court process.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Many other provinces including, as I understand most recently, Alberta have developed police colleges within their particular province to centralize training and to ensure that there's uniform standards in place for various levels of police and security personnel in the province. Will the Minister of Justice commit to do this in Manitoba as well, or has he considered doing this? Is it under review? Is it subject to any specific study, or is it not going to be done at all?

**Mr. Chomiak:** The two largest forces in the province of Manitoba, the City of Winnipeg police force, and the RCMP both have their own facilities. The member does raise a salient point insofar as in the discussions we've had with the federal government with respect to their announced expansion of both municipal and RCMP, that the capacity in the system requires augmentation. The suggestion of a police college, I think, at this point for Manitoba is something worth considering, but I don't think it's at a stage that I could say that we're considering it.

**Mr. Hawranik:** With respect to Manitoba Justice's decision to appoint Marty Minuk, who was Crown counsel with respect to the prosecution recently, was any consideration—I understand from the reports that Mr. Minuk had previously defended police officers and recently completed work on another case

alongside the accused's lawyer. Can the minister indicate today what criteria are used before the department decides on a decision of naming a special prosecutor?

\* (18:20)

**Mr. Chomiak:** There are several issues in this regard that are utilized by the department. First is the fact that whenever there is potential for perception of conflict, we immediately, the department, turn to an independent prosecutor. I can't talk about the specifics of any case that is before the courts, but I can indicate to the member that, in general, we probably do it more often, with more frequency than most jurisdictions.

Now, having said that, there are a limited number of senior criminal attorneys at the bar, the member will know that, that have the capacity to act as independent Crown prosecutors. There are a limited number that are utilized by the department. So, when an instance arises, the department acts independently, makes a determination that there's a potential perception of conflict, and then appoints one of the independent senior members of the criminal bar in Manitoba to that position.

I can't comment on the specifics of any case, but I would suggest to the member, who is somewhat familiar with the bar, I'm sure is familiar with the bar, that the pool upon which to draw in this particular area is relatively small, and the ability to have someone who has not crossed paths with another attorney in the province of Manitoba is almost literally impossible within the confines of Manitoba.

There are instances when outside Crowns are consulted. In this particular instance, the decision was made to seek an independent member of the bar in Winnipeg to deal with the matter. In all cases that this occurs, the decision is made in a policy sense by Crown prosecutions, and it's made without any outside influences or interference. It's made on a basis of possible perception in the public eye that a conflict exists with the Crown in Manitoba.

In my own personal view, the Crown functions independently enough in Manitoba that I think you'd be hard pressed to say that there's a bias, but that's just a personal view, from my own experience. However, as minister, I think the policy that's been adopted by the Crown is quite prudent and is adopted in any cases where there's a possible perception of any kind of bias.

**Mr. Hawranik:** In the case of hiring an independent prosecutor, such as in this case, is one of the questions prior to hiring an independent prosecutor, are they asked about whether there's a potential conflict prior to deciding whether or not to hire the particular individual?

**Mr. Chomiak:** In general, they would be asked or disclose whether they had acted for a particular individual. With respect to conflict with another defence counsel, again, because the relationship of the bar—good heavens, Madam Chairperson, I haven't done criminal law in Manitoba for a long time, but I virtually worked at one point or another with everyone at the bar.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Likewise, but I don't think I worked with you, Dave. In any event, if there is any interview, I take it there probably would be an interview process before deciding whether or not to hire a particular independent prosecutor. Since the Law Society is the governing body, governing conduct by lawyers and, certainly, deals with matters of discipline for lawyers, including conflicts of interest, is the Law Society at all consulted with respect to any question with respect to conflict, or does the Law Society itself participate in any interview process before hiring any independent prosecutor?

**Madam Chairperson:** Just a friendly reminder, ministers are by their portfolio.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Madam Chairperson, all members of the bar are expected to adhere to particular ethical guidelines under the Law Society of Manitoba. It would be, I think, difficult in advance to approach the Law Society in order to, quote, "clear" an individual who operates under a code of professional conduct prior to their utilization in a case, particularly in a relatively small criminal bar as it exists in Manitoba, because as one often knows and is often said in the north end, we're only one degree of separation from each other in this jurisdiction.

**Mr. Hawranik:** In this particular case, could the minister indicate whether other defence lawyers were considered to be hired as special prosecutor, or was it just the case of fingering one individual and asking them to become a special prosecutor in this case?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Madam Chairperson, I cannot comment on the specifics of this case, but there is a roster roughly of four or five Crown attorneys that are utilized as independent defence. There are five

defence lawyers who are senior at the bar who are utilized as independent counsel by the department.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Are they simply asked in rotation, or are they all given the opportunity to provide a submission to Manitoba Justice before Manitoba Justice makes the decision as to who to hire?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Overall, its generally in a rotation basis, although the member would appreciate that because of availability and because of other commitments that one is not always able to adhere to that, but to the extent that it's possible, yes, it's a form of rotation.

**Mr. Hawranik:** On occasion, the Province has hired outside counsel from outside Manitoba to serve as special prosecutor. In this particular case, was counsel from outside the province considered?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Madam Chairperson, generally, I'm advised, as a policy, the independent prosecutors are utilized in prosecutions of police officers.

**Mr. Hawranik:** In particular, in relation to hiring counsel from outside Manitoba, in particular, are there any particular criteria that's used prior to hiring an outside counsel from outside the province, or, are there, again, a list of lawyers from which to choose, and that's how they're chosen?

**Madam Chairperson:** The time being 6:30 p.m., committee rise.

#### AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL INITIATIVES

\* (14:40)

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

As had been previously agreed, questioning for this department will proceed in a general manner with the resolutions to be passed once all questioning is completed, with the exception of resolution 3.2 which will be passed once questioning on that section of the department is completed. The floor is now open for questions.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** My question to the minister has to do with a pilot project going on in Blanchard, which deals with providing farmers funds for providing environmental services. Can the minister give us some specifics on her plans to continue or not continue this or to extend this to

other parts of Manitoba? What is the plan and how will this happen?

**Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives):** Mr. Chairperson, this is a very good question. The pilot project is one that is a three-year pilot in its second year. It's the ecological goods and services ALUS program. I had the opportunity to go out to Blanchard just a couple of weeks ago and see the results of the program and, indeed, the results are quite significant. There's tremendous support from the municipality and from the farmers of the area.

It's a program that I continue to raise at the national level to try to get other provinces on board. I would like to see a national program. Prince Edward Island is going to be starting a pilot project, I believe, but at this point there isn't enough interest and/or commitment for this to become a full-fledged program, but we will continue to raise the issue at the national level.

**Mr. Gerrard:** I interpret the minister as saying that she's not entirely sure whether the pilot program will continue, and she has no certainty at all whether or not this may be extended anywhere else in the province. I think that's too bad that things are as uncertain as they are.

Let me move on to ask the minister some specific questions with regard to Killarney Lake. Now Killarney Lake, as the minister well knows, is a lake which has had some major problems with algal blooms as a result of phosphorus levels in the lake and phosphorus coming into the lake. It is, in a sense, a small watershed which mimics the same problem that we've got in Lake Winnipeg. Clearly, I think that there is a growing commitment to cleaning up Lake Winnipeg, a recognition of the problem of phosphorus in Lake Winnipeg.

The minister has been involved with some changes in agricultural regulations in terms of cleaning up Lake Winnipeg. But, clearly, when you have a lake which is a major problem like Killarney Lake, which clearly has had some significant work done already in terms of looking at phosphorus levels, it would be an ideal small model watershed for the government to invest some money to make sure that, No. 1, it's clear understanding where the phosphorus is actually coming from and 2, that Killarney Lake itself is cleared up. In doing so, there could be some important information gathered, some concepts tested, that would be very important in terms of being able to take the tested ideas, concepts,

and take the information gained from doing this at Killarney Lake, which drains a significant agricultural area, that would provide not only major benefit for the citizens of Killarney and the tourists who visit there, but that it would also provide a major benefit in terms of helping us understand Lake Winnipeg.

So a question to the minister is: Why has she not so far supported studies on Killarney Lake and a major initiative to clean up Killarney Lake, which could be used as an important step forward in terms of the longer run and very important objective of cleaning up Lake Winnipeg?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, the member in his comments tried to imply that there was no plan on the Blanchard project but in reality it's a pilot project; it's a pilot project and it will run for the three years of a pilot and then decisions will be made. But there's no sense running a pilot if you're going to go ahead and say this is what we're doing.

But I want to also tell the member that there's also another project, Ducks Unlimited-led with a watershed base pilot that's been approved in the South Tobacco Creek watershed. This clearly makes Manitoba a leader in ecological goods and services. So there is a water management project there. We are working with the—is it Deerwood conservation district? [*interjection*] So it is the Deerwood Soil and Water Management Association that has come to us and we are working. We are not working in the particular area that the member has indicated, but this is a group that has come to us so we are doing a watershed study on managing nutrients.

I want to give credit to our producers right now because our producers are doing a lot of work on Environmental Farm Plans and looking at how they can change their practices to ensure that they're getting the best value for their dollar. We as government continue to work with them to look at alternatives where you could get better soil management and better water management. These are two projects, both the project at Blanchard and the South Tobacco Creek watershed project, and this one is located in the Miami area, so a similar area to the one that the member's talking about.

\* (14:50)

**Mr. Gerrard:** I thank the minister. So, yes, I understand the Blanchard project will run for three years, but I take the minister's answer to indicate that there are no plans to use this approach in other areas

of the province right now, unless she's implying that, in the South Tobacco Creek, farmers are going to be receiving contributions for their environmental benefits like in Blanchard. But I think that what you're meaning in terms of the South Tobacco Creek study is that this is an alternative to studying and knowing what's happened in the Killarney Lake basin.

Certainly, I have been a strong advocate for what's being done in South Tobacco Creek. I've visited there a number of times. They're doing some very good work. But it is time now to apply what's been learned there to a very practical situation where there's a major algal problem. That practical situation in this circumstance is Killarney Lake. It is a very good example of a lake which has got major economic importance to the town of Killarney, to tourists there.

I was there in early September and it was an awful, pea-soup mess along the north shore when I visited. No one was going to go swimming in this, not only because it looked awful, but because when you've got that kind of a pile of algae, you may have toxins being produced and various other problems which make it totally unsuitable for swimming, let alone raising potential concerns about toxins which could get into drinking water, for example.

So I would suggest to the minister that it is time to take a really good look at the situation of Killarney Lake. It has a mix of agricultural area that it drains. Interestingly enough, a small portion of the watershed is in the United States so that you can—even in that respect, it mimics a little bit the situation of the Lake Winnipeg basin—measure the phosphorus coming out of the United States as well as the phosphorus going into Killarney Lake.

Interestingly, it is also a good model because there is the town of Killarney right there. Concerns about cosmetic fertilizers can be taken into consideration, and you know the contribution of dishwasher detergents, for example. I mean, this is an ideal watershed to be able to look at and test whether some of the regulations which the government has put in place are actually having the effect, or whether the major source of phosphorus is elsewhere.

So I would suggest that the minister have a look at Killarney Lake. I wonder if the minister has actually visited Killarney Lake this fall to see the significant problems with algal blooms and to talk to people about the situation. You know, there are

certainly other lake areas, but this one is a really good example because of the combination of factors which are involved, the ability to look at how you change practices in agricultural areas and have a big impact on the end, the bottom line, which is the phosphorus and the algal blooms.

So I suggest that the minister should have a better look at Killarney Lake and I would ask her, will the minister have a look at Killarney Lake and look at making the critical investments that could make a difference to Killarney Lake, and in sequence, and make a difference to the Lake Winnipeg?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, in the pilot program at Blanchard, this is municipal leaders that are involved, different commodity groups, different interest groups that have all come together. The municipality has come there and has put money on the table because they see an issue in their municipality.

The same thing in the Deerwood project that I talked about as a model watershed area, there's not only the Province, there is Ducks Unlimited and the municipal people involved in it.

With regard to Killarney, I can say to the member that we have staff in Killarney, and staff who work very closely with the people in that area, and, if people of Killarney and that surrounding area have an interest, our staff would be more than willing to look at these kinds of issues.

With regard to the comment that the member made that I have no interest in continuing the Blanchard project, that's completely inaccurate. I would love to see it continued, but before you can continue you have to have some facts, and that's why you run a pilot. Payments on the program are based on information that's collected. There's a chart that spells out how producers will be paid in it, but to say that we are now going to take this model and transfer it to the rest of the province without having a pilot, I do not believe that would be a wise thing to do.

As well, what we have to do is look at a national program. I can tell the member that this is an issue that Manitoba puts on the table every time we have a fed-prov meeting and looks for support from other provinces. We have not had the kind of support we would have liked to have seen for a national program, except from Prince Edward Island who is the other province there with Manitoba, but I can assure the member that I will continue to pursue this

one and other projects that we can look at where you might model. Specifically to the question, we are doing a model on the watershed.

**Mr. Gerrard:** I wasn't meaning to imply that the minister had no interest in further—but at this point that there was no solid commitment to anything further. I think that's accurate.

The situation on Killarney Lake and the Killarney Lake basin, from your description of the fact that other projects had municipal leaders, various other organizations, Ducks Unlimited, in some cases, are you implying that, if people in the region of the Killarney Lake basin, the rural municipality, the town of Killarney, and other people, came forward, that you would look at the possibility of working with them on a project on the Killarney Lake basin?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** In fact, if there was a group that would come forward with a proposal, our staff would meet with them. We would look at the possibilities. You have to do an assessment, but I can tell the member as well that there are groups that are conducting or doing something that's equivalent to farm plans. It's a community-based plan that's going on, and they're called equivalent agri-environmental plans. There is a group in the East Souris River watershed, which is the watershed that would cover this area that the member is referring to.

**Mr. Gerrard:** What I'm referring to is a specific project which would look at Killarney Lake and the water draining into Killarney Lake as the Killarney Lake watershed, the Long River and just the water coming into Killarney Lake. Certainly, I will try and communicate back to people in that area who are interested in this. I think it's welcome that the minister would be receptive to an effort to look at cleaning up Killarney Lake that looks at the contributions of phosphorus and gets people working together from different groups and different organizations. Thank you.

\* (15:00)

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa):** Madam Minister, you were in Souris just last weekend. One of the individuals that was at the event was Mr. Blaine Canning with Prairie Lane Farms, and I know that he had stopped by to have a chat with you. I wasn't sure if he had had the opportunity to ask you for details of progress on the CCIA initiative that he's a part of. I do know that in conversations with him CCIA and MCPA met with staff of yours, Dr. Lees

and Dr. Preston, and they felt that the meeting went really well, but I guess what they're looking for now is just a confirmation of the commitment from your office that the talks will be continuing and that there's been some progress in the area of a future plan and partnership with this group.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** The member is right. I did have the opportunity to talk to this individual about CCIA and MCPA and the use of CCIA tags. I can indicate to the member that my staff did meet with them in Calgary two weeks ago, and they came to an agreement to allow for data sharing. We have a similar data-sharing basis with other commodity groups, and if a little bit more of the details can be worked out and ironed out to meet what we think are important issues, then I think we will be able to proceed. But there is a little bit more work that has to be done on this.

**Mrs. Rowat:** So I could ask then of the minister, what would be the next step? What can I share, then, with my constituent? What will be the next step? That would include the stakeholders that are looking for some direction from the government on this.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** The next step will be for the legal people from CFIA, from CCIA and from our department to work through this to try to come to an agreement and iron out the details. There are a few details of how we'd be able to share information. There are a few freedom of information issues that have to be worked out, and that is what the legal people are working at now.

**Mrs. Rowat:** I appreciate the information to this date. I guess I'm looking for some type of a time line. You know, there are a number of strategies or objectives that have already been put forward. A lot of work has been done in this area, but there seems to be a very strong effort being made on the part of CCIA to move forward. They really would like to see an implementation plan co-ordinated in the near future.

So can the minister give me a time line on this initiative so I can go back to my constituent and feel comfortable that things are moving forward in a manner that is respectful of the agency's request?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** If you were asking for a specific time line to say when it's going to be finalized, there is a lot of work to be done. I will say to you that in the last couple of weeks there has been significant movement. We are working with CFIA, which sometimes takes a little longer to do things than we

would like, but CFIA has their rules to follow as well. There has to be a contractual arrangement made between CFIA, and there is a contractual arrangement between CFIA and CCA, but the province isn't in that contractual arrangement yet. So, we have to work out the details of that contract. We are looking to have a lot broader issues covered in this as well. So it's moving forward, but if you want to give your constituents a specific time, I could not give you that.

**Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Carman):** Madam Minister, I have a question in regard to the Treherne Dam project. There is money for a feasibility study, and it was agreed with the South Norfolk-Treherne Development Corporation that they would do a feasibility study on the dam project. I believe the numbers were \$100,000 from PFRA, which they agreed to put in; \$100,000 from your department; and also \$40,000 from the South Norfolk-Treherne Development Corporation. In the beginning of July, that money was supposed to have been approved so that the feasibility study could start. PF put their money in and the Treherne people are willing to put their money, but suddenly, there was a holdback from your department. Can you give me an update as to that?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, there has been a proposal. There's a steering committee that consists of the Treherne Dam Committee, PFRA, MAFRI, Manitoba Water Stewardship and Pembina Valley Water Cooperative. The study was broken down into two parts, and PFRA was looking at the water demands downstream from the dam. The work that the department was supposed to do was on the engineering side of it.

Since that time, there have been discussions between PFRA staff and provincial engineering firms. In those discussions, it was found that the initial estimate was far lower than what is actually required to do this study, and for that reason there is still discussion on how it can be supported. Simply put, the costs have gone much higher than what was anticipated, and there's an evaluation on how we should spend that money or the merit of that money. We haven't said we won't fund it, but there is an evaluation on what is required now and increased costs.

\* (15:10)

**Mr. Pedersen:** Madam Minister, what I think the Treherne people would really appreciate is some time frame on this and a commitment to this. We see

the projects, an absolute vital need on this and yet time keeps slipping away. If I understand it right, some of the first engineering studies were done back in the late '50s or early '60s. It's not like this is a new project and they would appreciate some time limits on this.

So I just ask you if there is any sort of time frame for an answer from your department for the Treherne, South Norfolk ?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Some things take a long time, don't they? If the member says that studies started on this in the 1950s, it's clear that this is not an easy issue to deal with. If the member is looking for me to say a specific time frame when this will be dealt with, I can't give you a specific time frame other than to say that we continue to work at it. But there is a lot of work that has to be done. You have to really look at what the water issues are, what the needs are in the area, what the impacts will be on surrounding areas. The part of the study right is now is to look at—it really has to be a business case. Part of it is to look at what kind of soil there is there, how a dam would be built.

What they're looking for is the provincial support for the geotechnical work and we're saying we need to do a little bit more work on this now. I can't give you a specific time frame, but I say to you that we will continue to work on it. If this provided the right kind of service and the water supply for the area then, of course, we'd be interested in it.

But just as work started some 50 years ago, we will have to do a little bit more work before we make a commitment. I want to say to the member, as well, that I have met with this group. We've been through their proposal and they are aware that we have some work to do yet.

**Mr. Pedersen:** Madam Minister, the very points that you bring up is the purpose of the whole feasibility study. I just want to reemphasize the importance of this, of making a decision on this, and let's get going forward on this because we can't have those answers until we have this. That's the purpose of the feasibility study, and I just urge you to realize its importance for all of southern Manitoba. We're talking about potable water for all of southern Manitoba here, and it's vitally important. Thank you.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Water is a very important issue and there are two studies that are going on on this. One is on the Assiniboine River side where the people along the Assiniboine River don't want to see any more

water drawn off, and the other study is what the water needs of this particular area are and how that can be addressed. We all know that there have been many fights over water, and when you try to do one of these things, you have to have all of the information and be sure that you're doing it right. But some studies are going on right now, and we will continue to work at it.

**Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie):** I would like to take this opportunity to thank for the past year of tireless work by the personnel of your department. The Ag Department personnel go way above job description in every area for the benefit of the agricultural community throughout the province, and I want to take this opportunity to personally thank the department for the valuable work and co-operation that we as producers enjoy with the outstanding personnel of your department, Madam Minister.

Madam Minister, I will say, though, from a Portage perspective, the ranks of your department are growing mighty thin. We have left in Portage la Prairie only three positions. That is a scant shadow of more than 20 personnel that were in Portage la Prairie some 15 years ago. Portage la Prairie's area of production is of high-value crops, and not to have the specialists to draw upon, as we have become accustomed, is indeed a concern. I recall personally the vegetable specialist, the irrigation specialist, the grassland specialist. The engineering that we received for both drainage and water projects in and about the area that were all previously provided for out of the Portage la Prairie office is no longer.

So it is a concern that personnel, and especially now with just last week's retirement of the former agricultural representative, Mr. Gerry Orr, whose outstanding years of service have come to be almost part of Portage la Prairie for his lengthy tenure as ag rep and then as the 4-H involvement that he provided. Another concern is that there is no one at this point in time, as the minister has alluded, in support of the next generation in agriculture which emanates out of the 4-H programming. There is no one left in Portage la Prairie for that.

But I bring that more to your attention than anything rather than to comment. It's very prudent to make certain that we have the supports that we need in agriculture, and I know the minister is well aware. But I don't think three persons in Portage la Prairie are going to be sufficient enough to draw upon.

The old adage, whiskey is for drinking and water's for fighting over, couldn't be more true today than when it was first uttered back in the 1800s when this land was first settled. The issue of water is of paramount concern to producers in Portage la Prairie, being that the processors of potatoes which are of vital importance to Portage la Prairie in the crop rotation are in need of more irrigated area.

\* (15:20)

Even though the number of potatoes produced in the province has diminished from 103,000 acres some two years ago to currently 89,000 acres, the dry season experienced in 2006 spawned the demand by potato processors for—the initial demand was eight inches of supplemental water throughout the growing season whereby the previous contract only called for three. The ability for producers to effectively accommodate that increase of demand by the potato producers to have on hand, whether it is used or not, required or not, is always dependent upon Mother Nature, but it still goes without saying that we are in dire of need of more water made available for irrigation purposes. I know the minister, when her negotiations and announcement of the Simplot processing plant located in Portage la Prairie, stated that she intended to add over the next five years 50,000 acres of additional irrigated area. That has not taken place.

So what I'm coming to the minister today is to leave her with the understanding that irrigation needs more support. We need sensibility within the development of irrigated waters. The Treherne Dam proposal has been discussed for more than 50 years, which is vital to the Boyne River and many areas that come off of the Boyne and the Stephenfield Reservoir; for irrigation purposes we need that to develop.

I have left in the minister's mind over the course of years that if the construction of the Holland No. 3 dam were to take place, then we would have no worries whatsoever for downstream supply of water. I would like her to continue to look at that potential project and to dust off the Assiniboine South Hespeler six-volume report that was received by her government under Premier Pawley, and the then-Finance Minister, Eugene Kostyra, received the report and was a signatory to that report. It's a report that I believe has a lot of information and merit and study. So I encourage her to take a look at that.

Just in conclusion here with my remarks, and I know the minister can just respond in any fashion



she cares to, but the new crops, new developments, MCDC, Manitoba Crop Diversification Centre at Portage la Prairie and Carberry play a vital role in examination of potential new crops and how agronomy can meld with new varieties and new crops to be to the benefit of more diversity in our agriculture. The negotiations are now ongoing. The department has been fingered as being less than supportive. The federal government believes the province needs to look at providing more resources to the Manitoba Crop Diversification Centre. It is very important that I and on behalf of many producers that we see that happen.

On the final note, I would like to ask in the ever-changing federal government proposals to support producers across this nation, who now is our representative? Is it Mr. Lesiuk who continues to represent Manitoba on the national program development and representing our province? It was NISA, then CAIS, and now we're looking at a series of others. I just wondered who is the provincial point person in that area for us.

I will stress the importance of being at the table with federal programs, insofar as it has been drawn to my attention that in the potato industry, the level of support for the average producer of potatoes in New Brunswick received more than \$100,000 in direct provincial and federal support monies than did a potato producer here in the province of Manitoba. A discrepancy of over \$100,000 per average producer. I believe there must be something that we as potato producers in Manitoba are lacking.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, I could go on for a long time here given all the information that the member has put on the table, but I have to say that I am absolutely disappointed that the member would say that Portage la Prairie has not been done well by this government or by this department. For him to say that we only have three staff people in this department is not accurate.

We have a farm management specialist. We have a livestock specialist. We have a vegetable specialist. We have a food production adviser. We have a fibre specialist working out at PAMI. The member talked about a potato specialist. It's my understanding that Portage la Prairie never did have a potato specialist. The potato specialist is at the crop centre in Carman.

You know, when we reorganized the department, our goal was to take advantage of technology, and our services are seamless. People can go to a specialist in any part of the province and

get the advice that they need. Telephones, computers, our staff move around. If there is a workshop that people want advice from, those services are available.

But in addition to that, there's a food policy specialist as well in Portage la Prairie. We are creating a food commercialization unit which will see 11 people in Portage la Prairie. FDC has 22 people, plus term people. MAS, Manitoba Agricultural Services has in the range of 100 people working in Portage la Prairie. So the Food Commercialization unit, Food Development Centre, specialists that are there, and then the Crown Lands branch that has caused controversy for some other people is in Portage la Prairie. We looked at that, we made the decision, so I would say that the member is not being very accurate when he says that Portage la Prairie has not done well under this administration.

With regard to the new crop development, we support and see the huge value of the crop centre at Carman, and we will continue to work on those issues.

With regard to irrigation, the member talks about irrigation and the need for more support and that, again, causes me concern as well, because there has been support in there, but there hasn't been the uptake. There is a reduction in the amount of uptake that is happening with the industry. There has been some downsizing, and basically because of people's diets. You know, this Atkins diet had an amazing effect on the amount of potatoes that were eaten. We all know potatoes are very healthy, but when diets change companies have to adjust. We have programs there to assist producers and we will continue to assist them and we will continue to do irrigation, but there has to be an interest on the part of the producers as well.

The member talked about me making a commitment to plant 50,000 acres of potatoes. I don't plant potatoes. I don't plant potatoes in Portage la Prairie. The amount of potatoes that are planted in that area depends on the amount of market and the demand of the food processors. If there's an increased demand, our staff is there to work with them. We look at putting in programs in place, and we consult with the industry all the time. We make changes to insurance programs; we make changes to safety net programs.

\* (15:30)

So there has been a downsizing in the industry. I know that's been very difficult for producers, but our producers are a resilient group and they make adjustments. I often think about when we lost the sugar beet industry. That was a hard blow for our producers in this province, but, you know, they said, okay, we don't have a sugar beet industry; it was a mistake that we don't have a sugar beet industry; we never should have given up on that sugar plant that was here in Winnipeg, but that's past history. What did our producers do? They picked up the pieces, and said, okay, what can we do with this valuable land that we have, and they started to grow beans, and they've become one of the best. We've become the best known bean growers in Canada. We produce more than anybody, and our staff is there to work with them and develop these crops. They're there.

So Portage la Prairie has done very well. If there is a specific position that the member is looking for—I did make one mistake, I said that the mass numbers of staff was 100. It is around a hundred. Not all of them are in Portage la Prairie, but the headquarters is in Portage la Prairie, and people value it. A good portion of those staff are in Portage la Prairie, probably 50 to 75 percent. Finally, the member asked about negotiations with the federal government. Those negotiations are co-ordinated by the deputy minister, assistant deputy ministers and whoever is needed, which, depending on the particular issue, and I can tell the member as well, that we have spent, our staff has spent, a significant amount of time attending meetings and trying to work out all of the details of the agreement, and there are many, many meetings. I believe that every one that required Manitoba to be represented at, we were represented there.

**Mr. Faurichou:** Mr. Chair, we do appreciate the responses by the minister.

I, obviously, left an impression that I was complaining about the number of personnel in Portage la Prairie. That was not my intent. I said the staff that is operating there is a shadow of in past and, indeed, if you go to the government building, and, if the minister wants to stop by, on the way through to Swan River on the Trans-Canada, we'll walk up there, and we'll see the offices and the empty chairs, but, in any event, we won't belabour that.

The people that work in the department do work extraordinary hours and it is a divestiture away. Anyway, we'll move on from that.

It is Carberry that is the place of MCDC, not Carman. It is also important that the minister failed to recognize one of the questions, and that was about the 4-H specialists within the department. There is no reference of that. It would be very good if each of the producer groups knows as to where and how they can make certain that they, when they've got a concern, how they come forward and can raise that concern with you or through your department, whether it be a vegetable producer or bean producer or someone that is in the higher-value crop areas that are now very concerned about labour issue. It is quite disappointing that at the present time there is a lack of commitment by this government to support a democratic process, and this is of gravest impact upon, not only our agricultural labour here in the province, but, also, across this nation. All of this could very easily be cleared up. I speak specifically of Mayfair Farm, if the minister would stand up and say, we will put this matter to a vote clear and simple, union or not, we would have the issue resolved in an afternoon rather than tens upon tens upon tens of thousands of dollars in legal fees. Why not believe in a democracy and move forward in that?

I encourage the minister to talk to her Cabinet colleague, and let's have a vote and resolve this issue. All of us then can move on.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** The member has asked about the 4-H specialist. We have 17 4-H people that deal with 4-H, and in his region there is one in Carberry and one in Gladstone. They are not called 4-H specialists. They are called rural leadership specialists, but they continue to provide 4-H services. I'm very proud of that because, you know, in many other provinces, there is no departmental support for 4-H. None whatsoever. But in this province we see the value of the program for our rural children and we continue to support it.

We continue to support the many volunteers because 4-H is a volunteer program, just as other clubs have—you have Boy Scouts and Girl Guides and those kinds of things. They are led by volunteers; 4-H is led by volunteers, but we provide a tremendous amount of support for them through our rural leadership specialists.

With regard to the labour issue, the labour issue is not in this department. It is the Manitoba Labour Board, which is an autonomous tribunal and is not a part of the government. There are representatives.

So I just say to the member, if he's asking me to take this to the vote or ask the Minister of Labour to put this to a vote, that is not what happens in this province. I believe the member knows full well that it is the Manitoba Labour Board that makes the decision and—[interjection] Pardon me.

Mr. Chairperson, whatever happened at that farm has to be dealt with by the Manitoba Labour Board, not by us. This is not the place where the politicians should be involved. You put a system in place. They are a quasi-judicial body. They make the decisions. It's our job as politicians to put the policy in place, to put the committee in place, and then let it move forward from there, but I would not be. If he's asking me to ask my colleague to hold a vote on this, it would be absolutely illegal.

**Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain):** Just a couple of follow-up questions to some of the previous discussion we've had. I guess, first of all, in terms of the MCDC in the Carberry area. I'm just wondering if there's going to be potential for any changes in terms of staffing there. I know that particular facility is funded through Agriculture and PFRA and we do have some MAFRI staff in several offices in Carberry. I've heard rumblings that there may be a chance to move those staff out to MCDC. Is that in fact something that might be in the future?

\* (15:40)

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairperson, the member is accurate. This MCDC is governed by an agreement between the federal, provincial governments and industry. That agreement is coming up for renewal. So while that discussion is taking place we are looking at what the opportunities are, how it can be changed, how we can get the best mix in it for the interests of our producers.

There are all kinds of discussions. One of the discussions is how can we use that facility better but no decision has been made yet.

**Mr. Cullen:** Can the minister advise the committee when that particular term is up in the current agreement?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** March 31, [inaudible]

**Mr. Cullen:** I thank the minister for that response.

Previously the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) was talking about Killarney Lake, and I'm quite familiar with the lake at Killarney. I do think the member raises a valid concern and a valid point.

*Mr. Andrew Swan, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair*

There are a number of individuals in that community who are certainly concerned about the lake, the algae growth that does happen from time to time there. There have been some studies done in the past by Dr. Goldsborough on that particular lake, but I do think it might be an opportune time to follow up with some additional studies on that lake. The feeling is that that particular lake would reflect quite well what's happening in Lake Winnipeg. It's a lot easier lake to study given the size of the watershed and the size of the lake. I think it would tie in very well with where the Province is headed in terms of their discussions on cosmetic fertilizers. With the community of Killarney right adjacent to the lake, I think it might provide us some valuable information, some real science in going forward before we do introduce legislation regarding cosmetic fertilizer.

So I would hope that the minister might take that under advisement and look at that particular lake. I know in that area there are also Pelican Lake and Rock Lake, which had similar situations to what's happening in Killarney Lake and also a number of other lakes around the province. Just to clarify, the conservation districts in that area, there are a couple of different ones there, Tiger Hills and Turtle Mountain conservation districts, who would be the conservation district responsible for the Killarney area. So they certainly would be valuable contacts, I think, in that regard.

So I would just like some assurances from the minister that she will address those particular lakes with the Minister of Water Stewardship (Ms. Melnick).

**Ms. Wowchuk:** It's interesting to hear that there have been studies on Killarney Lake that have been done before by a particular doctor. I'm not aware of those studies and I don't know whether staff is aware of it. But certainly if there's an interest in looking at this, we would be happy to meet with the people. Definitely, the conservation districts would have to be involved. There's interesting work that's been done on algae.

So I would give the member my word that if there are people that are interested in looking at this, our staff will meet with them and look at what the possibilities are to work with them or take their issue forward to Water Stewardship.

**Mr. Cullen:** I appreciate the minister's response.

I do want to raise a staffing issue in Killarney as well. We do have fairly capable people, at least the people that are left in those particular positions. Unfortunately, in Killarney we have lost our Pembina manager, the manager for the Pembina offices, the regional manager. She has moved on to another position, I believe, in Brandon. We have lost one of the business management specialists out of that office in that region. She has moved on to other responsibilities, I believe, within the department, also out of Brandon. So, in my view, we're short at least two people in that particular office. I would just like some assurances from the minister that those positions will be replaced.

The second thing is if the minister could give me some assurances in terms of a time frame when those positions would be advertised and hopefully filled.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Acting Chairman, there were two people who were working in the Killarney office who applied for other jobs and were successful and so have moved to different positions. I want to say that both those staff people were well-respected and were very skilled people. When there are job openings, we can't stop people from applying to other jobs if it's going to help them to further their careers. So they've applied for jobs, other positions, and those positions will be filled. We have other vacancies. As the vacancies are prioritized, then those come up to be filled. These will fall into that list as well. When we can move them along, there will be a competition for these positions as well.

**Mr. Cullen:** Mr. Acting Chairman, just trying to get a sense, then, how many vacancies we have within the province within the department, and then what type of a time frame are we looking at, at these particular, these two positions in the Killarney area? Are we going to be a year or two years from those positions being filled? Can you give me some type of a time frame that we can have an expectation?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** First of all, I want to say that, despite the fact that these positions are vacant, the services are still being provided, and that's part of having a GO team. They cover off each responsibility. But these are quite valuable positions. We will ensure that they are filled in a timely fashion. I would say within a few months they would be filled. I don't think it will take a year to fill them.

With regard to the vacancy rate, right now we are at 8.8 percent right across the department and the corporation. That's our vacancy rate. That varies from time to time. When we did a count of the

vacancy rate in August, I believe it was a little over 5 percent. So people make changes in their careers. Some people choose to retire. So your vacancy rate fluctuates and staff makes a decision on which jobs that have to be filled take the highest priority, and that's how they are filled.

**Mr. Cullen:** I thank the minister for that response.

Just changing gears a little, in driving by that facility in Elie where we see all the straw bales piled up there and we see reports in the media of how that particular situation's developed over the last few years, I just wondered what role Agriculture might have in finding solutions for that particular situation?

\* (15:50)

**Ms. Wowchuk:** I drive the same path as the Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Cullen) drives here. I see that every week when I come to work and go back home. I wish that that facility was operating again.

The member asks what this department does. We have responsibility for rural initiatives and looking for new opportunities. We've been aware and have talked to various investment groups who have looked at the facility. Unfortunately, nobody that has looked at it has been able to secure the finances required to acquire the facility.

The facility is owned by Dow Chemical and they are the ones that would have to make the deal, but our goal is, if there's someone who could use that facility and we could start to produce strawboard again, that would be very helpful but that hasn't happened.

I can say as well that we are looking, and our staff has developed two projects for straw utilization and looking at different ways to use those straw bales that are sitting there in a way that's environmentally benign.

**Mr. Cullen:** I guess the question in my mind leads to recapturing some of that product in the form of energy and biomass energy recovery. Is your department working on any initiatives or working with any companies or doing any research in that regard in terms of, you know, biomass energy development?

*Mr. Chairperson in the Chair*

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Yes.

**Mr. Cullen:** I don't know if the minister—if that was the end of the question or not, or whether you—I guess we're looking for something positive to happen

in rural Manitoba in terms of—you know, in my view there's so much that can be done here in terms of technologies going forward. I just think this is certainly one avenue that we should be having a really hard, serious look at.

I'm not sure if it's up to the Agriculture Department to take the lead role on this or whether there are other departments involved here that are taking the lead role. I guess that's really my concern, that we don't want to have some of these opportunities fall through the cracks.

So, I guess, maybe the question should be: Is Agriculture taking a lead role in some of these initiatives?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** I want to assure the member that our department is very involved and taking the lead on these kinds of projects. There are various technologies that are out there. There's a company, you know, that's looking at cubing this kind of straw where it can be used to replace coal. That's one project.

There's the project of burning different materials. Straw is one of them where you would use that to capture energy. I say to the member I had the opportunity to visit some places in Europe where there is energy that's created for a community and then—whether it's heated water or whether it's actual electricity where agriculture products are used as a fuel source in this. I think there are huge opportunities in this area. For us it's a little different. Their population is a lot denser, and it's easier to move that, whether it's hot water or electricity, but I think there's huge potential out there to work with agriculture products as a renewable fuel source. My department is taking the lead on several of these projects.

**Mr. Cullen:** Mr. Chairman, we certainly look forward to hearing more about those particular initiatives going forward. I do believe that it can address a couple of our major issues here, you know, the burning issue that we've had with stubble, and also the phosphorous loading. We can take a look at those things, and we can, maybe, address them full circle. I just want to leave that now.

I want to address a couple of issues. One is in regard to the Manitoba Horse Racing Commission report that came out here a little while ago. They make reference to the government's decision to carry out an extensive industry study in order to provide a solid source of information from which a long-term

policy can be adopted and implemented. We're talking here about the horse racing industry in Manitoba. I'm assuming that report or that undertaking is on the way. I'm just wondering if the minister could give us some direction in terms of when we can expect that report and maybe some of the information related to that report. Will it, in fact, look at the entire gaming and lottery angle that's related to the horse racing industry in Manitoba?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, I will endeavour to get a time line on that report and get it back to the member.

**Mr. Cullen:** I would appreciate that information from the minister.

In particular, the standardbred industry here in Manitoba, we certainly have a lot of people and families involved in that particular industry. As the minister will know, we're at the end of a three-year term where the government was providing some financing to the industry. It's very important for these people that are involved in the industry that they have some kind of direction from where the province is going to go in the future. I know the government has requested the industry over the last number of years to come forward with some long-term proposals on how they see the future of the industry. There's a lot of frustration with those people that have been trying to put proposals together, and how the government has dealt with them.

For instance, we had a company that wanted to spend \$14 million in Manitoba and establish a horse park near Brandon. Quite frankly, the government, in my view, wasn't very positive in terms of their reaction to that particular investment. Again, it's foreign investment coming to Manitoba. It could have been something that, I think, would have been positive for the entire industry. Even when we get responses from the Lotteries people themselves.

Susan Olynik talks about gaming entertainment. You talk about you need entertainment; you need other experiences that provide a total package, and looking forward to having more competition in Manitoba. So we thought, in my view that looked like a pretty good opportunity to provide another form of entertainment here and provide a nice package. The intent of that particular casino was to stop the bus loads of Manitobans that are leaving the province, either going south or going to Saskatchewan to spend their entertainment dollars. Quite frankly, that project didn't go anywhere.

I guess there are, maybe, two questions there. One is: Do you foresee any possibility of a development such as a casino or race track? The second part, and probably more important for this kind of industry is: Where are we going to be for next season, in terms of racing, in that industry?

\* (16:00)

**Ms. Wowchuk:** As I indicated earlier, there is a study going on, on the industry, and that should be available within the next few months. That will help to determine the future of the industry.

The member talks about the proposal for a horse park and talks about somebody willing to make an investment of \$14 million, but he doesn't talk about the number of VLTs that were requested, which was fairly significant. We have said, in this province, that we are not increasing the number of VLTs. An offer was made to provide them with a certain number of VLTs, I believe in the range of 40, and that was not adequate for them. So they chose not to proceed. Again, that's where that particular proposal is at, but I think we should wait for the results of the study. We can't make any decisions on the funding until we get the results of the study.

**Mr. Cullen:** I'm just going to make one quick comment before I turn it over to the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler).

It was very recently that the Province awarded 300 additional VLT machines to South Beach Casino. In my view, and a lot of people's views in the horseracing industry, it was almost like a smack in the face. It seems like there's almost two sets of rules here. It's very frustrating to look at it, try to move forward and try to negotiate something for the future. So there's a lot of frustration out there in the industry. I'm just afraid, we don't want to drive another industry outside of Manitoba. Thank you.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** I would encourage the member to raise that question with the minister responsible for Lotteries when those Estimates come up.

**Mr. Eichler:** I thank the minister and her staff for allowing my colleagues to ask a few questions, and the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) in regard to the Liberal Party.

Before we call the MASC staff up, I do have two quick questions I would like to try in regard to the announcement made yesterday, or it actually hit the news this morning. With Mr. Preston here, I would like to ask in regard to the avian flu that was found

on the Saskatchewan farm just north of Regina, and if the minister has some dollars set aside or if there's a plan set aside in regard to a plan that might come forward. We have to be prepared for this; it's a huge industry within the province of Manitoba, as the minister and her staff are so well aware of. In light of that outbreak, if we could get the minister's response on that, please.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, this has been an issue for some time, that foreign diseases can have a very negative effect on our industries. We saw it happen in British Columbia with avian influenza. We have been doing a lot of testing of flocks in this area, and we've set aside \$900,000 for upgrades to facilities so that we're able to do the proper testing, should we need it.

The most important thing is having proper bio-security, and a lot of work is being done. I have to say the commodity groups are doing a lot of work as well, setting up the proper bio-security, having the proper surveillance, and working closely with CFIA. I can tell the member that we have at the university, at the ag services complex, a facility where we would be able to, should it happen in Manitoba that we would get a disease outbreak and we all hope that we wouldn't, we have the infrastructure in place to work very closely with the industry.

Most of the industry is very good. They have systems in place where they have site identification, and they would be able to identify, if there's an outbreak, what the other sites would be. We have done a trial run here in Manitoba to see how we would handle an outbreak if it happened. I don't know whether the complete evaluation of that has been done, but I think it was a successful trial run.

If the member is referring to compensation, there would be, when there's a flock depopulation, there is a formula in place under CFIA that compensates. If there was a huge loss, that's where CAIS would kick in to cover off some of the losses.

**Mr. Eichler:** I thank the minister and staff. I can see us going back to 240 hours. Agriculture could probably take a hundred of it. It's such a huge department, and we certainly appreciate the staff's time to dedicate to it.

Before we do, I have one more question since you had brought up CFIA, and that is in regard to the anthrax breakout that came this summer again. Probably, I know that the staff in the Teulon area and Arborg and surrounding area—we had an outbreak in

Armstrong and Rockwood. According to the reports, I think that Armstrong had the highest number of animals, 47 animals that were affected in total, and I was just wondering, is that covered off? I believe CFIA has a formula they use for compensation for these animals as well. Is there any cost that's incurred other than the departmental staff as far as advice and that concern, or is there actually some cost that was incurred by the province on compensation for the animals?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairperson, indeed, there have been some outbreaks of anthrax. The member asks whether or not there is compensation. There is not compensation for anthrax because it is a preventable disease. People can vaccinate their cattle to control the disease. But there is a disposal fee of \$500 per animal to help to dispose of the animals, should they go down.

**Mr. Eichler:** Could the minister outline the educational process that goes through her department in educating? I realize there is a vaccine that is available for producers to use, but we just seem to not be able to get that through to our farmers. I know that I've certainly spoken about this issue at various parts of the province, and maybe I've been missing it and there might be some type of an education program that's been out that obviously is not getting to the producers. If I remember correctly, I believe the antidote vaccination is somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$1.50 per head, so it's not a huge cost in order to vaccinate for this particular disease.

\*(16:10)

**Ms. Wowchuk:** The department does do a lot of work on this and during the winter months. In fact, back in February there were articles in the *Cattle Country*, the MCPA newspaper. There were recommendations made that producers should be vaccinating and the member is right there, the cost is not very high when you consider the impacts if you get an outbreak of the diseases.

I want to also say to the member how seriously we took this issue, our department took this issue. You're well aware that during an election campaign no news releases go out, or very few news releases go out, but in the case of anthrax there was a news release during the campaign alerting people of the issue. When that happened, the extension staff went to work quickly and held public meetings and very good turnouts at some of these meetings providing the farmers with the information, but it's an ongoing process. That's what happened then, and I'm sure that

in the upcoming season as we get ready, you know, you don't worry about it during the winter months but the extension work will continue.

**Mr. Eichler:** I thank the minister for that, and like to see the continued development of the educational process for our producers. I know that we all think we're immune to diseases but it's amazing how far a fly or a disease will carry within one province to the next and even through the waterways from one province to another.

I'll have to ask the minister and her staff whether or not this will fall under MASC or not, but it has to do with the bees, with the colony collapse disorder, the CCD. If it is, I can wait until they come to the table or we can deal with it at this time?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Let's just deal with it now.

**Mr. Eichler:** The beekeepers have contacted me in regard to the colony collapse disorder and I know the federal government has kicked in, I believe the amount was \$360,000 over the next three years to finance research, and the province of Saskatchewan has kicked in \$40,000 as well to a development fund to study with the various industry groups and the producers to find out what they can do in their particular province. I was wondering where we're at in the province of Manitoba in respect to financial help in studying to find out what the actual problem is. We know there are seven different areas that are being looked at. One is the mites and that type of thing in cell phones and so on. If the staff could maybe update us on that as well as the minister.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, I'm not aware that we have contributed any money to this particular issue. If we were contributing it would be through the ARDI program so, we will have to go back and check the records of whether there has been any money put into this, but it's not something that we have been lobbied on by the industry as well.

**Mr. Eichler:** Mr. Chair, I know that it's a \$15 billion industry in United States alone. In Canada it's a billion dollar industry and I know that there's a, from the bee keepers information that I was able to get my hands on, the number of hives that they lost approximately 30 percent of their bees last year and I know that the Member from Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff), he has probably the largest beehive in operation within Manitoba and his population was decreased by 30 percent last winter through the disease and lost approximately another 25 to 30 percent this summer and I know that the pollination

and crops that's so important to the province of Manitoba's economy and if this continues to allow to go on, a number of the producers just won't be able to stay in the bee and honey business and I think that would be a loss. In fact, I know it would be a huge loss to Manitoba as a whole.

The number of hives, bees that have been brought in is mainly from Australia and New Zealand has been my understanding and the cost just to bring them in, freight-wise, is quite expensive.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Thank you, very much.

I want to agree with the member that this is a very important industry and we do work with them, but it's our understanding that the losses were much lower than what he is indicating in his comments and the majority of the damage was in Ontario and Québec, but not as significant as he has indicated here in Manitoba, but we will check those numbers.

**Mr. Eichler:** I'm ready to move on to MASC, Mr. Chair.

I don't know if we're going to get through MASC today. I certainly hope so, but I do have a number of questions for the rest of the staff a bit later on. So, don't go too far. You can go for coffee, but not too far.

Thank you.

**Mr. Chairperson:** The floor is open for questions on this section of the Estimates.

\* (16:20)

**Mr. Eichler:** Mr. Chair, we had a pretty good year. We're due for a few good years. We certainly had our share of hard luck over the past four or five years, and I'm certainly pleased that the weatherman and good Lord blessed our farmers with a pretty decent crop. I know the hail damage that came out in the Russell area and Roblin and Dauphin and I was wondering if the staff and minister could give us an update on what the payout might have been, if it's going to be significant. I know that the minister had put out a press release in August regarding '06, and the payout from MASC was down to about \$43 million in insurance claims, which was substantially down from \$200 million in 2004 and \$296 million in 2005. So, if we could get an update on that that would certainly be appreciated.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairperson, I think the member was talking about the hail damage, and,

certainly, there was some significant hail that not only affected agriculture, but affected many, many others, many homeowners and many car owners, particularly in Dauphin.

With regard to hail, hail is a producer pay; there's no subsidization in it. It's strictly a producer-pay program. So they pay the premiums. They get the payouts. The total payout this year under the program was \$14.5 million and that's an estimated amount that will be paid out. The premiums were about \$14.8 million. So by the time you take off administration, the program will be at a loss of about \$2 million, but there are other years when that balance is up.

**Mr. Eichler:** So then the insurance premiums would probably, in all likelihood stay where they are for the upcoming year then. Is there any indication that they may have to change, Madam Minister?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** No, we aren't anticipating any increases. There are surpluses in the program and a \$2-million loss isn't high enough, so we don't anticipate much change in the premium.

**Mr. Eichler:** Mr. Chair, the Wildlife Damage Compensation Program, could we find out how many claims have been made and the dollar value of those claims? Are there any pending changes to those programs to improve in relation to predation.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Last year, we had 1,458 claims. This year we have about 900 claims, but, of course, the year's not finished yet, so that number will go up.

The member asks whether or not—I'm sure it will go up—whether there are plans to make changes to the wildlife compensation. We made changes a few years ago when the federal government said that they would only cover up to 80 percent. When that change was made, we had to change the coverage to 80 percent, and there are not plans to change it. The other issue is not every province has a wildlife compensation program.

**Mr. Eichler:** Having said that, Mr. Chair, is it something the department is looking at in regard to other provinces not having any Wildlife Damage Compensation Program? Is this something that they're looking at of not being involved with or is it something that will be an ongoing program for our producers?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** No, we are not talking about getting out of the depredation program.



**Mr. Eichler:** The predator control that's out there that MAFRI is providing, what does the department do, such as wolves and coyotes, that are taking a toll on the livestock sector, and is the compensation level the same? I know the minister referred to the 80 percent level in regard to the federal side of things. Are we working with the Department of Conservation? I know the number of wolves up in our area and farther north up into the Interlake, along Lake Manitoba, that area has really been pelted hard. I know the minister has had calls and, I know, I've certainly had calls in that area. It's becoming a serious, serious problem.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** I want to clarify when I said it was an 80 percent federal program. It's a federal-provincial program. It used to be covered to 100 percent and then it changed to 80 percent, but it's not a federal program. It's cost-shared just like all of the other insurance, 60-40, like the other programs are.

With regard to what we are doing, there is a trapping program that Conservation has where they will go out and work with them even when it appears that there might be a problem. They work very closely with them. Those are handled through MASC, and we work with them.

I was with staff at a meeting in the Interlake where we talked about different options that people could look at on how they could do some predator damage, but there's no doubt that this last year—I see my colleague from the Interlake here. We were at that meeting where we talked about different options. I think we both had our own experiences right in our own yards where there has been wildlife starting to come very closely to the homes. Specifically, on this issue, it's waterfowl damage, it's wildlife damage, depredation and big game. So all of those, but the losses are covered to 80 percent.

\* (16:30)

**Mr. Eichler:** The number of cattle and calves that have been killed by either wolves or coyotes—there was an article recently in the *Manitoba Co-operator* which said there were 317 head of cattle killed by wolves and another 1,173 by coyotes that cost the province approximately in the neighbourhood of \$35,000. Now that's a substantial amount of money. I know that the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Hawranik) brought a couple of people forward last spring with cows that had had their calves taken away, where they couldn't find the calves. Is there any anticipated changes where producers would

receive some type of compensation even though we all know, sitting around this table, you know, the size of the wolves now. I know the Member for Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff) brought in a picture of a wolf that was just huge—

**An Honourable Member:** The critic thought it was a bear.

**Mr. Eichler:** The member on the other side thought it was a bear. It probably looked like it. It was the size of a bear. But I mean a small calf would stand no chance. In fact, he would be able to pick up a small calf and carry it away, and no sign would be made whatsoever of that offspring.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, there has to be some proof that the loss was caused by wildlife, because if you don't have a cause, if you can't prove it was wildlife, it opens it up to a lot of risks. It opens it up to having to pay for stolen cattle, opens it up to animals that die from disease. There are some risks, so that's why we have to have some proof, but I think that there is some leniency as well. When you see that there is a lot of wildlife in the area, then you can have some consideration, but basically there has to be proof that wildlife was involved.

**Mr. Eichler:** This particular situation I'm talking about, maybe the staff in the department know about it. But the producer that I'm talking about lost six head that were not accountable for. I know the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Struthers) went in and allowed some of his staff to dispose of the wolves in that area the best that they could, but in the meantime the producer is still out the cost of those head. I don't need to tell the minister. She's full aware of the hardship that's out there for these producers to lose five head through no fault of your own and not get any compensation.

I hear what she's saying, but I think sometimes we have to have a look at the individual basis of these claims and try and make some type of a common-sense approach. I agree that it could be abused. No doubt. But certainly we do have the technology to be able to track these producers, and if it's an ongoing basis and they're making claim after claim, then certainly I agree with the department as far as supporting any type of fraud. I certainly would never condone it, nor would I ask the department to even have a look at.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** The member raises a very good point, and that's why other departments have to be involved when there is evidence that there are big

losses. You have to go in and deal with the problem, and that's what Conservation's role is. It's to manage the wildlife when it becomes a problem, but with this particular program, there has to be evidence of a carcass, proof of loss, before a payment can be made. But there are other things that producers have to do, and work that we have to do with Conservation as well, to address the problem.

**Mr. Eichler:** Just one last comment or question in regard to the solution to this, then, in regard to perhaps trapping in order to facilitate lowering the number of predators that are out there. It's not only just the wolves and the coyotes, but we've also had a number of increase of bears moving into a large number of—southern Manitoba, and I know that that can certainly become a bit of a problem as well, being pushed through fences and out of the area mainly because of bear predators alone. If we could find some type of an incentive program where it wouldn't necessarily be payable to the producers, but it would be a way of either trapping them or moving them back out into an area which would be more conducive, where livestock's not quite so heavy. I was wondering if the department would look at some type of an alternative in that particular direction.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** In actual fact, that's what the trapping program does. The trapping program is a compensation to the trapper to help resolve the problem. It is not a compensation to the farmer. You have to work out with Conservation and finding a trapper that will go in there to do the work.

You know there are other things. Farmers have to address these issues as well, and what are some of the other solutions that might work. I talk about the neighbour that I have who has put two donkeys in his herd because he was having such serious losses every year. He's put donkeys in and his losses are way down.

I know when I raised this issue somebody said to me, well, cattle producers aren't donkey producers. They don't want to be bothered with looking at new technology. But there are donkeys. There are sheepherders who have gone into getting dogs, and I think dogs can work as well. It's not easy, but when you are living in those kinds of elements and close to nature you have to look at solutions yourself. Some of the solutions are with hiring other people to do trapping, and there's a program to do that, but we have to look at other solutions. Producers have to have an open mind to some of the different techniques. They may be pretty basic, but I tell you,

from the individual that I know, and I think my colleague from the Interlake has some expertise in this area as well, where he has used a donkey on his farm, that's the kinds of things we have to continue to do to promote new ways, and there may be very old ways, but taking steps to protect ourselves as well.

**Mr. Eichler:** I'd like to move on to the proposed livestock production insurance program, the consultations that have been taking place with the cattle industry on how it's going to be funded and how much it's anticipated to cost. I know, again, in the *Manitoba Co-operator*, the pilot project that's being proposed for 2008. I was wondering if the staff and the minister could give us an update on that. I know the KAP organization has also endorsed it and is hoping that it'll be a program that would be worthy to become part of the MASC program.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, I'd like to inform the member that these discussions are at a very preliminary stage. No decisions have been made. Every province is looking at how they might develop a program, but nobody has made a decision to proceed on one to this point.

\* (16:40)

There are issues that we have to deal with, trade issues, for example. If you were guaranteeing somebody so much for their calves or cattle, then you could face a trade challenge. So this is not an easy issue to deal with. Staff at MASC has made producers aware and have looked for their input into what a pilot project might look like, but nothing has been finalized yet. There's no program. It's quite preliminary, but I think, when you're looking at the possibility of a program, it's important that you involve the industry. The only problem is that then there's an expectation that it might happen, and we're certainly not at that stage yet, nor are other provinces. So it's in the preliminary stages.

**Mr. Eichler:** So the cattle producers, and I understood from the article that there were approximately 100 Manitoba cattle producers that would be doing part of this pilot project in order to see whether or not this would work. So is this project still going to be moving forward with a group of these Manitoba cattle producers or will it be put on hold?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** That still needs to be determined. That's not finalized. We are dealing with this year's budget. If there was a project, it would be in next year's budget. As I have said, it is still very, very

preliminary because there are a lot of details that have to be worked out, and I'm very conscious of trade issues and what can happen should you put in place a program that will then bring forward a trade challenge. We are exporters; we are not importers. That's why it makes it very difficult for us to put in a program while others in another country may not have to worry about that. As I said, all the provinces are looking at this kind of program and nothing is finalized.

**Mr. Eichler:** I would like to move on to the CAIS program which, I believe, falls under MASC, and, if we could get an update on the province's financial commitments with respect to the—no?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** CAIS is a different staff. So, if there's anything else, we can bring that staff forward, but CAIS is not dealt with by the corporation.

**Mr. Cullen:** Mr. Chairman, while we have the MASC staff here, I just would like some clarification. I think there has been some change in terms of the general management over on the crop insurance side. Is the general manager now retired?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** If he's retired, he hasn't told me, and he's still sitting at the table, but Herb Sulkers, vice-president of insurance operations, has chosen not to work as hard as he was. Yes, he's chosen to retire, and, yes, the position will be filled.

**Mr. Cullen:** Well, thank you for your clarification. I guess I wasn't sure of the correct term there to use. So, certainly Mr. Sulkers has been there a long time, and I think served the corporation very well.

Can you give me some feel for how that process will work in terms of filling that position? Is that a board decision or how is that handled? I guess the other question would be: When will that position be filled, and is there someone acting there in that position now?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairperson, the position has been filled on an acting basis by an individual named Craig Thomson, who was manager of adjusting services. An ad was taken out. People have been applying for the job. It was an open competition. Internal and external people have applied for the job, and, no, the board will not be making a decision on who gets the job. That's an administrative decision and people here at the table along with human resources will be doing the interviewing and making the decision as to who will take that position.

**Mr. Eichler:** Before we do switch hats here again, in regard to the Red River basin, I had a request from the producers in that area, and based upon the crop insurance policy, it's based upon their total farm. Some of that flooding that took place last spring, I know there was a request to be brought forward that some of that area be segregated off to a different policy, rather than a group policy, on their total insurance program.

Is it something the department might be prepared to have a look at where the land that continues to flood be covered off, rather than have it put in another person's name and have a separate claim put through. I mean, that's what will probably happen if we don't look at some type of alternatives.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, what these producers want to do is split off a part of their farm and, instead of working on the whole-farm basis as everyone else does, divide it off so that those acres are not counted. That cannot happen under the existing program that we have. If you were able to do that, you would end up paying a very high premium, and the level of that premium would probably discourage people from wanting to do this. There is nowhere else in Canada that this is happening right now, but the board has indicated to this group of people that they are willing to meet with them. They are waiting for a letter from the group and then a meeting will be set up, but, again, this would take a lot of work to figure out how it would be done. It certainly could not be done with the kinds of premiums that they would be paying now.

**Mr. Eichler:** I'm just asking for clarification in regard to the Assiniboine, and that land there has probably fallen into the same category, would that be something that they would be looking at similar for those producers over there as well?

\* (16:50)

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, there is a program that was put in place for '05-06 for the people of the Assiniboine Valley who were flooded because of dam operations. There is a commitment to look at a long-term program, but I believe that the program will still be whole farm, not looking at separating out pieces of the land, and looking at a program that will address the issues of when land is flooded because of the operations of the dam. So they are two very different situations.

**Mr. Eichler:** Again, before we leave MASC, the Young Farmer Crop Plan Credit program, could we

get an update in regard to the amount of rebates and how utilized this program is and what the age limit is when you refer to the Young Farmer program?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** I believe that this is a very good program, a program that supports young farmers as they get started. We recognize that the young farmers are our future, and we have to do what we can to support them. In this case, we want to help them with their crop insurance, so they have to be a first-time farmer. They have to file a crop plan, work with a crop production specialist. This year there were 63 people who qualified for the program for a total of \$12,600. Each individual can qualify for \$200 reduction on their insurance premiums, and they can stay in the program for three years.

I also want to say that when we started this program we budgeted \$10,000, so I'm pleased with the uptake because we've had more uptake than we anticipated. I hope that next year there are more young farmers that are first-time applicants for insurance and we will certainly work with them.

**Mr. Eichler:** The age limit that was also asked, Mr. Chairperson.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** I'm sorry that I neglected to answer that. The applicant would have to be under the age of 40.

**Mr. Eichler:** As we know the lifespan of us, as the minister had mentioned earlier in one of her earlier comments, we're eating healthier, we're living longer, and as we move along in our next chapter of life, we know that 50 percent of the land is going to be turned over in the next 10 years to another generation. I would like to recommend to the minister and her staff that they look at the age limits of people wanting to get into farming.

I would suggest that you just call it a farm crop credit program rather than putting an age limit on it. I know there are a number of sons and daughters that go off to various careers and come back and take over the family farm. I know I certainly have an uncle that's 83, his son is 54 and wants to come back and farm. I think he should have that same opportunity to try and stay competitive so he can do a decent payout to his father and the rest of his siblings in order to take over the family farm, but he does have to be encouraged to do that.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, this is a three-year pilot project, so we will see how it works. Obviously, there's a lot more uptake than we had anticipated, but at the end of three years we will evaluate. Maybe the

member's suggestion of first-time farmers being the ones who could get this—I would not agree with a general program for everybody, but this comes in line with all of the other programs that we do. Our government has made a significant commitment for intergenerational transfer of lands, other programs on loans to encourage and support young people, and we are encouraging, although I welcome anybody that comes back into the industry no matter what their age is. Our goal is to target the younger producer and our age limit is under 40 on our loan programs as well. We continue to look at these programs, look at how we can enhance them.

We understand that farms are getting bigger and sometimes it's harder for young people to get that money and that's why we've made some expansions. We've expanded the Young Farmer Rebate on the loans up to 90 percent of financing, which is very good because many times it's raising the money. So they can now borrow up to 90 percent, and for the first five years of their loan, they can have it for just repaying the interest and not having to make that initial payment on the principal. This all fits in with the whole package of Bridging Generations to help with the next generation. I think this is very important because I know many people who are older, as the member indicated, who want to get out of farming, but all of their assets are tied up in the farm. There was a time when you could just say, well, I'll sign the farm over to my kids, but with today's lifestyle that's very, very difficult. Farmers' savings are in their assets. So this will help that young farmer take over, support a bigger portion of the financing, and I think the five years of paying only the interest will be a significant help to those people who are taking over and starting up in farming.

**Mr. Eichler:** With respect to the loans that the minister talked about to young farmers, do we have a number on that as well, and the amount of money that was loaned out, and the rate at which those loans were loaned out at?

\* (17:00)

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, the provisions that I was speaking about, about the 90 percent and the five-years interest only are provisions in this budget. They are not in place until we pass the budget and we can go on it. This program has been in place. On the young farmer loans, up until March '07, there have been 459 applicants for Bridging Generations for a total of \$51 million in loans. On the Young

Farmer Rebate, as of March 2007, we had 1078 clients, for a rebate of \$1,224,990. So, again, a significant amount of money and that is at a 2 percent—that was for the way the program was before. It was 2 percent rebate over five years for \$10,000. Now that will be going to \$15,000 over five years. So we are increasing the amount of rebate.

**Mr. Eichler:** The \$10,000 to \$15,000 is a 50 percent increase. Is that in the '07-08 budget or is that already in place for '06-07?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** The \$10,000 was in the previous year's budget; \$15,000 is in this year's budget.

**Mr. Eichler:** Could the staff and the minister outline the procedure that would be used in determining whether the young farmer would qualify for any other discounts as far as benefits to the young farmer that would be outside the MASC, or is it all run through that particular department?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** The question was what procedure is used to determine if a young farmer would qualify. The young farmer would have to be under the age of 40 and participating in one of the programs.

You also asked about what other programs might be available. There is a management training credit, which is \$2,500 per year, which goes for five years for a total of \$12,500. When the individual takes the proper training that's needed, then this money goes to reducing their payment. The training program, when it is developed, with MAFRI staff they work through the farmer's operations and work with him or her in determining what kind of training they might need. There's also a mentorship program where there are supports to the individuals as they get started. We have a Young Farmers program where there's a Web site; we have a newsletter for young farmers. The Web site allows for links to all the other departments where there might be supports.

**Mr. Eichler:** Just for clarification, the way of farming now has gone more through the corporate side of things, and if the young farmers incorporate, does this limit their ability in order to access these if they form a corporation?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** No.

**Mr. Eichler:** In regard to the loans that are outstanding, the loans that were made in the future years, and we know how the hardship that's been out there for the number of farmers and the debts that are incurred by these farmers, could we get the amount

of money and number of producers that had to have foreclosures on them this past year?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, the member talks about how difficult it is for producers. It is, and the corporation works very closely with them. There are loans that have been written off to help producers. There have been loans that have been renegotiated, but there have not been any foreclosures in '06-07.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Before I recognize the honourable Member for Lakeside, I'd like to remind all members that as we are now past 5 o'clock and, as agreed in the House, we are now operating under the Friday rules regarding no quorum requirements and no votes. So this means that any vote today which is not unanimous will have to be deferred until the next sitting of Supply.

That said, the Chair recognizes the honourable Member for Lakeside.

**Mr. Eichler:** Could the minister or her staff outline the number of producers where the loans have been sent for mediation to the Farm Debt Mediation Board?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Pardon me.

**Mr. Eichler:** Farm Debt Mediation Board. The number of producers.

\* (17:10)

**Ms. Wowchuk:** I believe the member is asking about MASC loans. We have the number of people, applications to the mediation board, but we do not have them broken out as to which would be MASC and which would be other financial institutes. So, for '06-07, there was a total of 103 that had made application to the mediation board, and this year to date we have 47.

**Mr. Eichler:** The green initiatives loans and alternative energy loans, have there been any of those that have been made in the past year? If so, how many and to whom?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** We just made the official announcement of the green energy loan last Friday, a week ago. There are people who are interested. The alternate energy programs, as I said, were just announced. There were people who were at the meeting, and staff have been dealing with people who are interested in the program, but no applications have been taken to this point.

On the environmental loans, there, as well, that is just a new program and nobody has taken out a

loan on the environmental loan program. It is tied to the federal program, the best management practices program, and there is no clear signal yet as to whether the federal government is going to continue that program. So that's one of the issues that we're dealing with on that one.

**Mr. Eichler:** Well, I certainly commend the staff and the minister for coming forward with this initiative. I think that this is something we certainly are going to have to get on board with in order to try and promote any environmental concerns that we have, and certainly when it comes to energy loans.

Could the minister outline how much money is available? I believe that, if I remember right, there's a cap of \$500,000. Is that correct? And how much money is available in this particular program?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** On which program?

**Mr. Eichler:** On both programs, Mr. Chairperson.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** On the alternate energy loans, the limit is \$525,000 for individuals. For a corporation, it's \$1,050,000 that is available for corporations.

On the environmental loans, the limit is \$150,000, if that's the question the member's asking. If the member is asking how many of these that we could do, we have the provision that we could do as many as would apply.

**Mr. Eichler:** I believe that concludes my questions in MASC. My colleague from Arthur-Virden is here, though, to ask a couple of questions, and I don't know if they'll fall underneath that. I would just maybe ask if they wouldn't mind hanging around until 6:30, if that's okay, just in case there's something else that falls underneath there that pops up?

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden):** I just have a few questions of the minister that I wanted to ask in regard to an issue that's taking place, or a development that's taking place in my constituency, Arthur-Virden, that I represent. It's a couple of issues, but mainly it's to do with just some bit of follow-up from a meeting that I know the minister was at last week in Souris when she met with a group called Clean Country Resources and their efforts in developing an ethanol processing facility utilizing grain from southwest Manitoba and the region around it.

I wonder if the minister felt that she got the same feedback I did. I believe that it was a fairly good meeting. I appreciate the minister being there. I

appreciate the staff being there with her: Deputy Todd, Ms. Gingera-Beauchemin, and others, being there, some of the local GO persons as well.

I wonder if she could give me any indication as to what her thoughts are in regard to further developments around the grants for the water project. Number one, I know that their first concern was dealing with some of the water that they'd like to get done this fall, as they pointed out to the minister that it would be much easier to do while the weather is as amenable as it is today, as opposed to having three big frozen ponds or lakes out in the country, because they have to pump the wells for 72 hours, and they actually have to go to the expense of developing the wells with the cribs, it is my understanding, before they can do testing. The initial testing has indicated that there is lots of water in that region.

They have full co-operation from the Oak Lake Aquifer group, which is no small task in itself. But there is co-operation and a feeling of optimism in the whole region, indeed, in Manitoba, about the future of ethanol and biofuels. I commend the minister for her announcement on the \$525,000, the \$1,050,000 that can go out into some of the projects that would take place in the province of Manitoba.

I'm wondering if she could just give me an update on any follow-up that might have occurred since the meeting and her thoughts in regard to whether or not we would be able to give some positive return. Perhaps she already has. I don't know. I haven't been in touch with some of the group since the meeting last week. If she could give us any kind of a response to where the project is at, at this time?

\* (17:20)

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, I was really pleased to be able to meet with this group in Souris. I was impressed with the amount of support. I was impressed with the municipalities that were there showing their support because that's what you need in these kinds of projects. You can't be out there. I was also interested to learn that they had the ability to access water from the Oak Lake Aquifer, which is not an easy thing to accomplish, so they have done a lot of work.

There were three questions that were asked. One of them was on the manufacturing licence, whether they would need one or not. Yes, they will need a manufacturing licence, and they will have to work

with STEM, Science, Technology, Energy, and Mines, to get that licence.

With regard to moving the natural gas lines, we have no answer on that yet, but they would have to work directly with Hydro. Certainly, we could get a contact for them to work with.

On the water situation, again, there is no answer, but we are working actively to try to get an answer with the view that we would have to work with the municipalities. I think it's the municipalities that you have to work with on this one, not the group. We will get clarification on that, but that's our view on that one.

We recognize that time lines are very tight, so we will do what we can to move this along. The group will be required to obtain a production licence from the Province, and that's from STEM, from the ministry. In order to be eligible to produce ethanol in Manitoba, they have to get that licence, and the licence agreement will also be subject to strict environmental requirements, but this is where, under this production licence, that's where they would look at local production, how much local crop is being used.

Under the manufacturing agreement, the companies agree to meet certain levels of community participation and to purchase Manitoba feedstock. So those are the kinds of things they have to work through with the Science, Technology, Energy, and Mines in order to get agreement on this licence, so that's where they have to do some work. We will be relaying that information back to them.

**Mr. Maguire:** I thank the minister for her answer. Just a couple of things that I'd like to clarify. Which comes first, the manufacturing agreement or the production licence?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** The production licence comes first.

**Mr. Maguire:** I assumed that and I agree with the minister. It's no easy feat to get the work that these people have done in regard to the board already, the co-operation in the area. The open, public community meetings that they've held over the last two years have been received very successfully with a lot of support, as the minister's pointed out. In spite of projects, and I don't want to just pinpoint this one, but they're further developed, further down the road in regard to being ready to pour cement, start construction, if you will, than perhaps some of the ones in other areas, in the southwest at least, that I know of. There are others in the joint areas between

Viriden and some of the communities just across the line in Saskatchewan.

There are others in the Boissevain-Killarney area that have been looking at—you know, Iogen, the straw-based plant for years, but now they're looking at other sources as well. This group, Clean Country Resources, as you know, has gone completely away from their project of coal and they've gone completely to an energy source of natural gas and biomass now, as I pointed out to you, in their efforts to comply with what the Manitoba regs say they need to. They still feel confident that they can move forward with a successful plant. They do propose to purchase, you know, I don't know if it would 99.9 percent Manitoba grain. I don't know if you can force them to buy all 100 percent within Manitoba.

I think that there'll be corn coming into some of these plants from the United States and some other areas, from what I hear about Minnedosa as well, as just one example. But I agree with the minister, their objective, at least what they've told me, is to purchase as much local grain as they possibly can, and that's why they want it in that location, as opposed to moving it to some other part of Manitoba. They want it to benefit their farms in their local area, as I'm sure the minister farming in her region would understand.

So the production licence, if she could just elaborate for me on that. What steps would they have to follow to come up with the production licence?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** The member raised the issue of the coal. The group had come to the Province for funding for their feasibility study, and that was one of the issues that was prevented because of provincial policy. They didn't get money for their feasibility study to do the coal plant. They've put in another application now for feasibility funding under the new conditions that the member has outlined. So that has to be done. Once that's done, they apply for their environmental licence. While they're working on the environmental licence and construction, that's when they work on their production licence. The feasibility study is a first step.

**Mr. Maguire:** I appreciate that the minister is looking at the feasibility study under the new application and whether the REDI funds, as she indicated in Souris, I think, would be probably much more amenable under the new program than where they were. The group, Clean Country Resources, acknowledges that, as I do.

So I know, as they're moving forward on that, does she believe that this is an opportunity to be able to still do this by the end of October? I know you have to get wells, if we're going to pump that water to do the testing, it's a considerable amount of funds to put the cribs down that would be needed in that area to go ahead and do the testing right out of the cribs. They've done testing in regard to sites, found out that there's lots of water there, but you have to do it according to the regs that we have and according to the process. So it's just a matter of making sure that we follow the steps needed to be done in regard to getting the water tested and in place. That would be a big step forward for these individuals, I believe, and this company in allowing them to move forward with the rest of their programming this winter for next spring.

\* (17:30)

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, we are working closely with the group on their application for a feasibility study, and we're working with them on finding the right way to deal with them on the water study, and, yes, we anticipate that all of that can be worked out. The work that they have to do on the water study should be able to be done this fall.

**Mr. Maguire:** I really appreciate the minister's action on this. I think it's a very sustainable project that they're proposing, and it'll make a big difference to all of Manitoba.

The feedstock side of the industry as well, I guess I want to just back up a little bit and say that, you know, high prices for grain right now, we've got a little bit of pressure on some of the livestock side, having raised steers in the late '60s and early '90s when barley wasn't worth anything and watching the value of cattle rise at that time, when grain did jump and move to even today's levels back in the early, early '60s, or '70s, I should say. You know, our hope is that the whole industry moves forward together. There is always some lag time, but as the value of livestock hopefully will come up, if these are going to be new sustainable grain levels, then the rest of the industry will have to adapt and come forward at those levels as well and become sustainable.

There's always some hurt as these sectors, livestock and grain, move back and forth between, but I wouldn't discourage the minister from where we're at today because we do have safety nets and valves in place for those sectors as well. Hopefully, they are improved upon and working.

Can she just indicate to me the discussions she may have had with the industry in regard to feedstock in Manitoba and the by-products from the biofuels industry, and where she's at with some of the discussions with industry on that at this time?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** You know, we really look at this by-product, this feedstock that's coming off the production as an opportunity. It could be for livestock feed, and there's research going on there, but we also believe that there are opportunities for some high-end products that could be developed as well.

So there is research being done at the University of Manitoba through Husky; a chair has been established to deal with this issue. But we are doing a lot of work at the Food Development Centre, the food science section and the Richardson Centre looking at all of the different options. There's also research being done in the animal science section on the animal feed side, so there is work being done in a variety of areas.

We have to do some work, I believe, to convince producers that this is a good feed stock. I look at Minnedosa, and for the number of years that there has been an ethanol plant there the product has been dried and it's been shipped off to Québec. Most of it has been going out of the province to the dairy industry there.

Now we're having a larger facility and higher feed costs. We have to encourage people to use this product. In fact, the Food Development Centre has been in the Minnedosa area. They've been offering seminars to producers to look at the value and encourage them to consider this as a valuable product, and I think there are opportunities for spinoff industries to develop here with that particular product.

So we recognize it as being very valuable, and we are doing research in several areas on it. Hopefully, we will come up with a unique food product, because if you look at it, there's a lot of nutritional value in it; and, hopefully, it can be used as a supply for livestock because in other areas it is being used in that way.

**Mr. Maguire:** Well, I appreciate my colleague from Lakeside allowing me to ask one more question in regard to this issue and I appreciate the minister's response.



There's, of course, a lot of work being done in the nutraceutical industry and other health fields as well for the high-end products, high-end values out of some of these areas. I know that there's been work done in some of the plants in other jurisdictions before from my farming experience, and I would encourage her to continue to work as a department with the centres that she's named because there are lots of good material and good end results that could come from that. We are located in the heart of Canada that needs to have the most value out of those feed stocks, and I think that by doing so we're going to be adding value tremendously to much, much more than just the grain itself and the livestock but a number of other areas.

The minister indicated that she felt we could move forward, or this group would be able to move forward, with their efforts this fall. I'm assuming that means that would include getting the water testing and that sort of thing done, some help for them to get the wells drilled. Does she see any other hurdles, then, that they might have to overcome prior to getting their production licence?

\* (17:40)

**Ms. Wowchuk:** You know, it's hard to tell what is ahead of them, but the first step is the water study. They have to work along with the municipalities, and we are preparing a letter to send to them to tell them what steps they have to take to get that done. So that will be sent to them shortly. But, you know, they have to then go through the environmental review process, and we don't know what the environmental review—that's a federal-provincial review. We don't know what the outcomes will be. Then the next step for them is their finances, is being sure that they have—certainly, they have done very well with raising funds. So I think that's one of the areas you can give a lot of credit to them for the amount of work that they have done there.

I just want to go back again where we were talking about nutraceuticals and functional foods. I just want to revert back to that a bit and say that as a department we've supported the development of functional foods and nutraceuticals and the development of wheat-based ethanol processing and coal product utilization, that's the Food Development Centre, but also that we support projects in a cluster. I think we have a very unique cluster here in Manitoba with the Richardson Centre for Nutraceuticals and Functional Foods, the Canada Centre for Agri-Food Research in Health and

Medicine that's at the St. Boniface Hospital, and the Food Development Centre. No place else is there a cluster that works so effectively together. We're very proud of that model.

I also indicated that there were seminars that were organized with funding from our department and from MRAC with the economic development offices and University of Manitoba students. They did things like an overview of ethanol-coal product research program, wheat-based ethanol processing, and evaluation of coal products for food application, effects of de-branning of wheat starch and protein content in the ethanol production, evaluation of drying techniques for distiller grain, and developing food products from distiller grain. I wanted to put those on the record just to show the kinds of projects that are going on and the things that are being worked out and offered out in the community so people become more aware of the value of this product.

**Mr. Maguire:** Just a quick follow-up on that, the minister's comments in regard to the environmental review, the provincial and the federal one. Are they done jointly? I mean, she indicated they're a joint—can they be done at the same time? That would really speed things up. Of course, it's a much bigger saving in cost as well.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Generally, they are done together. Only one assessment is done, but then there would be the work that goes through so that both levels of government have the opportunity to comment and give their views on it. But it's usually a joint assessment.

**Mr. Maguire:** I would just close. The minister indicated that the R.M. would be responsible for the water development. Maybe I misinterpreted what she was saying. I think that the R.M. is very much in favour of moving forward with this project, as the minister has indicated, but, because it's a private project, I wondered if they're not responsible for developing their water program themselves.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, normally our programs work with the municipality to assess the industrial needs of a particular project. So what we're saying is that's the best mechanism. I don't think there's anything to worry about there because of the support that they have from the municipalities. But, in order to access programs or take advantage of

what government has to offer, that is why we're suggesting to work through the municipalities.

**Mr. Maguire:** Thanks very much for your time. I just want to thank the minister for her time then, and the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler), and I'll turn it back to him.

**Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose):** So then who is responsible for getting the water rights licence?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Are you asking who gets it or who issues it?

**Mr. Briese:** Who should be applying for it, the company or the R.M.? There's certainly a licence required.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Once the study is done, it would be the company that would apply for the licence, and they would apply to Water Stewardship for it.

**Mr. Eichler:** Getting back to where I started off about an hour ago on the CAIS program, and we've only got less than an hour to go, could we get an update on the Province's financial commitments with respect to CAIS, what's outstanding and where we are at, at this particular point in time?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Can the member clarify? Are you looking for the amount we spent in the previous year, or are you looking for the amount we've budgeted this year?

**Mr. Eichler:** Previous year would be fine and where we're at to date, but where we're at budget-wise would be a good starting point.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** For the year '06-07, our projected total payment is \$193.3 million. That's total federal-provincial, and the provincial share of that, which is 40 percent, is \$77.3 million for '06-07. That's the projection of what we anticipate will be paid out in that year. This is 2006-2007, but it's the payout for 2006.

**Mr. Eichler:** Do we have any indication of the amount of money that flowed into Manitoba outside of the CAIS program to reduce the provincial share of those CAIS dollars that were not being paid out as a result of that?

\* (17:50)

**Ms. Wowchuk:** The program that the member, I believe, is referring to, would be one of the programs, is the Canadian Inventory Transition Initiative. Under that program, in 2006, about \$90

million flowed into Manitoba. That would have offset \$16 million in CAIS federal-provincial, and that meant the provincial share was about \$6 million, but in actual fact there wasn't that kind of saving because we ended up paying out far more than we had projected we would be paying out.

**Mr. Eichler:** I thank the minister for that. The reason I am asking, I think it is important in our negotiation process. I know the minister has become frustrated, as well as the minister from Saskatchewan, as well we move forward into our next set of generation farm policies and safety nets, as we negotiate that. I know that the minister is trying to get that percentage changed from the 60-40, but before we do go there, that is why I was trying to get some of these numbers, in order to assist us in whatever we can do to make sure that we have a program that is going to be sustainable, that's going to be predictable and going to be bankable for our producers.

We know the last program had a number of flaws in it. The staff and minister are well aware of these problems. The \$6 million then, even though we did spend more money than we had actually budgeted, the amount of money that is going to be outstanding for '07-08 with the program ending, is there any indication that there will be a shortfall for dollars that are not in the budget for '07-08?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Every year since the program has been in place our government has met their commitment to 60-40, and almost every year we have had to put in additional funds above and beyond what we have budgeted for, and we have been able to do that. So we have met that. For this year, the applications are just starting to come in, so we don't know whether there are adequate resources there to meet our commitment or whether there will be additional resources required.

The member talked about my frustration with the federal government. My frustration and my desire to change the formula is not with these programs. Where I want the formula changed is on the disaster assistance program. The federal government announced the disaster assistance program that was 100 percent their program, and then they came to the provinces and got all this hype going that they were addressing disaster assistance. Then they said, oh, by the way, provinces, it's now 60-40. Disasters are not normally funded at 60-40, and I believe that we have to continue to pursue that issue to get the formula

changed. We will have to have some work done on this before we can come to an agreement on this because the federal government cannot continue to bring programs in and not live up to what they committed. That would be like me saying, oh, we've given an education tax credit to farmers and, by the way, federal government, we want you to share this 60-40 with us.

It's a provincial program. We're paying 100 percent of it. Federal government introduced a disaster assistance program. We have to be sure that we are getting a fair deal and that the federal government is not just introducing a program and then saying, oh, yes, you pay 40 percent when that's not the formula that we use for disasters.

**Mr. Eichler:** Before I do leave the CAIS program, the minister brought up some interesting questions in regard to the disaster assistance program, but I'll get to that in a minute.

The CAIS program, before I leave it, the minister said that there was a shortfall. Was this just absorbed in the general operating, or was this money taken from another department or through the rainy day program, or was it just absorbed and, if so, how much were we short in the budget?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** There may have been a small amount of the money that came out of the department because of prudent budgeting. I would give credit to our staff for the work that they do to ensure that we live within the budget that we are given, but the majority of the money, and it was a substantial amount, was provided by government. Because there was an additional expense, government provided the additional money.

**Mr. Eichler:** And the amount of money was?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairperson, we budgeted \$48.9 million. This is still a projection because we're not completed with '06, '07, but we're projecting that the costs will be \$77.3 million.

**Mr. Eichler:** That is approximately a 50-percent increase from what was budgeted to what was actually paid out. I find that quite odd, interesting to find that you can have almost \$30 million in efficiencies found in the department in order to do that. Where did you find that kind of efficiency to absorb that in your budget?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Maybe it wasn't clear. I said we might be able to find some of it through efficiencies in the department, but the majority was additional

government money that was provided through Treasury Board.

**Mr. Eichler:** So where did that money come from? What department was that transferred from? Somebody had to be short.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** We're very fortunate that the economy of Manitoba has been doing so well that, from general revenues, we were able to have the additional resources.

\* (18:00)

**Mr. Eichler:** It's certainly nice that the economy is doing well that you can come up with almost \$30 million extra for an unbudgeted item that, I'm sure there's others out there in the same departments wishing and fighting for that dollar. So we're certainly glad that the minister's staff saw to it that we did meet our obligations.

The minister had talked in regards to the disaster assistance program that's being proposed. The 60-40 split that is being proposed by the federal government on this program, do we have any type of a budget amount that we'll be talking about and what that cost would be for the province?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, I want to give full credit to my staff for helping me with preparing to go to Treasury Board and to Cabinet to get these additional resources.

It's a recognition that this government recognizes that the agriculture industry needs a good safety net program and, although there is a lot of complaining about the program, there is also a lot of money that flows out through farmers through this program. But, with regard to the disaster assistance, that's exactly the issue. We don't know. The federal government is not giving us enough information. There is not enough detail available yet, and we need a lot more detail before we can make decisions on this program.

**Mr. Eichler:** We would like to be kept apprised of that, but, certainly, I would have to agree with the minister and her staff in regards to the 90-10 split. I can assure the minister and her staff I'll be talking to my colleagues down east, because we have never seen, even back in the—when we were in government doing the Flood of the Century it was a 90-10. Certainly, I think that it needs to have those parameters built around that and the safety net put in so that we can. In fact, we only have one taxpayer here at the end of the day, and we are a province that

doesn't seem to have a lot of growth as far as population is concerned. So we only have one taxpayer that we can certainly get that money from.

So, certainly, I would like to move on to the new program that's being negotiated, the Growing Forward program. I understand that there was a meeting that was scheduled to be brought forward in September. Now, with the light of the two elections that are going on and possibly one at the federal level or Saskatchewan level in the next few months, we certainly don't know. I am concerned about the deadline coming forward on March 31, 2008, and we certainly don't want to be left in a position that we're going to be rushed into another program. I'm very concerned that we may not have those programs in place in time.

So could the minister give us an update for the committee on where this is at, and where her government is prepared to go in order to negotiate with the federal government on the new program?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Indeed, there was a meeting scheduled, and the federal minister chose to cancel that meeting. We weren't quite sure why he was cancelling. Then, of course, the Cabinet shuffle came and that may have had some effect on the scheduling by the federal minister. The member is right. There are now elections going on and the federal government will not call a meeting of ministers while there is an election going on, but I can assure the member that staff continues to work on these issues. I would have to say that probably more work and more meetings have happened in working out this agreement than have happened in the past. There's a tremendous amount of work, but I want to assure the member that despite the fact that there isn't a face-to-face ministers' meeting, there are teleconferences, our staff continues to keep us informed and there is a scheduled meeting anticipated with, for the federal-provincial ministers.

We would all hope that we could move this along, but, recognizing that there are interruptions that take place, like elections, that can cause delays, we're hopeful that the program will move forward in a very well thought out way. Nobody wants to put together a hasty program that will result in amendments being done as soon as the program is started, but, as has happened in the past, all programs have a deadline, though programs get extensions if a new program isn't able to be designed. So I think that

there is that capacity to extend the existing program if negotiations aren't able to be completed.

**Mr. Eichler:** Thank you, Madam Minister.

In regard to the Growing Forward program, we know that, at the Manitoba level on the CAIS program, we chose to have the program run out of Manitoba but administered at the federal level. Is the Province of Manitoba looking at maybe changing that, whereby we would do the administering of the new program, rather than let it be done at the other level?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** As a government and as a department, we continue to look at what the options are, whether there's a possibility that we could do this administration on our own, but this is a very complex program. To make a transition during the middle of a program I think would be very difficult for producers. To say that we haven't looked at it would not be right because we have looked at the possibility.

One of the things we have to think about is we have the federal administration here in Manitoba. The federal government is doing the administration for Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and B.C., and those are some very good jobs that are located here in the province. If we looked at taking over the administration, that means that other provinces would look over. I can tell you that Saskatchewan is lobbying very hard. They would like to take some of the administration out of Manitoba right now. So we have to think carefully about what the benefits are. Is there a benefit? Are we going to save money? Are we going to lose jobs in the province? You have to look at the whole picture. But we review it from time to time.

**Mr. Eichler:** I was wondering if the staff that's involved in helping negotiate the new policy agreement on Growing Forward, are there any highlights? I know there're a number of changes that have been recommended through the CAIS program. If they could highlight for us some of those areas of concern which they're working on in order to make the program better.

\* (18:10)

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairperson, there are four parts to the program, as the member indicated, to the business risk management. There's a whole other part besides business risk management, but under the

business risk management on the AGRI invest, there are still discussions going on on contribution rates and levels of caps that should be in place. That's not worked itself out yet, but as I said, that's the top 15 percent of CAIS.

With the AgriStability, which is the CAIS program, there are no real issues, just some issues about working out administration, some finer detail, but there are no major issues there.

Under the AgriRecovery, we've already talked about that under the disaster assistance and the concerns that we have about that.

The AgriInsurance, the continuation of the insurance, but we are moving to look at ways to put some insurance in place for livestock. As I talked about earlier, that's a very complex issue as well, and all the provinces are looking at it, but no details have been worked out on that.

My area of concern is in the others. We can work out these issues that are there to maintain the farm as it is, but we have to look towards the future, and that's where the non-business risk management pillars are. I'm very concerned about the reduction in contribution under the last agreement. There was wedge funding, which was about one-third of the dollars in the program. We've got an indication, not finalized yet, but messages from the federal government that there is not going to be any money in the wedge funding. So that makes it very difficult for us, because it is through this money that we've been able to fund ALUS, commercialization, food safety, tracking and tracing. I think that, as federal-provincial ministers, we cannot only look at business risk management. The industry is changing. There are many challenges for the industry with regard to food safeties. The whole world looks at us, at tracking and tracing. I'm concerned, with the direction the federal government is taking right now and the signals we're getting, that we are not going to have the flexibility that we need in this part of the program to move the industry into the future.

**Mr. Eichler:** With respect to the formula, other than the disaster assistance program, is it the Province's intention to have the same 60-40 split, as far as budgetary purposes, for the program then?

**Mr. Chairperson:** Yes, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Eichler:** I'm glad we had that discussion.

I do need to move forward, though, in respect to the Livestock Industry Development Assistance department. I was wondering if the minister could outline what exactly is the department trying to get done in respect to the secondary processing, as far as seeing that grow and develop. What is the long-term goal?

\* (18:20)

**Ms. Wowchuk:** I think we've been pretty clear on what our goal is. Our goal has been to increase slaughter capacity in this province so that our producers are not so dependent on people that are outside of the province, but this has been a very difficult file, despite the fact that funding has been made available. Those people who have looked at increasing, or new facilities, have just not been able to move in that direction. Focus is on niche markets. Consumers are looking for more locally produced product, so how is it that we can move and fill some of those local niche markets using Manitoba product.

Our provincial abattoirs have not expressed a lot of strong interest to move from provincial to federally-inspected plants, just because of some of the restrictions that are put on by CFIA. It is very expensive, although I would like to see some of them move to a federally-inspected plant. It's just like I would like to have more slaughter capacity in this province, but you have to have somebody who is willing to take those steps, and certainly as a government we're willing to work with them.

For those facilities that aren't able to move forward, we are working with them. We're helping them with food safety. We're helping them out with funding to deal with SRMs, which is a big issue for our abattoirs. We're working with them on feasibility studies, engineering studies, marketing studies, and as much as we would like to have them move forward to federally-inspected plants, it's their decision.

I should say as we look towards these niche markets and developing products, we've put in a suite at the Food Development Centre that we did not have before for the development of meat products. Again, that's another significant step that we have taken at that facility to help with the food processing industry. Since this program came into place, there have been eight applicants that have received funding under the feasibility studies in capital components. They include B J Packers, Plains Processors, St. Claude Abattoir, Country Meat and Sausage. Country Meat and Sausage had a few

applications. Dauphin Meat Processors and D.A.L. Meats have made application. All of these people see this as an opportunity to expand their facilities to meet the needs of producers because, if they expand their facilities, there will be more slaughtering in Manitoba, but also taking advantage of niche markets that are developing. Hopefully, they can displace some of the product that gets imported into this province.

**Mr. Eichler:** We certainly concur with the minister with regards to increasing those processors that are here and see them grow and prosper and, certainly, anything we can do to help that. I know the minister has called on her colleagues, and I was wondering if she could give us an update with respect to the interprovincial meat trade. Is there any type of success or stories that we might be able to go hopefully moving forward on any information on the meat trade program?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Well, I think this is a topic we've talked about every year, and one that we continue to pursue. I can tell the member that there is nothing new to report despite the fact that there is a lot of work going on behind the scenes and staff continues to work at. There's nothing to announce yet. It's really about food safety standards. We have to be sure that they are being met and that they are the same standards between provinces. Some progress, but not enough to make the changes. I hope that we will be able to move this file along this year.

**Mr. Eichler:** We certainly concur with the minister. I know that people from Ontario come here on holidays, and they take meat back. It just doesn't make much sense to me that they can come here and buy a steak and go back into the Lake of the Woods or back to Kenora and cook that same steak that they're not allowed to buy there, and I just find it very frustrating. But I can't dedicate any more time to that.

I would want to move on to the issue of, in the same department though, about the horse business with the ban on United States packers being lobbied very heavily to curb that. I know there's only one processing plant left and that's in De Kalb, Illinois. Is this some type of opportunity that we could use this program in order to maybe get some of this business within the province of Manitoba? I know the federal government just licensed a plant in Regina in order to take some of the meat business that is going to be out there for us. We could capitalize on this opportunity at this particular point in time, and

maybe this is one of the industries we could see grow and prosper within the province of Manitoba because it is a huge industry, and there are some 80,000 horses that are in the United States alone that are either going to be turned out in the foothills of Nevada or in the mines of Kentucky. We'd certainly like to see that business grow and prosper within the province of Manitoba.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Well, I guess that we have to recognize what happened with the horse slaughter industry in the United States. There's a lot of emotion tied to this, and there are many people who are so many steps away from the farm that they only think about these animals for pleasure. They don't understand where our food comes from.

We see this as a real opportunity, but it would take someone who wanted to build a plant or modify their plant so that they would meet EU standards, because this product goes to Europe, but definitely it is an opportunity.

**Mr. Eichler:** We hope that the staff will continue to work on that and see if we can take advantage of that opportunity. The farm school tax rebate, the requests as they come forward and the number of applications that are being sent out, what is the percentage of applications that are sent out, but not necessarily returned? I know the province has moved to increase that level of funding each and every year, and we're certainly hoping that that will get a 100 percent off in a very short time, but the amount of money that was actually paid out, but not necessarily claimed, what's the difference between those two figures?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, the books aren't closed yet for our 2005 year because people have three years to apply. So that program stays open so there could still be applications that are made. So for 2005, we received 34,103 applications; 33,930 have been paid out, but they are being processed and people can still apply until the end of this year.

**Mr. Chairperson:** The hour being 6:30 p.m., committee rise.

## EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

\* (15:00)

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

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

We are on page 31 of the Estimates book.

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Yes, there were a number of questions that I took as notice yesterday.

**Madam Chairperson:** I'm sorry, my microphone was off.

**Mr. Doer:** Pardon?

**Madam Chairperson:** The honourable First Minister, my microphone was off.

**Mr. Doer:** It's pretty loud now. We won't have any problem keeping awake here. Of course, with the questions, I won't have any problem anyway.

Mr. Veerkamp, the question is, transferred to a permanent position? The answer is yes. He's in a permanent position.

Any other Crown corporations on travel? No. We double-checked that.

The issue of did we have any communications with GrowthWorks before the takeover of ENSIS, there was no discussion that the government's aware of between any government official and GrowthWorks regarding the ENSIS transaction, until after the transaction was announced. There have been a number of meetings with GrowthWorks since that day with senior officials in the department of industry.

I think it's important to note that the Manitoba law, which was introduced in 1992-93, requires that any capital raised by ENSIS will be invested in any Manitoba companies. There was a question about—I made the reference to the teachers' pension fund and raised a question about whether it was called Greystone. Yes, it is called Greystone Managed Investments, and the TRAF teachers' pension fund management was transferred to Saskatchewan in 1999 pre-October 5 swearing in.

I mentioned that there was a substantial increase in jobs in the financial insurance sector of Manitoba. We've had that confirmed. We've gone from 24,900 to 29,400, an increase of 4,500 or 18 percent from August '06 to August '07.

The member opposite asked questions about private-sector investment in Manitoba. Stats Canada concludes that the private-sector investment will be 69 percent increase in Manitoba in '07. The level of private investment has gone up \$2 billion or 50 percent since 1999 to 2007.

Recent examples of private investment: the Avenue Building in Winnipeg, the Place Louis Riel Hotel—one was \$10 million; the other was \$15 million; the cultural centre, 7.5; condo complex in Gimli, \$55 million; Portage la Prairie consumer corp., 6.2; condo redevelopment of the Canadian Red Cross, 11.5; Sobeys distribution centre in Headingley, 40.5; Piazza De Nardi, \$2 million; Granny's Poultry head office and hatchery, \$8 million; Rona, who's planning to increase the number of retail stores in this province and have committed to 15 more stores by the year 2009; Bank of Montreal, \$5 million in '07 and \$5.3 million in '08 to renovate the existing banks; Qualico corporation and Winnipeg head office, \$16 million; Silver Heights Apartments renovations, \$6 million; Apotex Centre at the University of Manitoba, \$17 million, a pharmacy building at the Bannatyne campus; Richardson College for the Environment, \$35 million is proposed at the University of Winnipeg, most of that is from the private sector; North West Company renovations, \$3 million; Shape Foods, as I indicated yesterday, \$30 million; Canad Inns, \$25-million hotel adjacent to the Health Sciences Centre; Polo Park Shopping Centre, a \$30-million expansion; CVRD, Inco, \$135 million in capital projects, including an environmental project to capture dust in the smelter, smelter modernization, continued mine development and various other projects across its mines and processing plants.

As I indicated yesterday, the number of wells that I indicated I'd get the number for; 478 new wells were drilled, for a total of a \$400-million investment last year in oil and exploration. Mineral activity, spending up \$65 million in a new nickel mine, Crowfoot minerals; HudBay Minerals has announced a \$35-million exploration plan; Four Points Sheraton, \$10-million expansion at the airport; Can-Oat Milling, which is a project we discussed with the new company, with Mr. Schmidt, the \$14-million operation at Portage la Prairie; Biovail, 60,000 square feet, and I mentioned this yesterday, \$30 million is currently under way; Behlen Industries, \$3-million expansion in Brandon; Hopewell Development, a \$50-million investment at Kenaston and McGillivray; Blue Cross just completed a \$22-million redevelopment of the old health services building at Polo Park, which they opened in April, 2007; Husky Energy, a \$145-million ethanol plant; Winnipeg Airports Authority, which is now a private entity, \$580-million redevelopment; Siemens Institute for Advanced Medicine, \$25 million adjacent to the Health Sciences Centre, which is

under way; Smartpark, \$6.5-million multi-tenant facility, adjacent with the new head office of Canada for Monsanto; Nygard Fashion World, a redevelopment of \$10 million in two stores, which was announced in a potential other redevelopment of \$80 million; AirSource Power selling Manitoba Hydro power from new, private wind energy, \$178 million; and there are many other smaller hospitality industry announcements.

You asked what years I voted for the Conservative budget. It was correct, '89 and '99. *[interjection]*

Vincent Massey High School was the place I talked about tuition fees. The sports field was asked by your Brandon West person, do you want me to respond to him directly or I can to respond to the minister? I've got more questions I'll take as notice, but I'll allow further questions to take place.

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** One of the questions that was asked yesterday and undertaken as given was just a description of the travel over the past 16 months since our last Estimates, and I didn't hear that in the Premier's response.

**Mr. Doer:** Yes, the number will be made available and publicly disclosed. You're getting it for the fiscal year. It was in the public domain, most of the ones before that, and will be released in the public domain as I indicated yesterday, in a very short time.

**Mr. McFadyen:** I think I also asked just about who was on the delegation, part of the delegation on those trips. Is that going to be part? He made reference to a number, but I didn't hear anything about destination, purpose of the trip and who was on the delegation.

**Mr. Doer:** The material will be released and we're working on all of the issues of travel. We're actually upgrading the amount of material we release for all ministers, including the Premier.

**Mr. McFadyen:** When can we expect that information, and does it include the details I referred to in my earlier question?

**Mr. Doer:** It certainly includes all the travel of the Premier, both directly attributed to the office of the Premier and Executive Council and other expenditures that are paid for in other departments.

I further checked on the other question. I think I answered that yesterday in terms of Crown corporations.

**Mr. McFadyen:** In addition to Crown corporations, I'd asked whether there were departments other than Executive Council and Intergovernmental Affairs in government that had paid for travel, and I don't think he addressed that point specifically.

**Mr. Doer:** I believe there's one other, a very modest one, in Aboriginal Affairs dealing with the Aboriginal economic summit in Saskatoon, and I believe that's it. Most of it is Intergovernmental Affairs and the Executive Council.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Will he just check to confirm. You sound uncertain.

**Mr. Doer:** I did check and that's what I've come up with, but I've poked it around one more time just to make sure, triple-checked it, but the due diligence is there was a modest amount to a Saskatoon economic summit. Part of that was the delegation from Manitoba that was paid out of Aboriginal Affairs, but they will be fully divulged, I think, when we release ministerial travel, including the Premier's.

**Mr. McFadyen:** I just want to move over to the decision of the government to proceed with the proposal to build the power line, the next bipole line down the west side of Lake Winnipegosis and Lake Manitoba as opposed to the east side option. It's the only proposal that's being taken forward to the Clean Environment Commission, which means that if it is rejected, ultimately, which the Clean Environment Commission hasn't had a history of doing, but if it is ultimately rejected Hydro then goes back to the drawing board, and they've certainly made the case that there's urgency in getting on with this.

So the Premier has directed that they put that one proposal before the Clean Environment Commission, which effectively cuts off other options, or at least for practical purposes cuts off other options. I want to ask the Premier, given that he has indicated that the possibility of a UNESCO World Heritage site is the rationale for that decision, a site on the east side of Lake Winnipeg, I wonder if he could just indicate what is the status of that proposal to the U.N.? What is the latest from the U.N. in terms of that proposal?

**Mr. Doer:** Well, the member opposite uses the argument that that is the reason for, the reason, and I would caution the member opposite to not use the words "a singular reason." I know it may serve for the purpose of questions, but I just want to make it clear that our preference, which was well articulated



in the election campaign and before the election campaign, was more than one reason.

I mentioned customers. I mentioned the boreal forest, and then of course the question today was the boreal forest. It's more than one reason. Some of these factors also had been reviewed by Hydro itself. If you look at a straight line and the cost, there's no question, the Interlake route is the desired route, for the purposes of straight-line engineering costs, but they raise questions of reliability.

\* (15:10)

This matter is not something that—just so the member opposite—I'm sure the former minister sitting beside him will know that this matter is not something that hasn't been before governments in the past. It was presented to the former Filmon government in '92, and the east side proposal was not further advanced after '92. It was certainly a proposal that we became aware of, not immediately upon election but a few years after. Certainly, Hydro not only looked at the straight engineering factors. They also looked at all the other issues of potential costs and licensing. They also looked at customers, something that we hadn't entirely considered ourselves, but they certainly have raised the issue of customer reaction. Our largest market of export sales is actually Minnesota. So there are a number of factors going into any stated preference.

The government was clear on our preference and made no bones about it in the election campaign. You know, if I was going to take the most politically expedient route, it would be the Interlake. It obviously has the greatest right of way. It has the least amount of environmental issues because the right of way is already obtained. It is the lowest cost. It is the—

**An Honourable Member:** It's not reliable.

**Mr. Doer:** Well, there is other technology dealing with other options in the Interlake, just so the member opposite is up to speed on that. But the politically expedient route with the least potential controversy is the existing route. It does present challenges with reliability. So every one of these proposals, west side, east side and Interlake, have advantages and disadvantages. There is no question about that. But there is also no question that there are a number of factors that lead one to go to one proposal or another proposal.

Hydro studied some of these issues themselves, as they should, because obviously it is more than just engineering. The engineering issues are simple. The issue of will you get licensed. I happen to believe the possibility of getting licensed on the east side is remote. I actually believe it is going to be really questionable that it could be licensed on the east side.

Hydro has also identified a couple of false assumptions that have been purported in the public media. One of those assumptions is the allegation, or the claim, that the road would be paid for on the east side, \$400 million. That is something that Hydro has never proposed as part of their economics. It would add the \$400 million, by the way, that the member is purporting to save. Secondly, it was never something we could make available to First Nations in public hearings. We asked Hydro: "What did you say to First Nations in the pre-'99 period? Is it what Mr. Praznik was saying, a \$400-million road? Or is it not." They said: "No. We've never suggested that. It's not part of that." We asked them to quantify the economic benefits after the transmission line was built, and it really was brush clearing after the transmission line was built. So we asked that that be made public before we had the meetings of all the First Nations.

The second assumption that Hydro review has identified is the assumption, and I think this is important to note, that it is not their proposal that First Nations on the east side own the line. People now who are proposing that this line be built on the east side are also proposing that it be owned by First Nations, completely with First Nations. I don't know whether that is the Leader of the Opposition's (Mr. McFadyen) position, but it is certainly not the view—we've supported equity in the past, although it has been criticized by members opposite, but we have not supported complete ownership of the transmission line.

Those are two assumptions that also Hydro deals with because, you know, there are these myths floating around, and we can't consult with people on things we can't deliver. We are not going to go out to a community and say, listen, if you build the east side on Lake Winnipeg, there is a \$400-million road being built, paid for by Hydro. We are also not going to create a false assumption on the issue of ownership of the transmission line.

### Point of Order

**An Honourable Member:** A point of order.

**Madam Chairperson:** The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a point of order.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Well, if the Premier is done with his answer, I will dispense with the point of order. I was simply going to make the point he is running out the clock. It was a pretty direct question and we are running short on time, Madam Chairperson. So I just ask if you could call the Premier to order and ask that the responses provided are relevant to the question that's been asked.

**An Honourable Member:** On the same point of order?

**Madam Chairperson:** I just have to determine, were you up on a point of order? You seemed to change your mind.

**Mr. McFadyen:** The Premier sat down and so I'm not on a point of order. I was only making a preamble comment to my question.

**Madam Chairperson:** So it's—

**Mr. McFadyen:** Not a point of order.

**An Honourable Member:** You stood on a point of order.

**Madam Chairperson:** There is—

**Mr. McFadyen:** I withdrew it.

**Madam Chairperson:** Okay.

### Point of Order

**An Honourable Member:** On a new point of order.

**Madam Chairperson:** On a new point of order, the First Minister.

**Mr. Doer:** I was almost finished, but let's be very clear. When you use one reason as your preamble to state that that's why I made a decision, I have complete responsibility to go over the rationales of this. Now, we've raised this two days ago. You are completely able to raise it any time you want—yesterday—I'm perfectly prepared to answer the questions today. But I'm not going to answer a false assumption that is the reason for proceeding. That is going to be my responsibility.

When the member stands up on a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker, when a member stands up on a point of order, the person who was speaking is

supposed to sit down. I'm following the rules, and that's the rules of this Legislature.

**Mr. McFadyen:** I don't have any comments on the point of order.

**Madam Chairperson:** This was not a point of order?

**An Honourable Member:** The Premier raised a point of order.

\* \* \*

**Madam Chairperson:** We'll continue on with the Estimates.

**Mr. McFadyen:** One of the primary reasons given was the possibility of a UNESCO site. The Premier has added two other reasons: concern about customers and the concern about the boreal forest.

Coming back to the one reason which he has put forward repeatedly, he made references to the Great Wall of China, the Taj Mahal, the Grand Canyon and, I think, the Great Barrier Reef as reasons for wanting to do this. I wonder if he could just indicate then, what is the status of the UNESCO review of the proposal to have this region declared a world heritage site?

**Mr. Doer:** Yes, it's before the body that makes that decision in Paris. It's a proposal that's in. It generally takes some time to get agreement or disagreement. It took a number of years with other sites, such as the area in Newfoundland and Labrador, I think, was one of the last ones that was granted in Canada; the "Grand Marath," just north of the Humber Valley there, the site of the landing of the Vikings. It took some time, but the tourism in that area's quadrupled since the designation, and it's a very good story.

It would be good for Manitoba to have a world heritage site. An UNESCO World Heritage site does carry with it a certain international integrity of an eco-system, and it would be very good for Manitoba. But one can only apply for it. One has to await the decision making. There's other people that have had international credibility that are also supporting the proposal.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Recognizing that the federal government plays a role in these proposals, I wonder if the Premier would agree to table the proposal or application that's been made to UNESCO with respect to this designation.

**Mr. Doer:** I'll take the question as notice. I don't know the protocol, but certainly, we have applied for the designation, and I'll see what the protocol is on the proposal.

\* (15:20)

**Mr. McFadyen:** Can the Premier indicate whether the boundaries for the territory that is being proposed to be included within the world heritage site, are those the boundaries that were outlined by, I've forgotten the name of the organization that put out the map, Manitoba Wildlands? Gaile Whelan-Enns's organization distributed a map that showed the boundaries of the proposed site.

Can the Premier indicate whether those are the boundaries contained in the proposal or whether there're some other boundaries?

**Mr. Doer:** Certainly, Hydro is aware of the specific boundaries that have been proposed and, obviously, reviewed that as part of their review. I don't know about an advocacy body who, from time to time, I might point out, disagree with the government on lots of land use decisions. In fact, the last time we've dealt with some land use decisions we had certain recommendations on mining stakes in areas in Manitoba so, I don't, I'll take the question in notice on the specific boundaries and who else agrees with that or not.

**Mr. McFadyen:** I've just given that the potential for a UNESCO has been used as one of the primary reasons for the proposal to not run the line down the east side. I wonder if the Premier could just indicate, given what's at stake in this decision, I'm assuming he's carefully researched the criteria that UNESCO would use in granting such a designation. I just note that examples that have been used like the Grand Canyon includes activities like air tours, bus tours, hikes, mule trips, horse rides, white-water raft trips, smooth-water raft trips, bicycle trips, seven lodging establishments in the park with a proposal this year at the Grand Canyon for a museum, movie theatre, shops, restaurants and a golf course.

The Great Barrier Reef includes aircraft and helicopter tours, cruise ships, diving and fishing boat tours, commercial fishing in some parts and other uses in other sections of the Great Barrier Reef. We know, of course, the Taj Mahal and the Great Wall of China are great tourist destinations, man-made structures, and so, in that sense, quite different from what we have here. But can the Premier just indicate whether he's been advised that a transmission line

would be fatal to an application for such a designation?

**Mr. Doer:** I just want to make it clear that we did study the criteria very carefully on the UNESCO World Heritage site and, particularly for an area, an eco-system like the boreal forest, there is no question that eco-tourism can and does exist and co-exist with these proposals.

The views of the people indigenous to the area are also extremely important in terms of the designation. It is also important to have credibility with people that have credibility in the environment movement as well supporting the proposal. So the indigenous people are very important.

If it was going to negate eco-tourism, tourism opportunities, tourism development on the east side, we would very, we would be—you know, as the member indicated, there are lots of places that have tourism in the site. It's not a one size fits all, though, for criteria. If it's an eco-system, it has to have certain attributes that are unique that are not in abundance to the world.

We certainly are aware that both the support of the First Nations people and the—would be an extremely serious setback if that did not happen. The member asked the word "fatal"; it is a rather long criteria, but it would be a serious setback to not have the support of the people living in the area. I'm not the UNESCO body, so I'm not going to speak on whether it will be fatal or not.

If you're applying for an eco-system, to have some support from credible people on the environment is also important, but that doesn't mean to say you couldn't have other recreational tourism opportunities in the site, and that would—as I say, if it meant that nothing else could exist in places like Poplar River, we would be very careful, if there wasn't an opportunity to paddle that river, but also we'll be very careful to listen to the people living in Poplar River about what they think is best for their eco-system and they've made a very good international case for it. So I think that I just want to say there's a uniqueness here. You can't take the Taj Mahal and apply it to—not that I've heard—

**An Honourable Member:** That's your example.

**Mr. Doer:** I haven't used that example, but I've never been to the Taj Mahal, so I don't know. It's a floating criteria, but I can get that material for the member opposite, and I'll take as notice the issue of the application.

**Mr. McFadyen:** We know that was one of the reasons offered for the decision and, clearly, an important one in terms of what the government has been saying publicly. I take it that it's not at all clear at this stage then what impact one more transmission line is going to have on the proposal. We'll certainly look forward to learning more about that as we go forward.

I want to ask the Premier, he listed customers as a second reason. Has Minnesota taken the position that they won't buy more power? I know there was a recent announcement of a deal with Minnesota. Have they taken the position in writing or communicated in any way that the Premier might be able to table the position that they won't buy further power from Manitoba if the bipole line runs down the east side of the lake?

**Mr. Doer:** Well, Hydro, in their own review, has identified the issue of customer sensibility in Minnesota on a major international cause célèbre being the bipole 3 on the east side that most major groups in the environment oppose. So they've identified that to us. It actually wasn't a reason that we developed on our own. There is a high degree, I would point out, in Minnesota generally, Republican or Democrat, who are very sensitive to environmental issues, and Minnesota is one of the leaders on environmental policy. When you talk to the Governor of Minnesota, the Republican governor, Governor Pawlenty, he is very aware of environmental issues. The water policies in Minnesota are extremely important for the state of Minnesota. He, of course, joined with us in opposition to the Devils Lake diversion. He joined with us in opposition to the transfer of water from the Missouri River watershed to the Red River basin. Decisions dealing with energy in Minnesota always have a high degree of debate on renewability. There is tremendous pressure in every section of the United States to have a tremendous amount of development of renewable energy and clean energy.

I don't think members would be surprised also to hear that there is a lobby work from one band, the only band not signed on, on the Northern Flood Agreement. There is consistent lobbying going on in Minnesota and in Colorado when the annual meetings take place with Xcel. So this is a factor that has been identified as a, quote, "negative attribute" to the east side proposal, and that, certainly, was raised to us and I convey it to you.

\* (15:30)

I think it's a combination of all the issues, but, certainly, it has been identified as a potential impact with customers. Xcel, with the greatest of respect to the member opposite, is not the, quote "loony left." It's a publicly traded company. I've met with the president of the company. I've met with other officials of the company over the years, and it's a factor you have to consider and a factor that Hydro raised with us.

The Hydro engineers, as the member has stated, prefer the shortest route. That is no question; from an engineering perspective, that's what they'd prefer. But if you can't license the shortest route, it's also an issue that Hydro has to consider. If you can't sell it over a period of time to a major customer because they, too, go through a regulatory body with tremendous public pressure, you may be putting in jeopardy—I didn't think of it myself, but I actually think, on reflection of that advice, it's a much bigger reason than we had even raised during some of our public comments prior to the proposal being accepted by the board of directors.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Any proposal is going to be analyzed on the basis of potential problems. Certainly, this proposal would be as well, and any power sale would be analyzed on that basis. I'd only note, when he refers to Hydro having undertaken the analysis, that, even after that analysis was done, their advice was proceed with a line on the east side. That was their advice to government. Taking into account the factors that the Premier has spoken about, I trust the people at Hydro to know their market, know their customers and understand what their sensibilities are, to use the Premier's word, and to do what's right for the corporation. The Premier has decided to override that advice and put forward a proposal that is contrary to the advice that he received.

So I want to just ask, given that is one of the factors they would look at, whether, similarly, in response to that concern, the Premier would make the case to Xcel, or Hydro would make the case to Xcel, or anybody who raised the concern, that it is bad environmental practice to waste a minimum of 100 megawatts of power by running the line farther than is required, which is half of the capacity of Wuskwatim. It's half the capacity of a coal-fired plant south of the border. It gives up the opportunity to displace some of the coal-fired energy that's being generated, whether it's south of the border or in Ontario.

There's been lots of talk about Ontario being a customer. That was obviously one of the main reasons for building a new bipole was to supply that market in the event a deal is reached in Ontario. They are trying to move away from coal-fired generation. So to waste 100 megawatts minimum. We know it was 78 megawatts for the Interlake route versus east side, and we're told a minimum of 100, potentially quite a bit more than that, but we're being on the safe side saying 100 megawatts of waste of what the Premier calls a precious, clean commodity, whether that would be something that you might reply to Xcel with as a concern, or has that fact not been presented to them. If not, I wonder why it wouldn't, given that the Premier's certainly not been afraid to stand up to opposition when it came to concerns about the floodway aquifer and other areas. Why not stand up and do the right thing here and make sure the facts are presented to those potential customers, rather than getting caught up in, sort of, hypothetical concerns.

**Mr. Doer:** Well, they're not hypothetical. It's been identified by Hydro that the east side will be more problematic with customers in the United States. It's not a hypothetical. Just so the member opposite understands that, Hydro themselves have said—let's make one thing straight, from the proposal that was made in 1992 and obviously rejected by the former government because they didn't proceed with it, 15 years have elapsed. If members opposite think that the same prism of approval is going to be used by regulatory bodies to both purchase power and site transmission lines, if you think we're stuck in cement from 1992, and environmental awareness has not increased with citizens since that time, you're in a time warp. Yes, the advice to the former government was to proceed because it was the cheapest route. But there is a lot more analysis not only from engineers, but there is a lot of environmental and other related analysis on the pros and cons of both routes.

I would point out that this is an evolutionary issue. Customers are evolutionary. They're not static beings. Decisions that affect regulatory bodies are not the same decisions as five years ago, ten years ago or fifteen years ago. So, you know, some of the advice that was straightforward in '92 is not as straightforward to government and to the utility as in the past. The only straightforward advice there is to us is one that the Interlake route shouldn't be built even though it's the cheapest, but it may not be the

most politically unpopular, it may not cause us any probably less problems with our customers.

Let's also make something clear. Transmission lines are difficult. Even a small transmission capacity which required infrastructure that was approved by the former government became a political issue in this House for a small area in East St. Paul. After it was proposed and approved by David Newman and approved by the Hydro board we got hammered day after day after day on the East St. Paul line. If anybody believes west side, east side, Interlake, any transmission line is going to be an easy issue to get licensed. I only assume that the previous government knew how hard it was—

**An Honourable Member:** You said Interlake would be easy.

**Mr. Doer:** I said earlier politically. It isn't easier for reliability. I'm not therefore recommending.

The members opposite should understand that there are a couple of things that have happened since the original recommendation to the former government which they did not proceed with. One is a number of court decisions dealing with section 35 in the Constitution which we've supported with a memorandum of agreement, and, two, the environmental awareness and authority and leverage is much greater today than it was in 1992. So to use a 1992 set of assumptions, you know if you don't modernize in terms of your thinking and decision-making you're going to be in trouble. It's not a factor just identified by us. It was identified by Hydro.

**Mr. McFadyen:** There were other reasons for not proceeding in 1992 as the Premier (Mr. Doer) knows. Coming back to the issue of the advice then that he has received from Hydro and their analysis, can he table the analysis that shows that power sales could be threatened in the event the line was constructed on the east side of the lake? Will he table that analysis? He says Hydro has done an analysis that was one of the factors. Is he prepared to table those Hydro-generated documents and any supporting documents that may have come from Minnesota or anywhere else?

**Mr. Doer:** I'm willing to state that Hydro has different pros and cons on both routes. Their pros and cons, and one of the cons on the east side route was its potential, negative impact on and opposition in major customer areas south of the border.

\* (15:40)

**Mr. McFadyen:** Will the Premier table that analysis generated by Hydro? I don't doubt that the issue was raised. You have to attach weight to different considerations. I think it's important that we get a sense as to how significant a consideration that was compared to all of the others that they were looking at. Certainly, we know the conclusion they came to at Hydro as to which was the best route. Will he table their analysis that he's obviously been provided with?

**Mr. Doer:** Well, I've just stated it. I'll be very sensitive about information that Hydro has that affects security and customer relationship. But I'm stating something that the members opposite can ask in committee with the Hydro CEO. I would expect that they'll get answers appropriately.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Given the significance of this issue, obviously there's a major proposal, lots of time and energy being invested in it and, ultimately, money. Given the significance, will the Premier agree to support and encourage members of his caucus to call a meeting of the Hydro committee within the next seven days to deal with these issues?

**Mr. Doer:** Certainly, we'll look at the timetable and we'll try to—I don't know the availability of Hydro and the minister, but I have no difficulty urging that the meeting take place in an appropriate time. I have no difficulty in having it as soon as it can be scheduled.

**Mr. McFadyen:** I thank the Premier for that indication.

I'd like to just ask about the apparent discrepancy between the lines that were being used yesterday by the Premier in the House and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) in the media with respect to the kilometres of forest that would be cut under the different options. The Premier had indicated 800 on the east side, and I believe he said 550 on the west side.

I tabled in Question Period today the response provided by Mr. Brennan in response to questions from the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Hawranik) at committee when this was an issue, I believe, two or three years ago. Mr. Brennan indicated that the east side option would involve cutting roughly 750 kilometres and the west side—and at that time he was referring to the Interlake route; that was the debate between those two options—he said 800 kilometres,

since the west side route is a longer route than the Interlake route and at least the northern part covers much of the same territory.

I wonder if the Premier can just indicate or outline the discrepancy between what Mr. Brennan said in committee, and what the Premier and his Minister of Finance were saying yesterday in the House and in the media.

**Mr. Doer:** Yes, just perusing *Hansard* from Wednesday. Is the *Hansard* from Wednesday out yet? The Question Period?

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**An Honourable Member:** That's what I have. We just have the Tuesday's—

**Mr. Doer:** I'll check—

**An Honourable Member:** Sorry, it was Tuesday.

**Mr. Doer:** Tuesday? Okay, let me just look at the handy-dandy *Hansard*.

Stubble burning, West Nile, we didn't ask the question on Tuesday. I believe you asked the question on Wednesday. I don't think you asked the question on Tuesday. My recollection is you asked about children on Tuesday and about the *Bible* on Wednesday. Do we have Wednesday?

**An Honourable Member:** We've got unedited Wednesday.

**Mr. Doer:** Can you give me that *Hansard*?

**Mr. McFadyen:** Madam Deputy Chair, I can provide—I've only got the one copy; it's the unedited *Hansard* from yesterday where the comment was made. I've only got the one copy, but I'm happy to table it and certainly allow the Premier to make reference to it.

**Mr. Doer:** I'll have a look at it. The east side forest is dealing with the undeveloped boreal forest and the west side is dealing with the undeveloped boreal forest, and I believe the undeveloped forest on the east side is 800 kilometres, as I indicated, and the west side is 580 kilometres.

There's a difference between the distance of a transmission line and the issue of the boreal forest and the undeveloped forest. One of the points that is also important, the whole issue of developed versus undeveloped. So there's also a lot more rights of way

on the west side already than would be available on the east side.

**Mr. McFadyen:** My understanding or my recollection is that the Minister of Finance, I think, had indicated something like 760 on the east side and 500-and-something on the west side yesterday. Certainly, we know there's a difference between boreal forest and other kinds of forest and there is an environmental distinction. It may be that Mr. Brennan wasn't making that distinction when he made his comments, but I'd, certainly, appreciate clarification and some explanation for that apparent discrepancy between what Mr. Brennan said in committee and what the Premier and Minister of Finance are now saying.

We're, certainly, aware that the boreal forest running up the east side of the lake, the southern boundary of that forest works its way up the east side of the lake and, certainly, cuts to the north and west at the north end of Lake Winnipeg. So we are aware of that, but there just seems to be a different number every time somebody makes reference to the kilometres and, certainly, clarification on not just the amount of boreal forest, but forest-forest, generically, would be useful as well because there are some in the environmental community who wouldn't think that that distinction is as critical as others in that movement would. So it's a minor point, but one I think that calls for some clarification.

I just want to ask the Premier whether he has analysis from Hydro as part of the background to this decision on what the line loss will be given the extra length of the west line versus both the Interlake and the proposed east side line. We know that Hydro had indicated 78 megawatts of line loss to go through the Interlake versus the east side, considerably longer route to go to the west side. We are told that it's a minimum of 100, but I'm sure that that's part of the analysis given the amount of money at stake and the amount of environmental degradation that's linked to line loss. If the Premier would table that analysis from Hydro.

**Mr. Doer:** Well, I'll let that take place in the committee. I know getting into trees, there are three sets of definitions on trees over the east side and west side. One is boreal forest; one is undeveloped versus developed, and one is trees. The member opposite used the word, a tree is a tree, is a tree, and other people have used an undeveloped tree, is an undeveloped tree, is an undeveloped tree, and

another person has used the boreal undeveloped tree is different than a boreal developed tree.

\* (15:50)

I can understand the 40-kilometre discrepancy between the Minister of Finance who is a very precise person and the advice we're getting from Hydro. It might be that the undeveloped tree is different than the boreal forest of undeveloped tree. I have to admit I did not go out and march it all off. I did not do that. Maybe my good friend from Rupertsland did when he was hunting some moose on the east side of that beautiful eco-system. I can't claim to be out there doing the exact measuring, so I think that may explain the member opposite's "a tree is a tree": "I think that I shall never see/A poem as lovely as a tree. . . . Poems are made by fools . . .", I fear—I had better be quiet. My modest English ability.

So I think there are some issues here. There is no question that the west side has difficulty. Any transmission line has difficulty. We had difficulty getting something approved that the former government approved for a few miles in the northeast quadrant of Winnipeg. I guarantee you there'll be challenges on any siting of any proposed line. We tried to be up-front about what we believed in the election campaign; we stated our preference clearly. The member opposite stated it. The one good thing about it, we didn't try to say it was cheaper on the west side or anything else. We acknowledged the cost.

On the issue of efficiency, it will depend to some degree, and it's premature to talk about anything, but it will depend on some developments on private proposals west of us on a western grid, and there are some private companies working on that. It will also include what, with the carbon reduction targets in Saskatchewan and Alberta and the carbon tax in Alberta, notwithstanding the question on nuclear energy and the oil sands and those kinds of thing, it will depend also—because the west side is obviously closer to Saskatchewan—there are discussions going on, but no firm sales. We believe there's potential. If you look at the demand curve in every province west of us, east of us and south of us, there's demand, and all of them have to have—with the changes that have been made and more changes that are coming in Canada—a basket of renewable energy and fossil fuels, particularly in the West, and that is going to be important.

So the answer to the question is: I'll have people—for example, how much is going to be direct current, how much is not. The new technology on transmission is extremely superior to the past transmission. There is less loss of efficiency on the proposed west side than the existing Interlake, one of the lines. So there are lots of this stuff. I'm going to leave it to people that can give you more precise answers at the committee.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Listening to that response, the Premier saying there are problems on the east, there are problems on the west, and so we'll just pick the one that costs half a billion more. We know it's going to cost us at least 100 megawatts. It reminds me of former Prime Minister Chrétien responding when the ad scam first broke out: Ah, what's a million dollars. What's \$500 million, he seems to be saying in response to the question. We have problems there, problems over here. What's \$500 million among friends. I think Manitobans would want to know that there was something a little bit more to the analysis than those sorts of kind of flippant kinds of responses. But—

**An Honourable Member:** Those are your words, not mine.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Well, "flippant" is my word characterizing the response that was given.

I want to ask the Premier (Mr. Doer), then, who's referring to potential licensing problems on the east side arising from consultations: What consultations have taken place to date with the eight First Nations communities that are in proximity to the proposed west side proposal? It's eight, minimum; there are some that are closer and further away. But eight that are quite close to the proposed route, if not right on it. What consultations have taken place in order to deal with routing the line around two provincial forests and Riding Mountain National Park?

**Mr. Doer:** Well, Hydro looked at three lines, three potential bipoles, and they have identified the pros and cons of different routes. Obviously, a pro for the east side is the fact it is less distance and, therefore, less cost. We acknowledge that, and we don't treat that in any way, shape or form as a minor issue; it's a lot of money.

We know how much money that is. When we came into office, Hydro had accumulated about \$500 million additional debt that wasn't on the books.

Starting with Centra Gas, which, by the way, has lost money every year almost since it was purchased by the government before the first year it was in operation and every year thereafter.

So we know what it's like not to have debt on the books. We also know what its like to reduce the debt ratio. The debt ratio when we came into office was 86 percent. It's now at 80 and going down.

Thirdly, why did the former government not proceed with the east side? If it was such a slam dunk for reliability, why did they not go ahead? I dare say there probably were the same kind of concerns they had about the Boreal Forest and the east side and the First Nations that reside there. I am assuming that they had some of the similar concerns that we did, because provincial governments have to be concerned about the larger issues that affect land use in the province.

At the same time that they were looking at setting aside other spaces in Manitoba, they were looking at a transmission line. It's not just a little thing that goes through your backyard. You know how large a bipole is. It's a massive amount of space relative to the transmission line, and it's a massive corridor with massive infrastructure in it. So I am only assuming that when the former Premier had a proposal to him to build the—for the issues of reliability, we were told the former Premier was informed to go with the east side and was given the recommendation to proceed and proceeding with the reliability. That's why some of this discussion is sensitive, because anything to do with reliability, by definition, deals with security. That's why some of the documents with Hydro were never released to us, and probably properly so, but I have been briefed on what's in them and what was given to the former government and never given to the public. I'm very aware of what the documents were that weren't given to the former government in their days.

The only thing, one of the major things that's changed is the awareness of the eco-system on the east side, the tremendous potential we have to proceed in the proper way and to preserve something for future generations.

I would also point out to the member opposite, and the member has mentioned other projects, but let me just talk about—I haven't been to the Taj Mahal. What other ones were there?

**An Honourable Member:** The Great Barrier Reef.

**Mr. Doer:** I haven't been to the Great Barrier Reef.



**An Honourable Member:** Grand Canyon.

**Mr. Doer:** I have not been to the Grand Canyon.

**An Honourable Member:** They're all great places.

**Mr. Doer:** Well, I'm sure you've been to all of them, Drew. I envy you. But the—

**An Honourable Member:** They're beautiful places.

**Mr. Doer:** I know, but I do know, you know, I get to Birds Hill Park, and, you know, I get to Lac Lu.

You know, it is interesting that some of the city council—I need a historian here. It was city council back in the turn of the 1920s, I believe, that purchased Winnipeg's city park, the Assiniboine Zoo, for a million dollars. The sponsor of that and almost every one of the persons that supported that resolution was condemned by people as being way too much cost, way too expensive. A horrible, they were probably called flippant at the time. Not by people like the member opposite, of course, but they were probably called flippant.

I remember actually people criticizing, and I kept silent, the pedestrian bridge in Winnipeg. You know, there're lots of critics. The paint isn't even dry there. There're lots of critics about that. I remember getting hammered on The Forks. I mean, I had stories on CBC and other media about The Forks preservation. You know, it's expensive. It should be spent on something else. It's horrible. It's awful. Spending \$20 million to take that land back into public ownership is a boondoggle. So sometimes the decisions that are made in the long term, I would say to the member opposite, I don't know whether he is a long distance runner or not.

**An Honourable Member:** Used to be.

**Mr. Doer:** I beg your pardon.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Used to be.

**Mr. Doer:** Used to be, well—

**Mr. McFadyen:** Before I got into politics.

\* (16:00)

**Mr. Doer:** Before you got into politics. Well, now you're into rubber chicken. It's a very healthy exercise.

But there are some decisions in the past that have been condemned for being costly that have ended up in history to be right. The people that developed Central Park were right. They were

condemned as well. The people who put aside Assiniboine Park, they were condemned. They were defeated. They were scattered into the dustbin of history, politically. It's interesting, we don't know the name. I think John Queen was the mayor. I think he was the mayor at the time. But we have to know that people have made courageous decisions, more costly decisions that have ended up being right. The Eiffel Tower was condemned. There are lots of things that have been condemned that have actually stood the test of time.

So I know the member opposite is not going to change his view on the east side. He's not going to change his mind about the Manigotagan and the Berens River and the Bloodvein and the Poplar River and the spectacular eco-system that's potentially there. But maybe in 50 years from now, they'll be looking back at the short-sighted comments of the member opposite and they'll be comparing them to the long-distance visionary thinking of our government.

In terms of history, we're all judged by history. So I would say maybe the member opposite should go back and read the history, which I might try to do. I look at my good friend from Princeton here. If he can get me that history from somewhere, maybe I can read it, or maybe his son in Harvard could get it for me, his bright son who we are all very proud of, vicariously, through the clerk, and we could get that material to look at. But I would suggest to the member opposite that the easiest decision is to criticize in the short term, and I know he's going to do it, are sometimes the best decisions in the long run. I happen to believe this is one of them.

**Mr. McFadyen:** It's too bad he saved that speech for Estimates and didn't give it earlier in the House. It's almost inspiring. For every example he cites, you can think of the white elephant projects that have been engaged in by different governments. Who can forget MTX, the vision that went into MTX under the former NDP government? All the money that that cost Manitoba taxpayers? The great vision and foresight that's gone into so many other NDP boondoggles over the years?

**An Honourable Member:** Crocus.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Crocus being another good example. I think of that big dome in east London that is the most hideous, unpopular thing that was done by Tony Blair's government, which they thought was visionary, and ended up costing, I think it was five

times the original budget. Last time I was there, which was a few years ago, they had an outdated tourist kiosk inside this multi-million pound white elephant.

The Premier cites examples of great vision. Duff Roblin, certainly, on the floodway, we will acknowledge. We will acknowledge that Assiniboine Park and some of the early leaders of our city who set aside that land. That was a great decision, Assiniboine Park, and it was foreseeable at the time that the land was set aside that a day might come when there would be 650,000 people in the vicinity of Assiniboine Park to enjoy it. I think that the leaders of the city at that time probably saw or hoped that there would be even more than 650,000 people in the vicinity of Assiniboine Park to enjoy it.

To come back off of the flight of fancy and back to reality in terms of what's being proposed, the Premier is going to spend \$500 million and waste a minimum of 100 megawatts of power in order to stop a 65-metre corridor from being cut through a territory that is, how many thousand square kilometres? It was in the paper this morning. Thousands of square kilometres of territory. He's going to stop a 65-metre corridor. He talks about a massive structure. They are high. They're not particularly wide in terms of the cut; 65 metres, I think, is the amount on the existing bipoles. It's not even the length of a football field. I know the Premier knows how long football fields are, and we're talking a 65-metre cut. Not to minimize it. Obviously, we want to take account of the concerns and issues that are being raised, but let's not allow overblown overreactions to cloud our judgment on such a massive expenditure.

Especially when he's bragging back in April that he's going to run the pavement through the boreal forest. I think it was 170 kilometres of pavement. They were going to get out the chainsaws, go into the boreal forest on the east side, and pave the east side. So that is something that he supports. For some reason, he's worried about a 65-meter cut for a power line when there are already winter roads and existing transmission lines in the area. So let's not get too carried away with the whole vision thing which the Premier seems to be into at the moment.

So I want to ask the Premier, then, if he would just indicate, in their analysis of whether foreign jurisdictions want to buy power from Manitoba, if they're concerned about a 65-meter cut, whether they're concerned about the 170 kilometres of

pavement that he's going to run through the boreal forest.

**Mr. Doer:** First of all, notwithstanding, the classification the member opposite uses for pavement, for the Rice River Road. The Rice River Road will not go ahead without the consent of people in the area. If people in the area disagreed with something, it would be a problem for the government. If people in the area and people that are very knowledgeable in the environment together oppose the east side, it will have—I actually remember other people telling me this from different political parties over the years, not part of the debate on the east side transmission, saying this is one of the last preserved boreal forests, old growth forests, in terms of the boreal forest anywhere in the world, one of the last ones in terms of Manitoba and Ontario.

The member opposite talked about MTX. Let me just state that, as the minister of Telephones that got out of Saudi Arabia, the decision to get into Saudi Arabia is in the minutes of September, 1981. I actually showed them to the former minister, one Don Orchard, in committee when I was there in my first inaugural committee. I enjoyed doing that because he had pounded the Pawley government. All I did is ask for all the minutes and found the decision to go into Saudi Arabia supported by the minister September, 1981. That predated the election of the Pawley government in November, I believe, 18 or 17 of '81. I think, then, of course, they proceeded to implement the decision with a subsidiary of Telephones, which was recommended by Telephones, and lived to get hammered on it.

Obviously, Mr. Orchard knew where the skeletons were in the closet because one of them was his, and I enjoyed correcting the history and stopping some of his questions. He didn't like it when I pointed out that it had happened under his watch. He moved on to another question about mica sand or something else, if I recall correctly.

I do believe that Mr. Orchard is one of the key political advisers of the Leader of the Opposition. I think he is one of his troika sets of advisers; one of the threesome, if you will. Mr. Downey, who was running around telling the media that we were down to 14 seats. Never let Mr. Downey not exaggerate something. Mr. Orchard who was out there doing the—speaking of chainsaws, was chainsawing the former member of Carman, and the third individual, I'm going to think of their names in a minute, but there is three. Well, I'll interchange it with whoever

else I want to choose. Always leave yourself some room here in terms of your criticism.

\* (16:10)

But MTX, the decision to go to Saudi Arabia was made in September 1981. I read the minutes of Telephones. I thought it was kind of prudent to read back the old minutes, and what a nugget I found there. Not that it made any difference, but it was enjoyable. Secondly, the member opposite would point out that the people that put aside the land for Assiniboine Park and paid the \$1 million at City Hall because at that point it was way out in Charleswood and Tuxedo, they were defeated. The council that made the motion was defeated. I just point out to the member opposite, short-term politics aren't as lasting as long-term vision. I would like to have a little bit of a long-term vision.

You know, he mentions Tony Blair. I have a great deal of respect for Mr. Blair. I think, to answer the old Ronald Reagan question, is the U.K. better off today than it was 11 years ago, the answer is a resounding yes. I say to Mr. Blair, I don't agree with his decision on Iraq, but other than that he's done a very good job. I'm surprised that the member opposite would take a shot at the great Tony Blair. I thought Republicans and their like kind of liked Tony Blair, so I was kind of surprised to hear that.

**Mr. McFadyen:** The Premier will be interested to know that I met Tony Blair briefly when I was in the U.K. We had a chance to speak very briefly after a speech given by former President Clinton, north of London, and I said to him at the time that I respected a lot of the things he was doing as Prime Minister and the leadership that he showed on a lot of issues. I didn't get a chance to raise with him that hideous dome in east London. I probably wouldn't have even if I did have the time to raise it.

Tony Blair, I know, has referred many times to his admiration for former Prime Minister Thatcher as a role model for him and certainly had to abandon a lot of the principles that the Labour Party stood for in order to get elected and form government. I know that Tony Blair, if he were here today, would make the right decision. He wouldn't throw away half a billion dollars and waste 100 megawatts of a precious resource without any environmental benefits unless—he just wouldn't do it. He would have done his homework. He would have done the analysis. He would have made the tough decision even in the face of opposition, Madam Chair. I know

he even had members of his own party vote against him on a variety of issues, but he stood up for what was right.

I don't know if members opposite have ever voted against their leader and Premier on any matter, but this might provide an opportunity for them, to stand up for what's right, and then we can have a discussion about political courage and taking on some of the members of his own party in order to do what is right. Unfortunately, I fear, he's knuckled under to the pressure from certain interests within his party. Very un-Blair-like. Very not-stay-the-course. Prime Minister Thatcher said, "The lady's not for turning!" I'm afraid that this Premier is turning and twisting, depending on where the winds are blowing within his own party, and I think that's unfortunate.

I want to ask him whether he was consistent with the MOU that was signed by his Minister of Conservation (Mr. Struthers) in June of 2005 at OCN with the MKO chiefs and organization led by somebody that I have great respect for, Dr. Sydney Garrioch, where they are with their consultation with those people who will be impacted by his decision to run the line down the west side, and if he can table any consultations that have taken place to date.

**Mr. Doer:** I just would like to say that, you know, the member opposite made a mistake today in Question Period purporting that we had changed our position on the fact that the proposal would be fully analyzed by the Clean Environment Commission, and it would include major public consultations as part of that process and major public hearings. This proposal must go to the Clean Environment Commission. This proposal for the capital, the additional amounts of money must go—all capital decisions can and will be considered by the PUB. I know the member opposite maybe wants a career as a cross-examiner down the road in the PUB or the Clean Environment Commission. There are lots of lawyers there. In fact, there was one lawyer per megawatt in the Wuskwatim dam process. Maybe the member opposite was one of them; I can't remember whether he was there. Certainly, his law firm was.

So this is going to go and have a full environmental process. You know my preference. I think to not state a preference—the only party that didn't state a preference in the election were the Liberals. They never have a position. Yellow lines, dead skunks and Liberals in the middle of the road,

so—they say in Texas, dead armadillos; dead armadillos in the middle of the road. We stated our preference. We were clear that it was more money. We stated that; we were up front with the public. We didn't say, no, it's cheaper, or anything else. We said, it's a lot more money. But you know something? Hydro, in my view, the chances of an environmental licence on the east side are very, very low. I don't believe it will every happen. That's my belief based on all the factors I've listened to.

So you can talk about a straight line being cheaper than a circuitous line; that's true, but I don't believe it'll ever happen on the east side. Not in our lifetime. And I may be wrong; *Hansard* will live on for a long time. Unless the government's going to pass legislation to overrule people in the area, to overrule a Clean Environment Commission, I don't believe it's going to happen. It's not going to be licensed.

Now, different people disagree with me. That's what it's all about. You get paid for your judgments; I get paid for mine. You decided to campaign on certain things; I can go over them. That's your judgment. I campaigned on other things, but on this one we were both up front. You were up front with the people. It was too costly. We were up front with the people. We wanted to protect one of the most important, sensitive areas in Manitoba for future generations. We felt we could protect it in a more adequate way by having the transmission line not proceed. We feel we have a better chance of getting a UNESCO World Heritage site, and we believe that it is more in line with the grass-roots meetings we had with First Nations people.

We also know there's a 90-year history of development in the west side. There are highways on the west side. There are transmission lines. There are hydroelectric facilities. There's mining; there's forestry. Those are all taking place now on the west side amongst other economic developments.

So we would point out that there's considerable amount of economic—a 90-year history, again, which is a fact that Hydro is very well aware. So we think that it's the proper proposal. But I would point out that the economics of this has to be evaluated by the PUB, and the environmental consultations must be taking place by the Clean Environment Commission, including the concerns of all people on the west side. That is absolutely clear.

**Madam Chairperson:** Is it the will of the committee to recess? For 10 minutes? *[Agreed]* It is accordingly recessed.

*The committee recessed at 4:19 p.m.*

*The committee resumed at 4:32 p.m.*

**Madam Chairperson:** Will the committee come to order, please.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Where we left off, the Premier was making reference to the Clean Environment Commission process that will review the proposals being put before it. I wonder if, rather than proceeding with the single option for the Clean Environment Commission, being aware of the fact that, after going through CEC process, which will take a considerable period of time, if the CEC ends up rejecting the proposal, which I think is unlikely based on past history, but if it is rejected then Hydro is put in the position and the government is put in the position of going back to the drawing board, which will further delay the project and further delay and compromise reliability and potentially have a negative impact on sales, would he agree to put all three options before the CEC, if not all three then certainly the two options, recognizing that the case has been made on reliability to not proceed through the Interlake, put the two options, the east side option and the west side option, before the CEC so they can consider both options concurrently and not put us at risk of having a refusal and a situation where we have to go back to the drawing board?

**Mr. Doer:** Hydro advises that they have to propose and the Clean Environment has to determine. If the Clean Environment Commission rejects the west side for less environmental impact reasons than the east side, certainly, the east side will not be in any greater shape or form. The bottom line is they have to make a proposal.

For example, we were given two options on flood protection. We were given the Ste. Agathe option, which some people believe, a dam south of Ste. Agathe, and we were given by the IJC the other option of the floodway expansion.

At the end of the day you have to make a decision of what to propose to the Clean Environment Commission. It requires a considerable

amount of work by Hydro. You know, they have to do scoping, a lot more in-depth scoping, including public consultations, than has been already done on either side. So, yes, they have to—they've been saying to us, well, you know, we made a proposal in '92; we raised this issue in 2001. You know, at some point we have to make decisions. We said we wanted to go out and listen to people on the east side, and we did that. We had ministers meet in every First Nation on the east side. We didn't say our preference was the west side. They developed the option when we said we didn't think the east side was appropriate.

So there will be a lot of work. But we have to make a proposal. We didn't put two proposals with all the costs. We didn't put two proposals forward to the Clean Environment Commission. We put one proposal to the Clean Environment Commission. I daresay there's going to be arguments made on the capital costs, which affect rates. That will be at the PUB. One body will evaluate environment and one body will evaluate capital costs. I think in the case of Wuskwatim there was some co-ordination between the two bodies.

The other issue's going to be the federal government. Does the federal government want a separate proposal or do they want a joint proposal? That is a considerable amount of work as well. So this is a long way from being a fait accompli.

Hydro just wanted the kind of uncertainty from 1992 on resolved with the proposals that they could get doing more work on. We stated our preference. They looked at both options in terms of the pros and cons, and, as I said before, there are pros and cons of both options. Knowing and judging by the opposition members opposite after they approved a transmission line on northeast Winnipeg how exorcised they were about going ahead with it after they agreed to it, I suspect there's going to be lots of opposition.

Any citing of transmission lines is a negative exercise in terms of the public opinion. We will have a proposal that goes to the Clean Environment Commission. People will debate at the Clean Environment Commission. They will have the right to publicly argue at the PUB as well. There will be consumer advocates that will probably argue on the cost side and will take a different view than the government. There will be lots of people to take different views than the government. In fact, most people who disagree with the government will be before the public hearings. We expect there to be very, very vocal opposition from some people. The

Clean Environment Commission has the right to ask questions about alternatives. They have the right to do that. But we have to make a proposal and that's what we did in the floodway and that's what Hydro, ultimately, will do with the transmission.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Well, you know, again, the Premier wants to have it both ways. He will respond to questions about the fact that it's virtually a fait accompli by virtue of the directions provided to Hydro by saying, no, it's not a done deal because it's got to go through CEC. Then, in response to a question about putting options in front of the CEC, he talks about the amount of time and detail and consultation that will go into CEC process. The effect of this, of course, will be, as it has been in other proposals that the CEC will be under enormous pressure to approve it; otherwise, the elapsed time will have created a situation where Hydro's reliability is compromised and the other options are really not tenable. That's a risk. So, in likelihood, CEC may make comments and recommendations and orders to change detail, but this train has left the station; it's on a track toward a west side result. We fear that there hasn't been the due diligence prior to that direction to ascertain environmental issues.

\* (16:40)

What we do know is a half billion dollar debt for the next generation of Manitobans and a minimum of 100 megawatts of wasted precious renewable hydro energy. That's regrettable. I think we've probably debated, exhausted the various questions and issues on the matter of this proposal, and we'll agree to disagree. I suspect neither of us will be around by the time history renders its judgment on this decision, Madam Deputy Chair.

I want to move to another area, which is a significant one, certainly, for many Manitobans, and come back to the Premier (Mr. Doer) on the issue of Child and Family Services and the issues that we've seen and the chaos that's been created within that system since his government embarked on the process of devolution.

We know that there are always sad cases; there have always been tragedies within that system which everybody feels heartsick about when they do occur, and that by the nature of Child and Family Services, people working in that system are dealing with tough cases and difficult situations with families that are dealing with major problems, in many cases. Sometimes the effect of those problems is neglect. In

other cases, it's abuse, and, in the most tragic circumstances, it ends up being death.

We know that in recent years that the numbers have gone up. The Premier doesn't like to talk about numbers, but every number represents a child, the most recent being Gage Guimond. We know that the people working in the system are talking both privately and publicly about the chaos that's been created by the rushed process of devolution undertaken by his government.

We have a public inquiry currently going on in the specific case of Phoenix Sinclair, which we called for and which the Premier eventually agreed to, and which we think is an important step. I wonder, though, given the amount of chaos in the most recent death involving Gage Guimond, whether the Premier will expand the scope of that inquiry to have an inquiry into the facts and the consequences arising from the way in which his government has managed the devolution process, and not just the single, terrible case of Phoenix Sinclair, but also the more recent case and the various other issues that have arisen since they embarked on a process of devolution.

**Mr. Doer:** Well, thank you, Madam Deputy Chair.

First of all, I would point out that the analysis of the independent Child Advocate, the Ombudsman, the chief child psychologist at the Manitoba Adolescent Treatment Centre, a front-line independent person or a manager, an executive director from an Aboriginal agency in northwestern Ontario that prepared over 380 pages of information made it very clear that the system was broken prior to devolution. Made it very clear, and so I just want to say that that is an assessment that was made not by the government, but by an independent body.

The second point I want to make is the Sinclair-Hamilton report was produced and given to the former government, I believe, in 1991, and it did predict that the government would, the first time an agency stumbles, there would be tremendous criticism and calls to go back to the old ways of doing things, which, by the way, over the years they used to be religious Child and Family Services. Catholics used to be in the CAS of eastern, Protestants used to be in the CAS of Winnipeg.

**An Honourable Member:** There still is a Jewish one.

**Mr. Doer:** Yes, there is currently a Jewish Child and Family Services as well.

So it's not as if people haven't tried to find a solution closer to families in the past.

I would also point out that Justice Hughes in British Columbia has recommended a similar course of action.

I would point out it was the first or second day of questions on Phoenix Sinclair, notwithstanding the fact that it was reported as an "existing devolved case" which was corrected, that I committed our government to having an independent inquiry, but I said it would take place after the alleged charges of murder were properly dealt with in a court of law. I believe I can't speak to the investigations that are going on with the tragic death of the child Guimond because there may be criminal charges laid there as well.

Suffice it to say that I've said, as a first and starting point, that the inquiry will start with Phoenix Sinclair, as I had promised a year ago. There are investigations now under section 4 of The Child and Family Services Act, and I haven't received the results of those internal investigations and external investigations.

**Mr. McFadyen:** The Premier talks about the Sinclair-Hamilton report, and we've had subsequent reviews and reports. Judge Connor issued a scathing report on the lack of follow-up on the part of government to prior recommendations, and other reports have been issued which have offered scathing criticisms of what's gone on in the system. There was certainly nothing in the Sinclair-Hamilton report that recommended that children be removed from loving, supportive foster families and be put into a dangerous, unstable situation, as appears to have happened in the Guimond case. I don't think anybody recommended that. Of course, they wouldn't have. But that's what happened under his watch.

We know from social workers that they are under pressure to make decisions that they feel are not always the right ones from a safety perspective. That there are other considerations driving those decisions. So whatever the law says, and we know what the law says, but we know that the practice on the ground has not been aligned with what the law states. It doesn't mean people are acting illegally, but it means that there is an inconsistency between what the policy is and how that policy is being implemented, and the results are tragic results. So I would again ask the Premier—he likes to cite prior examples; we all do.

The Aboriginal Justice Inquiry was called really in response to three different factors. There were two deaths, the death of Helen Betty Osborne and J.J. Harper, and there was considerable evidence of systemic racism, discrimination, lack of sensitivity within our justice system. The two tragic incidents, combined with evidence of systemic issues, led to a broad inquiry. It was called by an NDP government. The report was received in the early 1990s, and, subsequently, policy changes, significant ones, were imposed on the child welfare system over a very short period of time.

The Premier (Mr. Doer) makes reference to other organizations from the past, Protestant, Catholic and Jewish child and family services. Those organizations did exist, but they weren't created overnight as a result of a top-down political directive. They were created over time in response to needs within communities. So the analogy doesn't hold up. This was a top-down directive and a change that was implemented very rapidly with many, many case files being transferred in a short period of time and with many hundreds of people working in good faith to keep up and to do their jobs well, but doing so in a very short time frame, and the evidence is that it has had very serious, tragic consequences in some cases.

\* (16:50)

So, given the background—and we understand that there are criminal charges and other proceedings under way in the Phoenix Sinclair case. I understand that there may be as well in the Guimond case. He's delayed the inquiry into Phoenix Sinclair for that reason; it's a legitimate reason for doing so. But it didn't cause him to delay his commitment and his announcement that there would be an inquiry. So all I'm asking him to do today is to make a commitment to broaden the Phoenix Sinclair inquiry to include systemic issues arising since the policy change to include the Guimond case and to have that inquiry get under way after the criminal charges have been dealt with, because the public has a right to know what's going on.

He's referred to other processes. They don't provide the same level of openness and opportunity for the public to understand what's going on. They're more limited in terms of their power and scope. We've got now deaths. We've got examples of systemic problems.

Will he broaden the scope of the inquiry so that we can get to the bottom of what has gone on under his watch in this very important and sensitive area of government?

**Mr. Doer:** Well, in terms of watch, I think it's inappropriate to talk about statistics. There will be a time and place to do that, because, certainly, with the tragic death of both individuals that we've been talking about, it is a tragedy. This systemic scope will be included in the terms of reference of the inquiry.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Just to be clear in terms of what the Premier just said, and I appreciate the comment, is he saying that the inquiry will have a mandate to look into systemic issues arising since the process of devolution was initiated, right up to and including the time that the inquiry gets under way?

**Mr. Doer:** Well, the systemic issues, yes. The issue of an individual case, if it's before the courts, it would delay the issue of accountability arising from Phoenix Sinclair and other systemic issues arising from it. I would be quite concerned. But the part of his question on systemic issues, yes. The public has a right to know. The government has a responsibility, and I would agree to that. Obviously, in any inquiry, the judges in an independent inquiry will allow latitude for any judge that would be appointed.

**Mr. McFadyen:** I appreciate that response.

I think the Premier is indicating that systemic issues will be looked into. I wonder if the Guimond case will be examined in the same way as the Phoenix Sinclair case is being examined, in that case. Just so that we understand that it's not just the facts of the Phoenix Sinclair case and systemic issues arising from it, but that both cases are being looked into, as are the systemic issues. I know it may seem like a fine distinction, but it's quite important in terms of what scope the commissioner will have once the inquiry gets under way.

**Mr. Doer:** Well, that raises the issue of whether the inquiry itself will be delayed further post the criminal charges that may be laid. Suffice it to say the systemic issues will be broad enough to deal with the systemic issues that arise, but not—I don't want to, and I don't think the public would want, a situation where potentially very serious allegations will be laid in a criminal court, literally 16 months, 18 months after the serious charges were laid with Phoenix Sinclair, and then delay, in essence, the inquiry that

we committed to dealing with Phoenix Sinclair. So I think a judge can accommodate both, but I will always err on the side of the serious criminal allegations that have been laid against individuals in cases, starting with Phoenix Sinclair, the allegations that have been laid; those charges must be dealt with in a court of law, and I want to be clear on that.

Secondly, on the systemic issues, I have no difficulty with the terms, but I also don't want to have the double jeopardy potentially of allegations that have been laid on the second child, and have that delay by another 18 months the systemic evaluation that we all feel is due to the tragic loss of any child, any child in care or children, for that matter, that may be a victim of a preventable death out of care. Certainly, any child in care has an extra burden of accountability to the agencies and public that are responsible.

**Mr. McFadyen:** I thank the Premier for the reply and concur that nobody in this House would want to see a criminal process jeopardized in any way by a public inquiry, and would, certainly, support the position that the public inquiry into a specific case should not proceed until the criminal charges have been disposed of. It, certainly, would not be difficult. You've got a lot of very capable lawyers working within government to draft the terms of reference in such a way that the commissioner would have the scope and power to begin to examine the second case after the charges have been disposed of in that case one way or another. They could commence after we assume the Sinclair charges would be dealt with first, commence the exam with the examination in that case and move to the other case subsequently, provided the criminal charges are disposed of. I'm sure that they could find a way to draft terms of reference broadly enough to allow that to happen and direct that it happen.

I wonder if the Premier could just indicate when this House and when Manitobans can expect to see the proposed terms of reference for the inquiry.

**Mr. Doer:** The member says there are skilled lawyers and justices. There are also skilled defence lawyers. I've made it very clear from the beginning that I am not going to, in any way, shape or form have any possibility that serious allegations that have been laid against the alleged murderers in this case—and I say alleged—will be in any way jeopardized in a court of law by any action I will take or, for that matter, any comment I will make. So I made that

commitment. I'll keep that commitment on Phoenix Sinclair and systemic issues.

**Mr. McFadyen:** As I've said already, we, certainly, wouldn't suggest he should do anything that would jeopardize the very serious criminal proceedings. We have every confidence that we have the ability over time to get to the bottom of what's happened.

We know that it was many years that had passed between the death of Helen Betty Osborne and the time of that inquiry was established. We think that it's got to be proceeded prudently with a view toward ensuring that justice is done in the case of the criminal allegations, but that, certainly, a commitment to examine all cases after the criminal issues have been dealt with would be very much welcome. I hope you'll be prepared to do that definitively without any caveat.

The Premier is now on his fourth minister of Family of Services, and he has a history of not making significant changes to Cabinet. We note the Minister of Finance has been there from the beginning, some would suggest inappropriately so. But the Premier has made that judgment and it's his right to make that judgment in terms of who acts as minister of Finance and who acts as ministers in other departments, but four Family Services ministers. It starts to look like it's not so much an issue of ministerial accountability, but it may be that the buck stops at a step higher than the ministers when you've got that sort of chaos and four ministers. I wonder if the Premier can indicate whether it's his intent now to stabilize the leadership of that department, stabilize the system or whether he plans to continue with the policy of chaos that's been undertaken at every level.

\* (17:00)

**Mr. Doer:** I would point out that I've had five opposition leaders since I've been Premier.

**Mr. McFadyen:** The joke response to the serious question is not something that I think would be particularly well received by people who care very much about this issue. I want to ask the Premier then again if he can respond to the question whether he intends to carry on with the policy of chaos from the ministerial level down or whether he can commit today to try to bring some level of stability to what's going on in Family Services.

**Mr. Doer:** You know, just to deal with the care issue, I just want to say that we have been, in the independent report, accused of not restoring as much



as possible the cuts that were made by the previous government on foster parent rates. So I accept responsibility for that.

We have been accused of having a caseload that has been too high at 25 children per case worker, but it certainly, over the investments we've made, has been reduced dramatically from the 40-to-80 cases that were documented in a judicial review of another tragic death that took place before our time.

We have been accused of being—or the allegation was made by members opposite that the system was failing to keep track of where kids were going. When we did the review last year, 5,998 children that had been placed in care were identified and two children over 16 weren't. There's no system that's perfect. I just want to make that clear.

When we set our mind on dealing with the Child Advocate report on something that we were critical of the former government on, on children in hotels, it's been dramatically reduced.

We have since increased the number of social workers by 65, and we're heading towards 150 front-line social workers. That will increase the stability.

I'll be going tonight to the Boys and Girls Club annual meeting. It's 30 years old. I'll talk to a lot of social workers in the front line. I was the volunteer that was involved in starting that organization. I hear different advice from different people, some of whom are my friends. Certainly, I knew in opposition and I even knew before then representing social workers, there's always a tremendous stress. Even if one had a caseload of one-to-one, if you have to make a decision of whether a child should stay in their home or whether the emotional care they'll get from parents is at risk with safety and you have to make a decision to move a child to another location, it is a huge, stressful decision. It is a very, very stressful decision. It's one that is fraught with the ability to make the wrong decision. I know that first hand from people.

As I say, I used to work with kids in the inner city. I know some of the social workers that came out of the School of Social Work have been tremendous people and did tremendous work. I also know some people came out of university and the Member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger) would know that as well. They couldn't handle the real human stress and some of the physical conditions that they may not be used to in their own upbringing.

Most did extremely well, but, like any other profession, there are some people that can't, you know, go into a profession. They're well trained, well educated and aren't able to necessarily handle the stress. I think that that's something I've known long before politics, and I'll probably hear that again tonight with friends I have that are working on the front lines of the inner city at the event tonight dealing with the initial decision on the Boys and Girls Club that was the amalgamation of two drop-in centres.

So I just want to deal with this issue of care, and I think it's important to note that we all care. I think we are implementing the reports we received last year, a year ago. We're well on the way to implementing those recommendations. They're not completed yet. We've increased the foster parent rates by 24 percent. The number of placements have increased by 500—no, 495, I believe. So we continue to work.

I just want to say something about a statement that was made by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger). You know, the Minister of Finance was, again, elected by the people. He mentioned his credibility. Well, he was very credible, both in his own riding and across Manitoba, and I just want to say to the member that when he makes comments of the political nature, I will respond politically. That does not mean to say the, well, I think we're both, we're accountable. If you can give it, but you can't take it, you know, you should not give it. Obviously, I care, but to comment on ministers in the way the member opposite did, I thought was inappropriate.

**Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East):** The law is very clear. The Child and Family Services Act is very clear that the interest of the child should be put first and foremost. Madam Deputy Speaker, we know for a fact that in the case of Gage Guimond safety of the child was not put first, and that was under this Premier's watch and under the policy directives that have been implemented by him and his minister. I would like the Premier to stand today in the House and very clearly state that the policy directive and the direction that is given by him, who is in charge of this province, that that direction has been clearly given to the Child and Family Services system, that the safety of the child will come before any other consideration in placement of children.

**Mr. Doer:** The law stands. We support the law. We introduced the law that was supported by all members of this House. The safety of children is of

paramount concern. I believe the quote is of all agencies, of all agencies of the director, the agencies, the courts. There are other criteria in it, but it's clearly in the law. I've always supported that law, and I support it again today. It's of paramount concern. The member opposite, you know, knows what it's like to have tragedies on somebody's watch and knows the tragedies that take place. I certainly know that she knows as well about tragedies that take place. We have an investigation under section 4 on the one case, and we will evaluate when we have that completion of that report, whether, in fact, the law was followed or not, and there will be accountability for people responsible.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** My question to the Premier deals with the health care system. As I think the Premier appreciates, and as people like Roy Romanow have emphasized in their report back in 2002, the health care system in Manitoba needs better accountability. I would ask the Premier: Why will he and his government not support our Bill 200, which would provide a first step, which is accepting the principle of accountability as fundamental to the delivery of health care in Manitoba?

\* (17:10)

**Mr. Doer:** I've said before that both myself and the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) have looked at the private member's bill and support the principles in it. We are doing our due diligence on the law because we will have to, at the end of the day, implement it. I've brought in a private member's bill myself in the past on non-smoking in child care centres and schools, and it was supported. Maybe it was supported because other people didn't want to take the responsibility of banning smoking in certain places at the time. You know, we're doing our due diligence. The members opposite don't pass bills immediately, instantly. I'm saying that we're doing our due diligence on it.

When you're running a department of Health, that includes lots of people having opinions on it, and we're gathering those, because we want to make sure that not only the principles are solid but also the issues of liability are thought out and the issues of implementation are thought out. Both the minister and I have said there're some parts of legislation that account for some of what the member opposite has proposed, and there're other areas that haven't. We're looking positively at his legislation.

I said today in the House on the phosphorus we would like to have the benefit of a national phosphorus ban, because we believe that will help on eco-systems and on consumer costs. We're really delighted that Québec announced, on Monday, I believe, or Tuesday, that they were proceeding, la belle province. We were looking at it ourselves. We may add things to his bill. We may add lawn fertilizers and other things in terms of water protection, but we're looking at both proposals in a positive way. We're just making sure we've done our proper due diligence, but don't—sometimes when members stand a bill it means they're still going to support it. Sometimes when they stand a bill they're going to oppose it. When we stand a bill, sometimes we're supporting it, and in this case we think it's a positive initiative, but we're doing more work on it to make sure that the 20,000 people that work in health care that would be scoped in, we won't consult with every one of them, but there are a lot of people in health care, and it's not a simple matter. It's easier to write a bill than implement one, but we've got to do both sides, pass it and implement it. So we think it's a positive idea and we're doing our work.

**Mr. Gerrard:** I would thank the Premier for looking positively at the bill and health care accountability and being involved in doing the due diligence to look at this measure, and I hope and would anticipate that when the due diligence is done we'd be able to move forward.

I'd like to ask the Premier a question on FASD. One of the problems in Manitoba has been that there really have not been good data on the incidence or prevalence of FASD. This is basic data and basic information which would be pretty important in terms of making decisions about how and where to take effective action to prevent FASD. It would also be pretty important to know what the incidence or prevalence is in order to make good decisions and assessments of whether measures taken to prevent FASD are effective. So I would ask the Premier why there's not the good data on the incidence and prevalence of FASD in Manitoba and whether he will take steps to make sure that such information is collected and is available.

**Mr. Doer:** Yes, I will take as notice the issue of the data. I know that, in terms of increasing diagnostic capacity in Manitoba, and hopefully in consultation with the national government, we can have more information.

I agree with you about the seriousness of this issue. It was one of the areas that we thought we had a good discussion on at the meeting with Prime Minister Martin at the health care meetings, both level 2 diabetes and the desire to have a national strategy and the high incidence of FASD in certain parts of our province, and certain areas we can do some work in on the preventative side, in terms of public education, you know, which we believe is extremely important, but in other areas we need a co-ordinated approach to prevent FASD.

On the individual data, I'll take the actual question as notice. On the capacity to get more data through diagnostic testing and other diagnoses, we are increasing that capacity, I believe.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Well, I note that the Premier and his government are starting to pay a little bit more attention to FASD and make some more investments. I think that's a good thing.

What I would like to comment on at this point is the fact that getting the information and the incidence and the prevalence of FASD can be very helpful in how one moves forward in terms of prevention approaches. As an example, having better information on the incidence and prevalence of FASD in different parts of the province. We know that there are areas where there are differences in certain schools. David Livingstone School, in that area, there appears to be a high incidence. We don't know enough about how far the area extends. How broader an area needs to be looked at? I think that there's probably some underestimation of the role of FASD in certain parts of the province.

It's been labelled a condition which may be more prevalent in Aboriginal communities, but the fact is that it is not a condition which affects just Aboriginal people. It is a condition for all of us in Manitoba, and all of us need to be involved. My guess would be that there is quite a variation, even in different Aboriginal communities, that there is considerably higher incidence in some than in others, and that it would be very wrong to label all Aboriginal communities as having this same issue to the extent that sometimes tends to get labelled.

What will be helpful in terms of being able to use resources effectively, clearly, is to have more information on the incidence and prevalence in different parts of the province. Then the resources in terms of preventive resources can be used in a much more effective way. At the same time we can measure the effects in communities where we're

working very hard and have got a lot of activity. So I would suggest that there is a real importance in having good data on incidence and on prevalence of FASD.

This information on the incidence and prevalence can be gathered, in a sense, in two ways and probably best to do some on both. One is to try and identify every child or screen every child and then you have a measure of where all the children are. That's fairly ambitious. The approaches that can now be used to screen children are more effective and it is, in the realm of the possible, but would take, from where we are right now, a huge commitment in terms of resources and a huge effort. But we need to be working in that direction.

In the interim, in the meanwhile, it would, certainly, be possible to have, for example, a study looking at incidences which assesses every 20th or every 50th child born in Manitoba, and provides, thereby, an incidence figure for which is based, because it's done in a systematic fashion, would give a reliable value for the incidence. The prevalence may be more difficult for a variety of reasons but, at least, we could start with some meaningful and responsible measures of the incidence of FASD in Manitoba, and that would be a significant step forward.

So I would ask, just in follow-up, whether the Premier will make a commitment to moving in trying to get us this kind of good solid information in terms of what the incidence is in Manitoba, as has been done for other conditions, and recognizing that this is an important aspect that we need to know if we're going to make progress.

\* (17:20)

**Mr. Doer:** Yes, I understand that there is a concerted effort to increase the diagnostic capacity for FAS. I know we've invested another million dollars in it. I also understand from the minister that we are doing or performing more interviews and surveys with up to 90 percent of new mothers about their pregnancy life health habits in terms of potential FAS, and I don't know what the linkage is.

I agree with the member that it's not specific to any population. I was very careful in my answer in the first question he posed because I do agree it's across all geographic and socio-economic areas of Manitoba. He is also right that there's a different, how should I call it, the different numbers or incidents in all different parts, but there are very

definite exceptions in different communities, in different cultures, and in different family support and information systems. So I want to make that clear.

I think it does affect our ability to prevent FAS, the ability to reach people through TV advertising. Other information in, perhaps, outlets in Manitoba doesn't always affect people that may, for example, get television from Detroit or some satellite television in some places or even in any place actually; in Winnipeg or any other place, you can get different satellite packages. So there's a real challenge to get the information out, but I will endeavour to get the information of how many, I believe it's up to 90 percent now, survey completion either through the public health nurse or the mother on information that's relevant to the question the member opposite raises on data on where, why, and then obviously asking the relevant issue of how we can make a difference and more of a difference.

**Mr. Gerrard:** I appreciate the efforts that are being made to ask questions and determine the number of children or the proportion of children who may be exposed to alcohol during pregnancy. I would express a caution. I have heard statements which, in my view, were overly optimistic in being able to ascertain whether or not a self-report by the woman who has been pregnant is information which is 100 percent reliable. I mean, there clearly are going to be some women who will not admit to drinking alcohol and some women who may exaggerate the extent to which they're drinking alcohol during pregnancy.

So it means, the bottom line is, and we know this, that not every child who's born to a woman who drinks during pregnancy has FASD, so clearly it's going to need a systematic approach to looking not only at the history but the other factors and at the child to determine what the real incidence is of FASD.

I think that this is going to be very important for us to make progress. Now, Premier, you have talked about the allocation of funds that you have made. I know that there was specific additional funding in the recent budget, and maybe you could give, in some general terms, how you expect the funding to flow and what is expected to be achieved as a result of the increased funding in FASD.

**Mr. Doer:** Well, again, I'm going to go to the Boys and Girls Club today. I know that they're involved in some grass-roots programs and preventions and they're getting support on some of these issues

through the Healthy Child Committee of government and Healthy Child Manitoba in terms of prevention and other related issues, but FASD is one of them. I note from my speaking notes for tonight that it's a topic that is well known by the Boys and Girls Club. It, certainly, wasn't something that started off in that club. About 30 years ago it was just trying to get a rec centre in the inner city.

The \$1.1 million in diagnostic will flow through the RHAs and, obviously, the people that are delivering the public health programs will be the ones that will be administering that. I don't want to go too much further with a doctor asking me questions about health care until I know the answers, so I'll be careful about how I say that.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Clearly, I appreciate the increased attention to FASD, the funding and the information. I would just ask that the funding of a million dollars would, I presume then, be split up among all the RHAs? Is that correct?

**Mr. Doer:** Yes, but there might be challenges in one RHA versus another and the Liquor Commission is allocated money, obviously, on a prevention program and education program, advertising, ads in bars, materials in liquor stores, et cetera, but I would imagine the RHAs have a pretty good idea. It's not hard to delineate through even the purchase of alcoholic products what some trends might be in different parts, although it's not completely scientific. I know that nobody, I think, has any home brew out there anymore, but I met one chap that once had offered me some enticing product well before I was involved in politics and, of course, I declined as you would expect. But I'm not sure whether the member from southeast Manitoba has a per capita allocation that would be the same as some other area. But, yes; the answer is, yes, it will flow through our RHAs.

**Mr. Gerrard:** My follow-up question to this: I have heard some concerns that the money flowing to RHAs, that they might not use it all for what it's designed for, which is to address the diagnostics related to FASD. So I ask the Premier what sort of assurance he will give that, in fact, the money will get to where it's supposed to, that is, increasing the diagnostic capacity for FASD and ensuring that there is a better job done in the province?

**Mr. Doer:** The specific line to the RHAs designates that for that purpose. I would say that most people working in health on the front lines understand, as the member does, and everybody else in this Chamber does, that this is a serious health challenge.

It's got serious consequences for individuals that are affected by FASD. It has serious consequences for the family. It has serious consequences for the community, and, obviously, has serious consequences for the social fabric of the greater society. So I think that whether it's Healthy Child, Families First, the diagnostic program, some of the other education programs with the Liquor Commission, there is a need, and I think there is a designation. I think most health care professionals understand this as a significant challenge and would treat it accordingly.

\* (17:30)

**Mr. Gerrard:** Now, what I would ask in the follow-up is who's going to be responsible in terms of co-ordinating the activities of all the RHAs related to FASD? Clearly, one needs to ensure, for example, that appropriate diagnostic standards are met. One needs to ensure, for example, that there is some mechanism for gathering the pooled information, not necessarily on specific individuals, but the pooled information from, of the number of affected children, the incidents; what is the data which is gathered in some sort of a pooled fashion. We do this in a variety of ways in the province. If we have a reportable disease, that becomes information which, for an infectious disease, is gathered centrally, no matter which RHA it comes from. West Nile disease is an example in how that is done.

If it is a disease which can be identified in some other way, the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation has done some province-wide data gathering. There are, in some instances, specialist groups. Cancer is an example where there is a data gathering process for the whole province. I would ask the Premier just, you know, who is going to be involved in sort of co-ordinating to the extent that FASD, that the appropriate diagnostic criteria and standards are used, for instance, for the diagnosis, and that there is some pooling of the overall information, not necessarily on any information that would identify individuals at that level?

**Mr. Doer:** Yes, first of all, the most diagnostic analysis and the most follow-up is done at the Children's Hospital right now. Also, the follow-up on this issue for purposes that increased diagnostic capacity would be monitored by the public health area of the Department of Health, as I understand, but I'll double check that just to be sure.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Now, I'm appreciative of the Premier's answer because in FASD it has not been as clear how this is to be gathered, and there has appeared to be, you know, some difficulty in getting province-wide information and data. Certainly, it will be very helpful to ensure and necessary to ensure that there is somewhere where there is some level of co-ordination in terms of diagnostic standards, and in terms of centralized pooling of data so that, you know, as a province and as a provincial government and a provincial Department of Health and the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) and others who are concerned of this area will be able to be, you know, have a picture of the whole province of what is happening.

I would like to note, at this juncture, the Child and Family Services system. I think there is some information which has been gathered on children in, I'm not sure whether it's children in care or it's children who come in contact with the Child and Family Services system, I think it's children in care, which showed much higher incidents of FASD than in the general population. This may not be entirely surprising, but, clearly, it is important to know what's happening and whether children who come into care have FASD or not. But the data that we're presented, that I saw, were based on what appeared to be a hit-and-miss kind of approach as to whether children had actually been thoroughly assessed in terms of whether they had FASD or not.

So I would ask the Premier what the approach is going to be, after this initial study, to moving forward with children in care or who come into care from this point on in terms of the approach for FASD, so that we can move forward and have a better situation, better information in the future, not only for caregivers but from a provincial perspective, so that we can know how big a part of a problem that this piece which is FASD is for children who are in care.

**Mr. Doer:** Certainly, we believe in a holistic approach and a co-ordinated approach to children in care, and the incidence of FASD, obviously, we still believe, as everyone does in this Chamber, that it starts with prevention through a number of different means. We also believe that it's important to have diagnosis early to try to have earlier intervention, and in the child care system itself there are individuals that have expertise in this area and there are treatment programs. But the incidents are obviously higher than the general population, and therefore the

challenges are greater by the time a child, if it's not prevented or detected earlier, it's much more of a challenge later in the child welfare system. That is, I think, self-evident to all of us in the House.

**Mr. Gerrard:** I think that it is quite important for a number of reasons when a child comes into care, but the question of the possibility of a child having FASD is asked, and that some reasonable assessment be made. This is important for the future care and plan for that child. It's important for the whole system to know in general terms what's happening.

But I certainly have talked with those who have been involved with looking after children, and they have been frustrated by the fact that they did not have diagnosis of FASD early on but that it came later on, when it could have made a big difference. There is growing evidence that, when you have a child diagnosed with FASD and that you know that that child has FASD, everybody around that child, then, has an understanding that what's seen as the child's problem is the fact that the brain of that child works a little differently because of the FASD. If you've got family members who are, No. 1, a little bit more sympathetic to the problems the child is having, No. 2, can have some understanding of FASD and adapt care of the child to what we know about how kids with FASD learn, and we know a lot more than we did even five or 10 years ago, that in fact those children, their chance of doing well goes up very substantially once they are identified, and that there have times in the past where it has been looked at as stigmatizing—right?—a family or a child.

But clearly now all the evidence shows that you are helping the child and the family where you have a diagnosis, and people can adjust, and the school can know and adjust, and we can make not only a little bit more in the way of allowance, but we can adapt the learning that's used and the approach to learning that's used for those children in a way that can be much more effective just because we know that that child has FASD.

I would ask, what is the Premier's view, Premier's approach going to be with respect to the Child and Family Services system and children coming into care, to what extent effort will be made to determine whether such children have FASD?

\* (17:40)

**Mr. Doer:** As I've indicated before, we're trying to make increased diagnostic capacity at the earliest stage. We also have the people available. A lot of

social workers have training on some of the symptoms of FASD. Thirdly, we have the EDI testing in the first year of school. I believe, when we started out the EDI tests were in some school divisions because it was voluntary. I believe now it's up to almost every school division in Manitoba where there's EDI. Interesting enough, they're finding interesting results on EDI tests on different factors leading into school. So they're picking children up at that stage as well with FASD and other learning challenges coming out of either home or child care. Obviously, the earlier, as the member said, you could detect a child with FASD, the better off you are.

**Mr. Gerrard:** These initiatives are good initiatives. I think it is going to be particularly important to be able to have the co-ordinating activity, in a sense that's going to be able to pool what's learned from the various initiatives to be able to provide much better understanding of the incidence and prevalence of FASD.

I would ask the Premier whether he's committed to making sure that these are not just done in isolation, but that the information is going to be able to pull together in a fashion that will give us a much better perspective of the situation province-wide with regard to FASD.

**Mr. Doer:** Yes, the money we announced in April, a \$7.5 million increase, represents investments we've made because we recognized it as a problem. I think the magnitude of the increase reflects our concern because it's a 1,400 percent increase since 1999.

The other factor dealing with Child and Family Services is there's \$600,000 in new money in this year's budget designed to have greater resources for Child and Family Services dealing with foster families and FASD kids. So there's more capacity in that system. There is a comprehensive strategy, but it is delivered in so many different places by so many different people. There are certain public health issues; there are community education issues; there are diagnoses that take place at the Children's Hospital and through the public health agencies. There is the EDI program and other follow-up in schools. There is the program dealing with foster children and FASD and support for social workers. I even believe there's a program in schools for kids that are transitioning from school to adulthood and what that means and what kind of services they should have. So all of these are intended to try to make a difference for people with FASD, and the

fact that we've increased the funding indicates our appreciation of the magnitude of the challenge.

**Mr. Gerrard:** One of the initiatives, as the Premier knows, that we have taken on this side is the bill which has been introduced by my colleague, the MLA for Inkster, which deals in part with labelling of alcoholic beverages with respect to the risks for somebody who's pregnant of the development of FASD in the child. We believe that this is an important measure and that it can be helpful to the overall effort to reduce the incidence of FASD in Manitoba.

I would ask the Premier whether he would look carefully at trying to implement this in Manitoba.

**Mr. Doer:** Well, obviously, the more information you give to people when they intend on drinking, the better off they can be. We have very little bottling or manufacturing in this regard in Manitoba. That's why we try to inform people at the liquor stores with the liquor—hopefully, they're using now the non-disposable bags, the cloth bags. I would highly recommend it and the education programs on television and in bars.

I think there have been other provinces that have discussed this with much larger buying capacity than Manitoba. The largest liquor purchaser in the world is actually the Liquor Board of Ontario. We'll need more people coming on board with us to get results, but, obviously, the more you can inform, the better off you are. On that part I agree. The ability of Manitoba to do it in isolation from other large purchasers of alcoholic beverages—you know, we try to do it at the outlets where the bottles are purchased so there is information there and pamphlets and other material. Even if we were to require it of a bottling company in Manitoba, they can move their operations to another jurisdiction and produce the beverages somewhere else. So it's not that easy even though the sentiment of providing more information is better.

**Mr. Gerrard:** I would suggest to the Premier that Manitoba may actually be an ideal province to do this, and it would not be requiring the manufacturer, it would be requiring that when the liquor is sold through the Manitoba Liquor Commission. The Manitoba Liquor Commission is in an ideal position to put a sticker on every bottle of liquor that's sold through the Manitoba Liquor Commission. As the Premier well knows, the huge majority of liquor in this province is sold through the Manitoba Liquor

Commission. There's only a few other distributors, and certainly, this would be an example of why a province like Manitoba is actually in a position to move much faster and quicker than other jurisdictions. So I would suggest to the Premier that Manitoba is, in fact, the ideal province to be able to move on this initiative.

In talking with people at the federal level, for example, there does not seem to be—because the Conservative Party and the Bloc appear to be opposed to this measure—a willingness to move forward on this legislation. Certainly, Manitoba could do it and could do it, in fact, relatively easily compared to most other places. Will the Premier take this and look at it carefully with a view to the possibility of bringing this into effect?

**Mr. Doer:** Well, as I understand it, the member for Winnipeg North, I'd better get the right constituency, Judy Wasylycia-Leis—I can actually use the name in here because the former member from St. Johns has a private member's bill in Parliament. We support that, and perhaps my honourable friend across the way, a Conservative, could help with our Conservative friends. I think the federal NDP and the federal Liberals support it. It's too bad it wasn't brought in 18 months ago when the former government had a majority if they believed in it, but I think it is. There are two ways to go. One is federally because I think a lot of the legislation dealing with international trade and labelling is in the purview of the federal government. The other issue is, and we also have agreed to internal trade, so we also have agreed to require access to—the old days of you've got to have a brewery in a province to sell beer here; those days are over. There is internal trade. There is the access to markets. We could do it with, maybe, other provinces, but it is preferable. I support the private member's bill of Judy Wasylycia-Leis.

\* (17:50)

**Mr. Gerrard:** I thank the Premier for his comments, but I suggest, as I have already, that the label could be put on at the level of the Manitoba Liquor Commission. It would not prejudice, you know, Manitoba producers versus others. It would provide an effective way of implementing this in Manitoba, and this is going to come. We should be showing the leadership not only because it's the right thing to do and because it needs to be done to help prevent the FASD. Finland is going to include a warning that alcohol endangers the development of a fetus,

beginning in 2009. We could actually, because of the Manitoba Liquor Commission situation, move much quicker than that, and it is something that should be looked at carefully. I would just ask that you give this some real consideration because I think it's an initiative which is important to Manitoba; it is important to Manitoba children. It's going to happen in due course. Why aren't we out front in doing this instead of waiting for others? and I would suggest to you that at this juncture, until some provinces start to act, the federal government is not going to act, particularly with the distribution of parties as it is right now.

**Mr. Doer:** Just in terms of updating the member, he may not be aware, but in April 2005 the Liberal majority in the standing committee voted against this. They voted against it in the Standing Committee of Health. They recommended that they not proceed with Bill C-206. They cited as a reason—and just so members know, labelling is the responsibility of the federal government under the Food and Drug Act—they cited as a reason from studies from the University of Montréal that there are more effective ways.

Having said that, we support the private member's bill of Judy Wasylycia-Leis and if the federal Liberals are on side now, maybe we just have to get the Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) who's got tremendous influence with the present minister, the lead minister—he's got his hand on the horn and his other hand on the levers, and he's got all this control—but I actually think it would be a good thing to push the MPs for Manitoba. I think it would be helpful. I think other tools as recommended by the University of Montréal are considered more effective, but I think more notice is better than less notice.

So I would support Judy Wasylycia-Leis, and I still think—that was a majority parliament. In a minority parliament sometimes there's more—not that I'm suggesting minorities are a good thing, but in a minority—*[interjection]* Well, I know Batman and Robin over there would have got together and formed the government. What a horrible thought that would have been. I support the private member's bill of Judy Wasylycia-Leis, and I'm glad that the Liberals have now had a conversion on the road to Damascus from their former position to their present one, because I think it is helpful. I think we should get that bill passed, and I look for the Member for Steinbach to start the ball rolling.

**An Honourable Member:** I had lunch with Tony Clement. Six hours late.

**Mr. Doer:** Well, that's good. Well, we've got a commitment. We have a commitment from the Member for Steinbach that he has persuaded Tony Clement to do this and we'll wait with bated breath on October 16 when the Speech from the Throne comes down for both phosphorous ban for dishwasher detergent and labelling. I'm excited. This is good.

#### Point of Order

**An Honourable Member:** Point of order, Madam Chairman.

**Madam Chairperson:** The Member for Emerson—Steinbach—it's late. The Member for Steinbach, on a point or order?

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** On a point of order. Just for the Premier's clarification, I said I had lunch with the Minister for Health; I said he was six hours late. But certainly in the future I'd be happy to raise this issue.

**Madam Chairperson:** The Member for Steinbach does not have a point of order.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Gerrard:** Yes. I would just comment to the Premier, that, you know, I've been talking with and corresponding with Paul Szabo, who's been a long-time advocate for this and has, indeed, I believe, had a private member's bill as well, which would have the same effect.

I think that, as I said, for a number of reasons it is not so likely to move at the federal level, but it is something that we could do at the provincial level, and I hope that the Premier will look carefully at the possibility of taking this forward.

I'm going to hand things over to my colleague, the MLA for Inkster, to ask several questions.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Madam Chairperson, interesting listening to the Premier's response in regard to the FASD bill, the phosphorus bill earlier today. One of the thoughts that comes to my mind is Tommy Douglas. I wonder if Tommy Douglas would have said, well, we'll wait until Ottawa decides on medicare. What kind of a system would we have today? We should show leadership, I believe, on those two issues, good initiatives.



But, anyway, my question that I have for the Premier, very precisely is I'm going to read from the Alfred Monnin report of March 29, 1999.

Code of Ethics and Terms of Recommendations, point 3, where it states: "That all registered political parties follow the recommendations of the federal Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing published in November 1991 (often referred to as 'the Lortie report'), and prepare a Code of Ethics as outlined therein as well as a mechanism whereby such Code or the provisions thereof be strictly adhered to."

We then have a code of ethics, Madam Chairperson, which the Premier's party agreed to, our party agreed to. All the major political parties agreed to, and I quote directly from that shared code of ethics. It states: "All political participants accept the responsibility to act in such a manner as to maintain and enhance public confidence in the integrity of the political process."

When it talks about the Application—I think this is really important for the Premier—it states: "Party leaders and candidates undertake to actively promote compliance with this Code."

In regard to Knowledge and Adherence, it states: "Members shall respect and adhere to the principles and rules of conduct set out in this Code and actively promote adherence to the Code on the part of other Members." Other members would also include the chief of staff from the Premier's office.

Respect for the Law: "Members shall maintain and promote respect for Manitoba's election laws. This involves complying with both the letter and"—and I really want to emphasize this—the "spirit of the provisions of all elections laws and regulations."

Then it goes on to Integrity, and it states: "Members shall conduct themselves in a way that upholds the integrity of, and the public's respect for, the electoral system."

Madam Chairperson, keeping in mind that this code of ethics comes from a report in which the Premier himself advocated very strongly for and says that he endorses, my question is: When he applies the code of ethics to the letter that was written by Mr. Kaur Sidhu in regard to The Maples nomination, can he tell this House what he has done beyond forwarding the letter to Elections Manitoba?

\* (18:00)

**Mr. Doer:** I'm assuming that Mr. Lamoureux, or the Member for Inkster, rather, is putting all his integrity behind the individual that he purports to support in his question here today, and that is his right. Having said that, he also mentions the public confidence issue in terms of integrity. The member opposite made major public allegations against people that couldn't defend themselves in this Chamber. He also made other allegations in the hallway, and he made further allegations in the public arena. He went out and made all kinds of claims that, by any journalistic standard, he has failed to meet. The member opposite will know that nobody has decreed that the loud Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) is the arbiter of integrity.

Actually the public is. The public has the question, raises the issue of public confidence. Public confidence has been vested in the 57 members that are in this Chamber. The public confidence was challenged by the member in his own statements on his own seat. You know, I'm not going to dignify his false bravado and his false promise any more except to say the people have spoken. The member opposite made a claim. He hasn't had the courage to follow through. That is his right. He'll be judged accordingly.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Madam Chairperson, I had indicated during the last provincial election, and I made reference to that in my grievance, I would suggest that the Premier (Mr. Doer) read the grievance. What I had told my constituents was that I would publicly apologize not only to the affected individuals, but also to the Premier himself. What I am trying to do is to get down to the truth of the matter, and a very specific question to the Premier: Has the Premier talked at all to his chief of staff regarding the letter that Mr. Kaur Sidhu wrote? Has he talked to him in any way, any fashion, in regard to this issue?

**Mr. Doer:** Well, Madam Chairperson, the member opposite has taken a view and taken a side, although it's late. Those of us who had the material sent it to Elections Manitoba two months before. What is the integrity of a member saying, I was sitting on the letter until it was the right time, literally 60 days after. The member opposite said, I'm putting my seat on the line. He put his seat on the line. That's what he claimed to do. Sheila Copps put her seat on the line; she had the courage of her convictions to follow through. The member opposite doesn't. He can shake and bake and rattle and roll, it doesn't change the

fundamental facts. We have the tapes; we have his words. His words are hollow, hollow to me, and hollow to everybody in this Chamber. He has no credibility. His credibility fell like a house of cards when he failed to, at minimum, apologize to the person whose reputation he dragged unceremoniously through the mud without any protection of this House.

I remember once when his former leader, Mrs. Carstairs, made an allegation about a person who couldn't speak in the House, and she had the courage the next day to come back and apologize. There's a time-honoured tradition that if people in this House are going to go after unelected people that do not have the right to speak out, that when they're proven to be wrong—and we've all made mistakes before—they have had the intestinal fortitude to stand up and apologize in this House. The member opposite doesn't have the backbone to do that, and he has no respect from me.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Madam Chair, I would, again, suggest that the Premier needs to read my grievance. My question is very simple to the Premier. Has he had any discussion with his chief of staff in regard to the letter that was written by Mr. Balagus, and if he's not prepared to answer that question, will he at least indicate to this House one piece of any written form, anything at all in writing or state his own personal opinion as to whether or not Mr. Balagus, his chief of staff, has been cleared of any wrongdoing.

**Mr. Doer:** I sent the letter to Elections Manitoba when I saw it first, which is my obligation, long before the member opposite—60 days before the member opposite even raised it. Then he said he had the letter, which raises the question: what did you do with it? Then you said, oh, I was sitting on it; well, I was sitting on it. Then you go out and make some statements in the hallway.

You're probably going to ask your lawyer to extend parliamentary privilege outside of this Chamber because of your words. Citizens have the right, all citizens have the right, not be slandered outside of this Chamber. I'm not speaking for the chief of staff of what he's going or not going to do, but I would suggest to the member opposite that there is parliamentary protection in this Chamber and with it goes fundamental responsibilities. But the member opposite has chosen to go out of the Chamber and make his statements. It'll be interesting to see what happens.

I'm not privy to any decisions that are going to be made by an individual citizen. Every person has a right to have allegations that are made against them verified, and when they're not verified, to be dealt with accordingly. You have no more rights outside of this Chamber than an individual that works as a chief of staff or as a chief of staff in Ottawa or as the lawyer for somebody else. You have a responsibility, sir, and you failed it. If you're going to make allegations about somebody, you'd better have the facts. The person that you are representing—

**Madam Chairperson:** Order, please. Would you please speak through the Chair.

**Mr. Doer:** The person you purport to represent, you'd better be very sure if you're going to take one person's word over another person's word, you'd better be very sure of what you're doing.

Having said that, you put your seat on the line. You're still standing here. You're equivocating. You're blubbing around in terms of what you're saying. You have no credibility with me. You won't until you do the proper thing and apologize properly to the individual, and do what you said you were going to, and that's resign your seat and let the people of Inkster rule after you've made this mistake.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Yes, Madam Chairperson, the Premier, in all of his words, says nothing to clear his own chief of staff. He doesn't say that his chief of staff is clear of any form of wrongdoings. He never has said that.

The best that I understand, from what I understand, there was some letter that went to someone and part of that letter said that there's not enough evidence to lay charges. *[interjection]* You're right. The Member for Wellington (Ms. Marcelino) is right. From my perspective, it's hearsay. Based on that, the Premier says I have to resign my seat. What moon or what planet are you on, Mr. Premier? Come to grips. You think I'm going to respond to an NDP press release.

**Madam Chairperson:** Order. I remind the committee members to please speak directly through the Deputy.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll attempt to do that.

The code of ethics states: "Party leaders"—that's you, Mr. Premier—"and candidates undertake to actively promote compliance with this Code." Can the Premier tell me how he is actively promoting

compliance with this code, when the code itself talks about, not only following the letter of the law, but also the spirit of the law. How is he ensured that that particular part of the code is being complied with?

**Mr. Doer:** Well, the member opposite made his allegations. He said he would put his seat on the line. Elections Manitoba, which he in 1998—and, by the way, it's 1998, not 1999, in terms of the Monnin report—said he would support the independent nature of Elections Manitoba. He also supported the proposal that was in the law, that was to have Elections Manitoba conduct their investigations similar to any other investigative body dealing with the powers of subpoena and other powers. They have come to the conclusion that the allegations made were wrong, not wrong, but there was no charge. The threshold for laying a charge is less than a conviction. There was no charge laid. Member opposite made his statements. I'll let history judge him.

\* (18:10)

He is not the carrier of the lantern in terms of the issue of public confidence. You know, actually, the public is. He doesn't carry a lantern around and is the final arbiter. He can smear people. He can smear and smear and smear, and that's what he does best. He's the smearer from Inkster. It's too bad, but that's what he is, and that's what we know him as, and that's what we'll remember him as.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chair, I believe I do nothing more than what the Premier, when he was leader of the opposition, would have insisted on and he fought for and he fought at that time, and I supported when it is that he fought.

The difference is now he sits across the floor in the Premier's chair and his principles have seemed to change. Mine have not changed. The Premier still does not want to provide any sort of paper, and on a little point, but he took exception to it and said: Well, I was wrong. It wasn't '99 it was '98.

No, the Premier is wrong. It was '99. It was March 1999, and I'm sure he'll confirm that little point too.

The Monnin report, it's right in front of me. It says March 29, 1999. So maybe it was a misprint, possibly I guess, but the Premier is likely wrong on this.

The question that I pose to the Premier, Madam Chairperson, is that the Monnin report wanted and

insisted that there be a code of ethics. This Premier has a responsibility to enforce the code of ethics as a leader of the New Democratic Party. He refuses to even touch base to talk, to explain anything in regard to the code of ethics with behaviour of a chief of staff.

Madam Chairperson, I work from the information that's being provided to me. New Democrats provided me information, not one, not two, and they even went beyond two about a meeting that took place. If this Premier refuses to answer directly, it doesn't necessarily mean that the person is innocent. If the person isn't, why?

If I was the chief of staff and I was innocent, I'd be awfully upset with my boss. Why isn't my boss? He's the one that sits inside the Chamber. He can stand up and say, no, the letter is bogus. Something's wrong here. The Premier is in the position in which he can address this. He's the one that's prolonging it, Madam Chair. If he wants to kill it he can kill it today. All he has to say is, I've talked to Mr. Balagus. I don't believe that there's any substance, that there's no substance to the letter that was written by Mr. Kaur Sidhu. If he believes that to be true, why won't he say that?

I provided him ample opportunity to do that. I have a responsibility to make sure that this Premier is living up to the code of ethics. That's what I'm elected for, and this Premier might not like that, Madam Chair. My response is, tough. That's my responsibility. I don't need a lecture in terms of having to apologize. I'll apologize when the truth ultimately comes out. I look to the Premier to be more open and to be transparent about this because he knows, full well, Elections Manitoba, by law, cannot give any further comment on this issue. So I will never even see the letter that is allegedly, and I do believe it is out there somewhere that says there wasn't enough evidence to lay charges. Well, what about the spirit of the law.

More importantly, when I was talking about it, I was talking about The Elections Act. I was talking about the code of ethics. The code of ethics made up 90 percent of my speeches. All the Premier has to do is review *Hansard* and he'll see that. It was the code of ethics that I was referring to.

Madam Chairperson, if I was to—and I know the Premier has, at least I suspect the Premier has actually read the letter, and if you read the letter it is—you know and I can read a couple parts directly

from it. I am seeking—this is a letter that was signed by Kaur Singh Sidhu, and it's been tabled by me inside the legislature. Just for the record, so the Premier knows, I didn't sit on the letter. The letter was tabled shortly, and when I say shortly, within a few days. I might have received it on a Saturday, and I might have tabled it on a Monday.

Upon receiving the letter, I actually tabled the letter. It states, and this is coming from Mr. Sidhu: I am seeking nomination in The Maples in 2006. The nomination date has been postponed, and I am being bullied to withdraw my name and support Cris, and so on. Mr. Balagus called me on Tuesday, August 28 at my work for a meeting. Meeting was arranged August 29 at 3 p.m. in room 215. During the whole meeting Mr. Balagus was putting pressure on for not seeking candidacy from The Maples, and that Cris Aglugub run as a candidate during the next general election. He strongly said that I should say to Ms. Mia Rabson from the *Winnipeg Free Press* report, if she interviews me, that I am, in brackets, Kaur Sidhu, not running. This is another example of intimidation and bullying. Mr. Balagus also offered me a high-profile board position to enhance my profile in a deal for not running against Cris. This is an example of corruption and bribery.

You know what I found interesting, Madam Chair, is how it's signed off. It's signed off "die-hard NDPer."

That's the letter, and the Premier (Mr. Doer), I am sure, has read the letter. Then he says, well, that's one person. So I'm taking sides with one person. I started to raise the issue after receiving this, and what does the Premier say? Nothing. I forwarded it to Elections Manitoba. What about the code of ethics? He's the one that responsible for enforcing the code of ethics. What am I doing? I'm doing my job. It was brought to me. I brought it up into the Chamber. That's what I get paid to do, and that's the part of my responsibilities as a legislator inside this Chamber.

Madam Chair, the Premier says, well, you know, that's just one person's side that I'm taking, and I can tell you, I had talked to more than two people in regard to this, all of which were New Democrats, I must admit. But, you know, another individual, and I'll take this from a CBC clip, and it's dated. Elections Manitoba sent it Thursday. This is actually dated August 30, 2007. Last updated from CBC news: In December, long-time NDP member Gurmeet Gill charged that the Premier Gary Doer's

chief of staff—and I withdraw the name, the Premier—had offered another member, Kaur Sidhu, a high-profile government job in exchange for staying out of the party's nomination race in The Maples, a riding of Winnipeg.

I know in earlier reports this same individual, Mr. Gill, had indicated that it was with one of the regional health care authorities. Madam Chair, not only did I get confirmation that, yes, this was a letter and that the person, this Mr. Sidhu did sign the letter. I also had a witness that said that he was at the meeting. He was at the meeting, and it's true that it happened. I saw that through the news. There are substantial allegations that are there, and I am raising allegations because they are serious allegations, and where there is smoke there is often fire.

The Premier was trying to hide on this issue because he wasn't saying a word as he does it today. Not a word. Not a peep. I've provided him the opportunity to say that, that Michael Balagus is clear of all wrongdoings in my opinion. Even give his personal opinion. He won't even tell us that he's applied the shared code of ethics, yet the code of ethics says he has a responsibility to ensure that members are abiding by the code of ethics. But he chooses not to even apply that. Why is he not responding?

Instead, Madam Chairperson, he sits back, and he feels that he has the right and the authority based on his—

**Madam Chairperson:** Order, please.

The honourable member's time has expired.

**Mr. Doer:** The Monnin did start in '98, and I do want to say that it was concluded in '99. When I make a mistake, I actually apologize.

The integrity of people is not to be questioned. We have staff with integrity, and we have staff that have passed the test of cross-examination—not cross-examination, but rather scrutiny under the power of oath under the law. The allegations have been investigated, and they have been properly investigated. The charges are serious. If there was anything to them, there would be a charge laid. There wasn't, and I judge people accordingly. Thank you.

\* (18:20)

**Mr. Lamoureux:** My final question, then, if the Premier could answer it, would be: Does he believe as a Premier that he has a responsibility to live up to

the code of ethics in the province of Manitoba for political parties?

**Mr. Doer:** I believe the code of ethics, the law, the spirit of the law is important for all of us in this Chamber, including myself, and I also believe the people actually make that judgment, not the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux).

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Can the Premier indicate how he applied the code of ethics in this particular situation in regard to Mr. Sidhu's letter and the news media reports as to witnesses to the meeting that took place.

**Mr. Doer:** I operated within the law immediately, and I'm accountable for that. I do not need lectures from the Member from Inkster. I don't smear people that can't defend themselves in this House unless I have reason to do so. That's an issue of ethics, too, sir. You failed it.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Well, Madam Chair, I more than welcome the opportunity, whether it's in Committee or here, to have Mr. Balagus so that we can question him direct, anything that would ultimately get some sort of response in regard to it.

The question to the Premier is: Does he recognize that he has a responsibility to apply the code of ethics in this situation, and if so, does he believe that Mr. Balagus is completely clear of any wrongdoing?

**Mr. Doer:** I believe in the battle of ethics. The Member for Inkster pales in comparison to the chief of staff of the NDP or the government, rather. I think he pales in comparison in terms of character, and he pales in comparison in terms of the fortitude to have a backbone to follow-through in what he said.

I'm going to the Boys and Girls Club tonight. I know that Mr. Cloutier is a member of that board of directors. I want to hope he's there tonight. I know he took the original tape of the member. I'll have to replay it. He'll probably remember it. We heard the tape.

We all know the integrity issue. You know you can argue, allege somebody else's integrity; you can allege somebody else broke the law; you can go out in the hallway and say what you want. I am not giving Mr. Balagus advice on lawsuits, but I know what it would be. It would be inappropriate to make it in this House, but I don't, and I wouldn't give him advice as a private citizen because he actually has

rights as a private citizen. I think, as I say, your integrity fell like a house of cards when you failed to follow through on your commitment.

**Some Honourable Members:** Pass.

**Madam Chairperson:** Is the committee ready to pass the resolutions? *[Agreed]*

Resolution 2.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$14,600 for Executive Council, Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2008.

**Resolution agreed to.**

The last item to be considered for the Estimates of the Department is item 1(a), the Ministers' Salary, contained in Resolution 2.1.

At this point, we request that the ministers' staff leave the Chamber for consideration of this last item.

The floor is open for questions.

**Some Honourable Members:** Pass.

**Madam Chairperson:** Resolution 2.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,744,600 for Executive Council, General Administration, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2008.

**Resolution agreed to.**

This concludes the Estimates for this department. The next set of Estimates that will be considered by this section of the committee are the Estimates of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs.

What is the will of the committee?

**An Honourable Member:** Committee rise.

**Madam Chairperson:** This section of the committee will therefore rise.

\* (18:30)

Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

## IN SESSION

**Mr. Speaker:** Please be seated. Could I ask the House to not see the clock for a few minutes? *[Agreed]*

*Hansard* did not pick up my putting the question on Bill 17 earlier. I myself am to blame because I forgot to throw the switch when everybody was giving, when everyone was clapping for the guests that were here.

For the record, I need to have the House indicate that it is agreed to the motion that Bill 17 be read for a first time. So we will need leave to revert to Routine Proceedings. Is there leave to revert to routine proceedings? *[Agreed]*

### **ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

### **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

#### **Bill 17—The Firefighters, Peace Officers and Workers Memorial Foundations Act**

**Mr. Speaker:** With leave, I will put the question on first reading of Bill 17, The Firefighters, Peace

Officers and Workers Memorial Foundations Act. It was moved by the honourable Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Lemieux), seconded by the honourable Minister of Labour and Immigration (Ms. Allan), that Bill 17, The Firefighters, Peace Officers and Workers Memorial Foundations Act, be now read a first time.

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

So the hour being now past 6:30, as agreed to, this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday.

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, September 27, 2007

## CONTENTS

<b>ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS</b>			
<b>Introduction of Bills</b>		Manitoba Economy Borotsik; Selinger	468
Bill 10—The Family Maintenance Amendment and Inter-jurisdictional Support Orders Amendment Act Chomiak	461	Trans-Canada Highway Maguire; Lemieux	469
Bill 17—The Firefighters, Peace Officers and Workers Memorial Foundations Act Lemieux	461, 567	Bill 203 Lamoureux; Doer	469
Bill 209—The Historic Trans-Canada Highway Act Hawranik	461	Private Members' Bills Lamoureux; Doer	470
		Phosphorus Free Dishwashing Degergent Lamoureux; Chomiak	470
<b>Petitions</b>		<b>Members' Statements</b>	
Provincial Trunk Highway 2—Glenboro Cullen	461	Ramadan Swan	471
Provincial Trunk Highway 10—Forrest Rowat	462	Hockey Day in Canada Dyck	471
Provincial Nominee Program Lamoureux	462	Cole Choken Nevakshonoff	472
<b>Tabling of Reports</b>		Dr. John Dick Pedersen	472
Annual Report of the Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2007 Wowchuk	462	India Day Celebrations Bidhu Jha	472
Annual Report of the Food Development Centre for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2007 Wowchuk	462		
<b>Oral Questions</b>		<b>ORDERS OF THE DAY</b>	
West Side Bipole Power Line McFadyen; Doer	462	<b>GOVERNMENT BUSINESS</b>	
Child Welfare System Briese; Mackintosh	465	<b>Committee of Supply</b> (Concurrent Sections)	
Hollow Water Cottage Barricade Hawranik; Chomiak	466	Infrastructure and Transportation	473
Stefanson; Chomiak	467	Justice	497
		Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives	509
		Executive Council	536

The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba Debates and Proceedings  
are also available on the Internet at the following address:

**<http://www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/hansard/index.html>**