

Fifth Session - Thirty-Ninth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

Official Report
(Hansard)

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The Honourable George Hickes
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Ninth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
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.
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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.
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.
HICKES, George, Hon.	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
HOWARD, Jennifer, Hon.	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Garry	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
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MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	N.D.P.
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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.
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SWAN, Andrew, Hon.	Minto	N.D.P.
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	P.C.
WHITEHEAD, Frank	The Pas	N.D.P.
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	N.D.P.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.
<i>Vacant</i>	Inkster	
<i>Vacant</i>	Lac du Bonnet	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 5, 2011

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 30—The Change of Name Amendment Act

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Consumer Affairs): I move, seconded by the Attorney General (Mr. Swan), that Bill 30, The Change of Name Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le changement de nom, be read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Mackintosh: This could be called the you-can-run-but-can't-hide bill. This bill requires fingerprinting when one changes their name to reduce the risk of a person changing their name and avoiding a criminal record.

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

Bill 34—The Workers Compensation Amendment Act (Presumption re OFC Personnel)

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister charged with the administration of The Workers Compensation Act): I move, seconded by the Minister of Housing and Community Development (Ms. Irvin-Ross), that Bill 34, The Workers Compensation Amendment Act (Presumption re OFC Personnel); Loi modifiant la Loi sur les accidents du travail (présomption s'appliquant au personnel du bureau du commissaire aux incendies), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Ms. Howard: It gives me great pleasure to introduce this act. It gives a new definition of OFC personnel to the firefighter presumptions. This means that the firefighter heart injury and cancer presumptions will be extended to personnel employed by the Office of the Fire Commissioner whose duties include investigating the cause, origin and circumstances of fires, firefighting or delivering training on fire investigations or firefighting.

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

Bill 205—The Regional Health Authorities Amendment Act (Mammography Accreditation)

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I move, seconded by the member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu), that Bill 205, The Regional Health Authorities Amendment Act (Mammography Accreditation), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Driedger: This particular bill will ensure that all mammography machines in Manitoba undergo an accreditation process so that we can ensure that they are all in proper working order and that they are all up to standard across the province. Thank you.

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

PETITIONS

PTH 16 and PTH 5 North—Traffic Signals

Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

The junction of PTH 16 and PTH 5 north is an increasingly busy intersection which is used by motorists and pedestrians alike.

The Town of Neepawa has raised concerns with the Highway Traffic Board about safety levels at this intersection.

The Town of Neepawa has also passed a resolution requesting that Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation install traffic lights at this intersection in order to increase safety.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation to consider making the installation of traffic lights at the intersection of PTH 16 and PTH 5 north a priority project in order to help protect the safety of the motorists and pedestrians who use it.

This petition is signed by D. McDougald, S.M. Glen, C. McNairnay and many, many other fine Manitobans.

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

Auto Theft—Court Order Breaches

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Yes, good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

On December 11th of 2009, in Winnipeg, Zdzislaw Andrzejczak was killed when the car that he was driving collided with a stolen vehicle.

The death of Mr. Andrzejczak, a husband and a father, along with too many other deaths and injuries involving stolen vehicles, was a preventable tragedy.

Many of those accused in fatalities involving stolen vehicles were previously known to police and identified as chronic and high-risk car thieves who had court orders against them.

Chronic car thieves pose a risk to the safety of all Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To request the Minister of Justice to consider ensuring that all court orders for car thieves are vigorously monitored and enforced.

And to request the Minister of Justice to consider ensuring that all breaches of court orders on car thieves are reported to police and vigorously prosecuted.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by H. Cecelon, S. Sziron, J. Spyrka and thousands of other Manitobans.

Convicted Auto Thieves—Denial of MPI Benefits

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Carman): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

In Manitoba, a car thief convicted of stealing a vehicle involved in a car accident is eligible to receive compensation and assistance for personal injury from Manitoba Public Insurance.

Too many Manitoban families have had their lives tragically altered by motor vehicle accidents involving car thieves and stolen vehicles.

It is an injustice to victims, their families and law-abiding Manitobans that MPI premiums are used to benefit car thieves involved in those accidents.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To request that the Minister of Justice deny all MPI benefits to a person for injuries received in an accident if he or she is convicted of stealing a motor vehicle involved in the accident.

And this petition is signed by J. Versteeg, K. Maxwell, C. Major and many, many more fine Manitobans.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table the MIT 2011-2012 Departmental Expenditure Estimates.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Flooding and Ice Jams Update

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures): Mr. Speaker, the Winnipeg police dive team recovered the body of a young man yesterday in the Sturgeon Creek. This is a tragic situation and a solemn reminder of the power of our swollen creeks and rivers. I'd like to pass on our sincere condolences to this individual's family and yet again note the importance of exercising extreme caution in and around flood waters and dikes.

A high water advisory is in effect for all major lakes in Manitoba. A flood warning has been issued for Dauphin Lake and all inflowing streams and Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin, which are forecast to reach unprecedented high water levels since lake regulation began in 1961.

* (13:40)

These high waters on Lake Manitoba have prompted the RM of Coldwell to put up 800 feet of Aqua Dams and 600 feet of Tiger tubes at Sugar Point and Lundar Beach. The RM has also requested sandbags from the Province as a precaution.

The Province has also sent a sandbag machine, sand and bags to O-Chi-Chak-Ko-Sipi First Nation on Lake Manitoba upon request to assist with flood fighting in this area.

On a positive note, I can advise the House that 544 people from Roseau River First Nation returned home yesterday, leaving 195 from that community still evacuated.

The total number of evacuees across the province is currently 1,306.

Finally, I'd like to highlight that the Shellmouth Dam and the Portage Diversion will be in operation for an extended period of time, and water levels on many lakes and rivers are expected to remain high for weeks or even months. Despite this, it is important to note that many areas of the province, including Lake Manitoba, Lake Winnipeg and the Red River from the floodway control structure to Lake Winnipeg are below the state of nature. This means that current water levels in these areas would be higher without the benefit provided by these very significant flood management systems.

Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose): Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for the latest update.

Since the House last sat, it has been confirmed that a young man lost his life when he drowned in Sturgeon Creek. It's a tragic reminder of how dangerous rushing bodies of water can be.

The rising flood waters in certain regions continue to pose a challenge, particularly for First Nations communities. The latest ones affected include Lake St. Martin First Nation, Little Saskatchewan First Nation, Fairford First Nation, and I know that the Crane River school was being diked today at the Crane River First Nation.

Water levels on Lake St. Martin and Lake Manitoba are not expected to peak until early June.

As someone who represents many constituents with properties along or near Lake Manitoba, I can certainly attest that water levels are high and are having a very adverse effect. Residents along major lakes are also keeping a watchful eye on the ice situation as it relates to the risks of pileups and potential damage from that.

On a more positive note, the Red and Assiniboine River are cresting in Winnipeg and the flood-related impacts have been limited, thanks in no small part to the presence of flood control works like the Shellmouth Dam and the Portage Diversion.

We look forward to ongoing updates on the flood situation. Thank you, Mr. Minister—Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I ask leave to speak to the minister's statement.

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

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I want to begin my comments with a mention of the young man who died in Sturgeon Creek and extend my condolences to the friends and the family. This is a very sorrowful event and we hope that all around the province people will be alert and that we can avoid these sorts of problems in the future.

Second, I want to comment on the situation with the continuing large numbers of evacuees, many from First Nations communities, and highlight the fact that the long-term planning for communities like Peguis and Roseau and Lake St. Martin is urgently needed and must be a major priority.

Thirdly, the problems along Highway 75, a major trucking route and major communications route, highlight the need to address on an urgent basis going forward the long-term plans to raise Highway 75 or find a way of keeping Highway 75 near Morris open, as well as, I would suggest, looking at Highway 23 just west of Morris to see what could be done to keep that open as well.

So there is lots to do, not only now but moving forward, and we need to keep focused on this. Thank you.

Inuit Culture Celebrations

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

Mr. Speaker, *toongasoogeetsi*.

Today marks the third time members of this House have gathered to honour and recognize the contributions of Aboriginal people to the cultural and historic makeup of this province.

Last spring, we honoured First Nations people by hosting Treaty Day at the Legislature. We acknowledged the governments of Canada, Manitoba and First Nations have a unique relationship that has existed for more than 139 years.

Last fall, we hosted Métis Day and acknowledged Louis Riel's provisional government, made up of many Aboriginal people, as the first elected government of the province of Manitoba. Today, we are honouring the many contributions of

the Inuit people who have lived in the area we now call Manitoba for centuries.

I will begin by acknowledging you, Mr. Speaker, the first Inuk elected as Speaker to any provincial Legislature and a man I am thankful to be able to call an old friend. When you acknowledged the guests earlier this afternoon, I was very proud to hear you address them in your language, Inuktitut. And I am proud that last year, the Manitoba government passed the Aboriginal languages act acknowledging Inuktitut as an official Aboriginal language.

I'd also like to acknowledge our honoured guests in the gallery, including Moses Aupaluktuq, the MLA for Baker Lake in Nunavut, along with the many members of the Manitoba Urban Inuit Association who have played a pivotal role in bringing Manitoba's Inuit community together for today's celebration.

Most importantly, I want to convey my deepest and heartfelt respect to the elders who have joined us, including elder Levania Brown, and I want to honour those who have gone ahead to the spirit world.

Historically, the Inuit people played an important role in opening up the north to the European fur trade, along with the Cree and Dene people in communities like present-day Churchill and York Factory. Their generosity and industrious attitude laid the groundwork for what would become the province of Manitoba.

Like many Aboriginal people, European contact marred the Inuit way of life with many forms of dysfunction. For example, for decades our Inuit brothers and sisters were stripped of their names and given a numbered tattoo as their only form of government-recognized identification. But, courageously, they are embarking on the task of putting their lives and identities back together.

Their resiliency is exemplified by the hard work of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami to create the territory of Nunavut, which, after decades of negotiation, was established on April 1st, 1999.

Since that day, Manitoba and Nunavut have shared a proud and unique relationship. I believe, with this attitude, we will continue to build a strong and prosperous future for all people in Manitoba. Thank you and *mutna*, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): I want to thank the minister for his statement this afternoon, and on

behalf of our leader and our caucus, I, too, want to acknowledge and welcome our guests from Nunavut to the gallery—who are in the gallery.

And I want to also acknowledge you as the first Inuit Speaker in our province and the contributions that you have made to our Legislature and our political process.

I also want to say thank you to the people from Nunavut who welcomed us back in 1999, when we took a delegation of business people to Nunavut, and, as a matter of fact, we were there on the day that the first government was sworn in, and I had the honour and the privilege of meeting the first premier of Nunavut that day, and, indeed, one of the ministers who I believe is related to you, Mr. Speaker, we met on that day as well.

I also want to welcome the MLA from Nunavut, from Baker Lake, today, who made his way to this celebration and to join us here in the Legislature this afternoon. Welcome to the Manitoba Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that the people from Nunavut and Inuit people in Manitoba and the Nunavut territory have contributed richly to the cultural and heritage life of our province and indeed our country, and I know that they have lived with many adversities throughout time.

But it's a new day. And today I want to say thank you to the minister who put this together, and I want to also say thank you to him for allowing us, as members of the Legislature, to come together and to not only be recognized at the ceremony but to participate in a small way in the ceremony. And for that I want to say thank you to the minister, who was gracious, and that was a very class act, Mr. Minister, and we certainly appreciate it.

To the people from Nunavut: Welcome to our Legislature and we hope your experience here is a rich one. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* (13:50)

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I ask leave to speak to the minister's statement.

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

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I rise to join others in this Chamber in recognizing the important contribution that Inuit people have made to Manitoba to our culture, both in the north and, in fact, increasingly as more people of Inuit background are

living in Winnipeg and other places throughout the province.

Certainly, I'd like to acknowledge yourself, and the important role that you have played in the last number of years as Speaker is an important contribution of one among many but, certainly, one that stands out.

I would like to acknowledge and welcome the guests who are here on this occasion of a celebration, the recognition of the contributions of Inuit people.

I'd like to say a word about, you know, the display downstairs. The Hudson Bay archives people have put together some very interesting material, including lists of people in the Inuit community who worked or traded at sites—Hudson Bay sites. And I would like to thank Michelle Rydz who provided me a little bit of an interpretive tour as she was one of a number of people who had put together and been involved in putting together that display, and I'd like to invite the people here and outside to make sure that they have a chance to see that display while it's here. Thank you.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Okay. Prior to oral questions, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the loge to my right; we have with us, we have Moses Aupaluktuq, who is the member of the Legislative Assembly for Baker Lake. And also he's a part of our family. My second oldest brother is married to his sister, so he's a family member. So welcome to the family.

And also in the Speaker's gallery we have with us today, we have the board of directors from the Manitoba Urban Inuit Association. We have Nichola and Aidan Adjuk Batzel from—originally from Whale Cove; and Sylvia and Casandra Craig, originally from Rankin Inlet; and Winnie Crawford from Turn Pointe. She's up—she's our oldest elder that's here. She's 90 years old, and she's the long-time—grew up and a long-time family friend of my mother's when she was still alive. So she's very, very special to all of us in the North.

And also I'd like to introduce Ron Brown from Rankin Inlet and also his wife, Levania Brown, from Dawson Inlet who is a former deputy premier and also former member of the Legislative Assembly for Rankin Inlet.

And also Ariel Voisey, who is from Churchill and Maria Quqsuq from Whale Cove.

Inuktitut spoken. Translation unavailable.

So on behalf of all the members, I welcome them here.

Okay. And then also we have in the public gallery, we have from Horizons Adult Learning Centre, we have 11 students under the direction of Ms. Tara Debreuil. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Conservation.

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

Okay. We'll move on.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Emergency Health-Care Services Government Record

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): I want to welcome these special guests here today as well, the member for Baker Lake and the other guests in the gallery today, and acknowledge the minister and others involved in this very special celebration in recognition of the Inuit people.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of access to health care in Manitoba today, far too many Manitobans continue to be disappointed that the government has failed to deliver on promises to ensure timely access to health care for all Manitobans, and, in particular, the government has failed to keep its promise to end hallway medicine, now more than 11 and a half years since that promise was made.

It was the No. 1 promise that the government made and the promise was very clear: It was to end hallway medicine. Mr. Speaker, why haven't they done it?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Before I get to that question, which we answered yesterday, I want to again welcome our guests, but I also want to point out that we had 1,300 students and teachers outside today celebrating Winnipeg's school safety program's 75th anniversary. This is the famous school patrol and these school patrols—I remember well when my children played that role in grades 5 and 6—these school patrols make a very valuable contribution to the safety of neighbourhoods and are very dedicated to their task.

I'd like to also thank their sponsors, the Public Insurance Corporation, the Canadian Automobile Association in Manitoba, the Winnipeg Police,

McDonald's restaurants and the *Winnipeg Free Press*.

And on the question of ending hallway medicine, Mr. Speaker, I simply put on the record information we put on in the last two days. On average, in Winnipeg, every day, we have one person in the hallway, one patient in the hallway, and that is information that we put on the public record. We publish it every single day. And that contrasts with the 34 people during the 1999 and earlier period.

Mr. McFadyen: It wasn't yesterday. It was Tuesday that the question was asked, and the answer that was given wasn't responsive to the question. It wasn't accurate, and it's not a reflection of what's actually going on in health care in Manitoba today.

Mr. Speaker, there are far more than one patient in the hallway on any given day in Winnipeg hospitals. Today I want to ask the Premier: Their promise was clear. They would end hallway medicine within six months. It's now 11 years and 7 months. Why doesn't he just acknowledge they have no intention of keeping the No. 1 promise that they made to Manitobans over 11 years ago?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, not only do we keep that promise on a daily basis and not only have we invested in more doctors, 405 more doctors, and 2,500 more nurses and a complete renewal of our ambulance fleet throughout Manitoba, these are just some of the investments we've made in reducing hallway medicine so that, on average, it's one patient a day, which is disclosed and made available to the public every single day versus 1999 when no information was available to the public. But when it finally was squeezed out of the government of the day, it turned out to be, on average, 34 people a day that were in the hallways.

We've made dramatic progress. We're not perfect, but we will continue to find ways to improve the service that people get through the emergency rooms. We will look at diverting people to quick-care clinics. We will look at diverting people to access clinics. We already move people to the urgent care clinic at the Misericordia Hospital.

So we will look at every measure possible to increase the efficiency of people receiving timely care when they need it.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, the facts are entirely at odds with what the Premier is saying. There are more than one—there's more than one person in the hallway of hospitals in Winnipeg on any given day.

It was under his government's watch that Brian Sinclair tragically waited 34 hours in an emergency room without getting the care he needed.

It's under his government's watch that a record number of Manitobans continue to not have access to family physicians. It's under his government's watch, Mr. Speaker, that only six months ago they were rapidly discharging patients from hospitals because of a lack of capacity. It's under his government's watch that paramedics spent over 15,000 hours waiting to discharge patients around emergency rooms.

Mr. Speaker, the facts are they've had 11 and a half years to get it right. They still haven't got it right. Why doesn't he acknowledge that they have no intention of fixing the problem, either no intention or no ability to do so?

*(14:00)

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the facts actually do underline very clearly the significant improvements we've made in hallway medicine in Manitoba. These improvements have been the result of very focused investments in personnel, doctors and nurses as well as technologists, very focused investments in redesigning the emergency rooms, very focused investments in ambulances, and, of course, some people, for example, the person—the doctor that runs the ER room at the Seven Oaks Hospital has developed one of the most efficient protocols and procedures anywhere in North America on how people are dealt with in an emergency room.

And I remind the member opposite he promised only to grow health care at the great—rate of growth in the economy. That would've meant—if his promise would've been fulfilled, that would have meant \$756 million less for health care, over 2,000 nurses laid off in Manitoba. That's the approach the member opposite would've taken if he would've been in government.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a new question.

Mr. McFadyen: On a new question, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier has just said on several occasions in the House that there's only one—an average of one patient in hallways in Winnipeg hospitals. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, that's directly contradicted by Arlene Wilgosh in response to a freedom of information request that was just received by our party. And what that response says is that at

the Grace General Hospital there are 17 numbered stretcher spaces in hallways.

That, Mr. Speaker, is the way that they've dealt with this problem of hallway medicine. Instead of taking patients out of hallways, they've gone along the hallways and thrown numbers up above their stretchers up and down the hallways, and they've tried to call those hallways something else.

Why doesn't the Premier just acknowledge that all they do is play political games rather than getting results for Manitobans?

Mr. Selinger: First of all, Mr. Speaker, if the member has information that he wants to quote from, he should put it in front of the House so it can be investigated. I will say this: The last time the member quoted from information, it turned out that he left out the most salient part about hydro rates which were the lowest in North America and perhaps in the world.

So when we come to hallway medicine, Mr. Speaker, what are the facts? The facts are that there have been dramatic improvements in the number of doctors we have in Manitoba. Instead of losing 100 doctors as we did in the 1990s, we have 405 doctors more now. Instead of laying off 1,300 nurses and firing them, we have over 2,500 nurses more in Manitoba right now. Instead of reducing the number of physicians that can be trained in the medical school from 85 to 70, we've increased it from 70 to 110. Instead of no nurse practitioners in Manitoba, we now have nearly 100, and as a result we are treating more people—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. McFadyen: Well, Mr. Speaker, the response comes from the president and CEO of the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, Arlene Wilgosh. It refers to 17 numbered places in hallways at the Grace Hospital.

They said over 11 years ago they would end hallway medicine. Mr. Speaker, what Manitobans didn't realize was that rather than getting patients out of hallways, all they were going to do was rename those hallways by putting numbers up along the way.

I want to ask the Premier: Will he today apologize to Manitobans for falsifying the hallway medicine numbers in the same way, Mr. Speaker, that he falsified his election return?

Mr. Selinger: The member opposite misleads the House with his information, and he seems to be

afraid to table it in front of the House, Mr. Speaker. If he really wants to be open, if he doesn't want to return to the '90s when everything was hidden and misquoted, let him table the information.

Now, let's take a look at the Grace Hospital, Mr. Speaker. The members opposite tried to scare the people of St. James by saying the Grace Hospital would be shut. We have invested in a new access centre which is going to be constructed at the Grace Hospital. We have committed to a new emergency room redesign at the Grace Hospital. We have committed to additional resources to deal with the elderly that need care in that community, of which there are many that need access to the emergency room.

And, of course, unlike the members opposite just nine months ago that wanted to cut one-half a billion dollars out of the budget and lay off nurses and doctors, we committed to protecting front-line services and we committed to ensuring that nurses and doctors and paramedics and nurse practitioners had employment and work in Manitoba to serve the needs of Manitoba patients. That's what we've done and they voted against it.

Mr. McFadyen: Well, Mr. Speaker, all that they've done is they've gone around and they've—they put numbers up on the walls of hallways above the gurneys, above the stretchers. The patients are still lying in the hallways. *[interjection]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. Let's have a little decorum, please.

The honourable First Minister has the floor.

Mr. McFadyen: And, Mr. Speaker, Manitobans know when they go to visit family members about the number of people lying in hallways. If it walks, talks and quacks like a hallway, it's a hallway no matter how much they try to rebrand it.

Rather than playing games with words, rather than falsifying hallway numbers, rather than falsifying election returns, why don't they just do what they promised to do and end hallway medicine, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the information is on the public record that the average number of patients in the hallways is one. If the member has information that refutes that, let him put it on the record. He knows very well that his promise in 2007 would have resulted in 2,000 less doctors in Manitoba and it would have resulted in \$750 million less resources in

the health-care system, and then last year they wanted to cut another half a billion dollars out of our front-line services.

We have more doctors. We have more nurses. We have more ambulances and we now are committed to working with all of those people who are available to us in the health-care system to improve health care and continue to protect front-line services for all of Manitobans.

That's our commitment. Their commitment is to cut front-line services.

Grace Hospital Emergency Room Numbered Hallway Stretchers

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, in 1999 this NDP government promised to end hallway medicine, but today hallway medicine still exists and we now have parking lot medicine.

And, Mr. Speaker, we've learned that the NDP have numbered the ER hallway spaces at the Grace Hospital. In fact, there's 17 of them in total.

So I'd like to ask the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) to explain: Why is it that the WRHA can get a shiny, brand-new corporate headquarters while the Grace Hospital has to make do with numbered ER hallway spaces in the ER?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Acting Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, it seems like the members opposite want to refight the '99 election and we're quite happy to do that. We're quite happy to talk about Connie Curran versus hiring doctors. We're quite happy to talk about hiring 1,500 nurses 'versing' firing 1,500 nurses. We're happy to talk about 34 people in the hallway night after night after night versus today's stats, that are online, that average one per day.

And you know what, Mr. Speaker? We're happy to fight the '99 election based on health care because if it looks like a duck and talks like a duck and cuts like a duck, it's the Tories, over and over and over again.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, as usual, instead of answers we hear desperate attacks from a tired and desperate government.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to ask again: Can the Minister of Health (Mr. Oswald) explain why the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority was able to get a brand-new headquarters, a new parking lot and a new rooftop patio while patients in west Winnipeg

are stuck in the Grace Hospital ER hallway in numbered spaces?

*(14:10)

Mr. Chomiak: Oh, Mr. Speaker, okay, if the members want to go back to '99, I'm quite happy.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the day we were sworn in as government I went to Grace Hospital, and there was numbers and there were people lined in the hallways. Now, I've been to Grace Hospital recently, several occasions, and they're not staying overnight, not like Concordia Hospital where they recorded—where the—33 people in the hallway overnight. That has changed dramatically.

If members want to go back and they want to debate Connie Curran, that's fine, Mr. Speaker. If they want to talk about having two regional health authorities in the city of Winnipeg and 13 vice-presidents that we had to cut, we'll be happy to do that. We will debate health care in Winnipeg, Manitoba, versus 1999 anytime, any place, anywhere.

And we'd love to have an election based on health care, Mr. Speaker, because Manitobans know who they can trust on health care. The Tories cut—or the—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, again, this minister has nothing to offer but desperate attacks.

So I would like to ask him again: Can the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) explain to Manitobans, why does the WRHA get a brand-new shiny corporate headquarters for bureaucrats, a new parking spot for bureaucrats, a new \$38,000 rooftop patio for bureaucrats, while Grace Hospital ER patients are stuck in permanently numbered hallway spaces? Why do bureaucrats always come first with this NDP government?

Mr. Chomiak: And recently I had occasion to be at the Seven Oaks Hospital that members opposite tried to close, and I was in the newly refurbished ER where they have an automatic sign that tells each patient, the six or seven that are waiting, how many minutes they have to wait to see a doctor.

And there's also a new emergency room at St. Boniface, Mr. Speaker, new facilities at Health Sciences Centre, new facilities coming up at Grace Hospital, new facilities at Victoria.

And there's only been one hospital ever closed in the history of Manitoba, one large hospital that was called Misericordia. It was closed by members opposite without consultation, Mr. Speaker.

And we will hold our record of health-care spending. The members wanted to cut half a billion dollars just nine months ago.

And we'd be happy to go to the people and talk about health care and the future and building for the future based on our record versus based on their dismal record where people stayed in the hallway overnight, and we have the stats here on the website to prove it.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable member for Russell has the floor.

Hamiota District Health Centre Panic Alarm System Requirement

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): The recent brutal beating of an innocent licensed practical nurse and the terror inflicted on her registered partner and also on a scheduling clerk, Mr. Speaker, is something that the Hamiota community, the staff at the Hamiota hospital, the residents in the community and surrounding areas are still terrified about, and they have sent a petition, which I received a copy of, to the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) requesting that immediate action be taken to at least provide temporary panic alarms so that officials can be notified immediately when such an attack takes place.

Mr. Speaker, there were only two nursing staff on duty at that time, and one of the nurses was beat so badly that she was not recognized by a triage nurse when she was taken there.

Mr. Speaker, we're not blaming the government, but I want to ask the minister whether or not there's a plan to immediately provide panic alarm systems for that hospital.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Acting Minister of Health): And, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. It is one of the issues that's quite fundamental—quite fundamental—to all of our safety and well-being in that front-line providers, particularly those that are in situations where there's not a lot of people around them, are entitled to the utmost protection, and abuse and any kind of safety provisions must be dealt with.

I appreciate the fact the member has some suggestions. I—the minister has looked at some suggestions. There are—there is some new regulations coming in with respect to safety consideration, but any suggestion the member has, be it immediate alarm systems or other systems, we are prepared to look at.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, had an injury like this occurred on a work site anywhere in Manitoba, that work site would have been closed down until proper precautions and proper systems were installed to ensure the safety of the people working on that site. We're not asking the government for any more; neither are the people of Hamiota and the people who work in this facility.

And I'm asking the minister whether or not we can be assured by this government that immediate—I'm not talking about action in a month or two months; I'm talking about immediate action will be taken to install panic alarm systems, on a temporary basis, until a permanent solution is in place, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Chomiak: As I indicated to the member previously, we will take a look immediately at the suggestion made by the minister with respect to safety. It is a very difficult balance, Mr. Speaker, in terms of clearly protecting the providers of health care—is No. 1 concern. There's no question.

And, at the same time, Mr. Speaker, we have to look at both the distances, the times and the availability of health care to people in the community, which is a very—obviously a very difficult balance, but we will take the suggestion by the member into consideration today.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, I just spoke with the mayor of the community of Hamiota, and their biggest concern is that, first of all, it was March 15th when this incident took place, and no specific action has been taken to date, and no communication has been given to the community, nor the hospital, about what immediate action can be taken.

This petition, Mr. Speaker, was signed by the entire community, plus surrounding communities like Birtle, Strathclair, Oak Lake, Oak River and Cardale, and what we are pleading with the government for is to take some immediate action before another innocent nurse or staff person at that facility may be injured because of the clientele that that hospital has to deal with.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, there is no question that it is most important for the trust of people that work for us—work for the people of Manitoba, that they feel safe and work in a safe work environment, and we obviously will take the suggestion, even though members opposite—I hear some disquieting comments from members opposite. This is a very troubling issue and I—we will take those into consideration.

And if there hasn't been appropriate—I'm sure there's been some contact. I know there's been discussions with the nursing association, nursing union and others, Mr. Speaker. We will certainly ensure that that takes place, if it hasn't, and I believe it has already taken place.

But, clearly, the workplace safety for those people providing care every day, saving lives every day, by the hundreds, Mr. Speaker, must be maintained for all Manitobans.

Economy Projected Growth Rate Forecasts

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Mr. Speaker, under this NDP government, in the last five years, average expenditures have increased by more than 5 per cent per year, and yet economic growth isn't even close to matching that, and now a Conference Board of Canada report, released today, placed Winnipeg dead last in Canada in terms of projected growth.

Can the minister explain how she plans to pay for the shortfall?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, we know that the members opposite really have a hard time saying anything positive about the Manitoba economy. They have a hard time saying anything about the economy in this province, despite the investments that the private sector is making, despite the fact that we have the lowest unemployment rate. The members opposite continue to want to paint doom and gloom.

Mr. Speaker, the Manitoba's economy is forecast to grow by 2.7 per cent this year, based on Manitoba Finance's surveys of economic forecasters, exactly in line with the national growth.

Mr. Speaker, the Conference Board of Canada has forecasted a lower –

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, the NDP government is spending at a much, much higher rate than the rate of growth, and the shortfall will have to be made up somewhere.

So will she not admit that the true agenda of this NDP government is to raise taxes in Manitoba in order to pay for that shortfall? Will she just come clean?

Ms. Wowchuk: Well, Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member opposite, we will not do what the members opposite recommended a few months ago when they wanted to cut \$500 billion out of the budget. Those dollars would have meant we would have not spent any money on stimulus; we would have not spent money on front-line services; we would have not kept teachers in the classroom and police on the street.

Mr. Speaker, people in Manitoba are working. People in Manitoba are confident that our economy is growing. Our population is growing. We have the lowest unemployment rate this—in this province. Only the members opposite want to paint doom and gloom for this province, and, once in awhile, they should stand up and praise the people of Manitoba.

* (14:20)

Mrs. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, this information is coming from the Conference Board of Canada, and I'm sorry that the member opposite can't handle the truth, but these numbers speak louder than the actions of the NDP.

And, Mr. Speaker, this NDP government needs to find ways to increase its revenues over and above the rate of growth in order to pay for their spending problem.

They have two choices: No. 1, they can raise taxes, or, No. 2, they can increase the debt. Which will it be, Mr. Speaker?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite has missed one very important option. The member opposite has missed the option of growing the economy, and the economy in Manitoba is growing. It is—if she looks at the average annual growth—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. We still have 13 minutes, so there's a lot of time for more questions and answers if members would be just a little—patience. Have a little patience here. We need a little bit of decorum in the House here.

The honourable minister has the floor.

Ms. Wowchuk: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I have indicated to the member opposite, Manitoba Finance Survey of Economic Forecasts has our growth at 2.7 per cent. The Conference Board of Canada has predicted a lower rate of growth, and, certainly, we will have to look at the numbers put forward by the Conference Board of Canada.

But I have confidence in the Manitoba growth. I have confidence, when I look around every day at Manitoba and I look at the number of people that are working, Mr. Speaker, the investments that are being made, our economy is growing. We're training people—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Lake Dauphin Fishery Tributary Fishing Moratorium Cancellation

Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose): Mr. Speaker, on April the 25th, the Minister of Water Stewardship placed a moratorium on fishing on three tributaries of Lake Dauphin: the Turtle River, the Valley River and the Vermillion River. Yesterday, the moratorium was lifted.

Mr. Speaker, would the Minister of Water Stewardship explain why the moratorium was cancelled?

Hon. Christine Melnick (Minister of Water Stewardship): Well, the moratorium wasn't cancelled, Mr. Speaker. The moratorium was researched with scientific methods needed to understand that we need to continue to protect the walleye stock in Dauphin Lake. We brought in the moratorium after consultation with the community. Again, through scientific study, we determined that the spring spawn had successfully been completed and we lifted it on the 25th of April. We lifted it yesterday.

Again, we want to thank the people who participated. We want to thank the WRTC and the local community as we rebuild this important walleye stock in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Briese: Mr. Speaker, members of the Intermountain fish enhancement group were tagging fish on Tuesday at the mouth of one of the tributaries of Lake Dauphin. They noted that fish were still full of milk. These pickerel had not even started upstream to spawn.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Water Stewardship: Why did she put a moratorium on fishery—on the fishery a week before the spawn started and then cancel it before the majority of the pickerel started up river? Could it be she was just providing window dressing to get past the annual fish enhancement banquet in Dauphin?

Ms. Melnick: First, they're against the moratorium. Then they're against lifting the moratorium. Then they're against the science that the department has come up with. Then they're against working with the community. Then they're against making sure that we don't bring hardship to the people who respect the moratorium by handing out the frozen fish. Members opposite want it every which way.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable minister has the floor.

Ms. Melnick: They laugh at providing sustenance for people who are respecting the closure. The truth is, in the late '90s, they issued a press release, turned out the lights, went home and over 66,000 pounds of fish were taken under their watch.

That is their record, Mr. Speaker. This is ours, the third successful moratorium and we'll continue to work the community to make sure this walleye stock [*inaudible*]

Mr. Briese: Mr. Speaker, the minister's had 11 years to address this issue. The fish that were there in '99 are probably all gone now.

Mr. Speaker, five chiefs belonging to the West Region Tribal Council signed a letter to the Premier (Mr. Selinger) stating they have, I quote: lost confidence in the ability of the Minister of Water Stewardship to substantively address the ongoing matters in the Lake Dauphin region.

Under this minister's watch, we have seen six to seven hundred thousand dollars wasted on a missing resource management plan, thousands spent on frozen fish, fish biologists handing out frozen fish instead of monitoring the spawn, a moratorium lifted before the fish begin the spawning season.

Mr. Speaker, I ask: How can anyone have confidence in the Minister of Water Stewardship to protect the Lake Dauphin fishery?

Ms. Melnick: By walking away from their press release in the late '90s, certainly all the walleye would be gone in Dauphin Lake today, Mr. Speaker.

Other measures that we have brought in during our time in office include reductions in the commercial harvest of walleye from Lake Dauphin, reductions in the daily catch limit of walleye for anglers, the requirement that all spawning-size walleye be released and closure of all commercial and recreational fishing during the spring spawning season.

I'll put our record up against theirs any day, anytime, anywhere.

Education System Regional High School Graduation Rates

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, it's clear why the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan) never taught schoolchildren because she's not very good at listening in class.

Yesterday, I asked the Minister of Education to table graduation rates by region so the minister can be transparent about how the NDP has failed kids in inner Winnipeg, and she wouldn't do it.

I'm sure the NDP will boast about today's doesn't-do-enough education announcement, but it won't matter because there wasn't enough for improving graduation rates in inner Winnipeg.

Mr. Speaker, when will the Minister of Education be honest and release graduation rates by region so that we can know more—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Members in this Chamber are all honourable members. Members, pick your words very carefully. When you make a reference to a member, when will a member being—start being honest, that means something negative happened in the past.

And all members are honourable members. Pick—I caution all honourable members to pick their words very, very carefully.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that you also pay attention to when the members on the other side refer to people on this side as ducks. I think that's inappropriate.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I don't think any member in here would want to be reflecting on the Speaker. I think the member's got to be—should be very, very careful here.

The honourable member for River Heights has the floor.

Mr. Gerrard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to ask the minister—through the Speaker, I'd like to ask the minister, when will she release the graduation rates by region so that we can know what's happening in inner Winnipeg?

* (14:30)

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite doesn't want to know what's happening in inner-city Winnipeg, what we have done, because we have worked with community groups and schools and teachers and the Winnipeg School Division in inner-city Winnipeg to mount more programs for the success of people in that area.

One example is the Pathfinders program. The Pathfinders program is working with a handful of inner-city schools, Point Douglas being one of them, Norquay being one of them, the David Livingstone School being another one, William Whyte School being another one. And they're bringing those students together in an environment on Selkirk Avenue where students can go there after school, get mentoring, get tutoring, have an environment where they can do homework, have an environment that puts a priority on success. That Pathfinders program is being co-sponsored by the Royal Bank of Canada along with the school division and the Province, and it's just one of the—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, the Centre for Policy Alternatives at least is providing some information better than what this government will do, that there's very low graduation rates in inner Winnipeg. Very often, as the CCPA says, and I quote: Very often local information is required for local recognition of the problem, which can then in turn lead to local action. End quote.

The report goes on to say: Given that poor school performance in childhood sets the stage for negative outcomes in adulthood like poor health, low income and shorter life expectancy, policies in this area—end of quote—policies in this area are critical.

Mr. Speaker, why is the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and the member for St. Vital setting up inner-Winnipeg kids for poor health, low incomes and low life expectancy?

Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Education): Well, Mr. Speaker, I think it would be important for the member opposite to actually go on a tour of the Winnipeg School Division with me sometime, and I would like to extend that invitation to him. I'd be

prepared to go with him to the inner city anytime to see what great work is going on in the inner city.

Perhaps maybe this summer he would like to join me and go to the Summer Institute of Learning that has been established. It's a learning opportunity for young people in the inner city so that when they're out of school they can continue their learning, and it's an incredible program that was set up under the direction and the vision of Strini Reddy, who everyone in this province knows is an incredible educator.

We work with school divisions all the time in regards to our at-risk population, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I have visited a number of inner-Winnipeg schools. I would refer the minister to the small pilot project that she mentioned that the NDP were doing yesterday, and there was only one school in Winnipeg School Division that benefited, and that school happens to be in an eastern suburb of Winnipeg, not in inner Winnipeg. Again, the minister from the suburbs is failing inner Winnipeg.

Mr. Speaker, in this pilot program, why was there no money for schools in Minto, no money for schools in Burrows, no money for schools in Point Douglas, no money for schools in Wellington? When will the member from St. Vital admit she's willingly—willfully hiding information about regional graduation rates because she doesn't care and doesn't want to release the information because it might indicate that this will lead to poor health, low income and a shorter life expectancy for inner-Winnipeg youth?

Ms. Allan: Well, Mr. Speaker, we all know that the most important thing you can do for a young—for a student to have success is early intervention, and I would like to talk a little bit about we—what we have done in regards to early childhood development and learning.

We have just set up an early childhood education unit in the Department of Education. Through our Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet we have set up programs that are benefiting the age bracket from zero to five through our parent-child resource centres, through our Triple P parenting program.

We have also got an early childhood education development grant that is provided to all school divisions so that those school divisions that have young people and vulnerable populations that need help can get that assistance so they can develop

programs so that we can have those young people succeed in later life.

Science Education Action Plan Funding

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to part of a government that is making unprecedented investments in high school education and providing the youth of this province with the tools they need to compete in the global market of the future.

With the important role science and technology plays in our economy, can the Minister of Education please inform the House of the latest investment in our public schools to help our kids become doctors, engineers, scientists and technologists of the future?

Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Education): I was pleased to be at the West Kildonan Collegiate today with the Premier (Mr Selinger). We are announcing a \$25-million capital expenditure to renovate new labs and build new labs in this province over the next five years. We all know how important this is in regards to having young people succeed and build their resumés and have an opportunity to have careers in the new technologies of this world to prepare for the modern economy.

We are also making commitments for teacher professional development in this area, and I'm sure that the member opposite—all of the members opposite—are happy with this announcement, seeing as we haven't heard one education idea from anybody over there.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

PR 17 Upgrades

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake): Mr. Speaker, this government has made a lot of progress since it launched its \$4-billion highway renewal program in 2007. However, there is still work to be done and, as a result, this construction season will see a lot of activity in the Interlake region. This is thanks to a recent funding announcement made by the Premier and the MLA for Thompson to provide \$12 million towards the improvement of a 21-kilometre stretch of PR 17 between Poplarfield and Fisher Branch.

Once construction is completed later this summer, PR 17 will have a road and Transportation Association of Canada RTAC rating and will be able to accommodate the heaviest truck loads. These

upgrades will benefit all motorists, but they will make a huge difference to farmers and heavy truck operators. The new rating also means that PR 17 will now link the community of Fisher Branch to Provincial Trunk Highway 68, a strategic transportation route that spans the Interlake from east to west. PTH 68 was also upgraded to RTAC status in its entirety by this government a short time ago.

Lundar and Ashern are also in line for infrastructure upgrades to their main streets to the tune of \$2.4 million combined. In Lundar, the existing main lanes will be overlaid on PR 641, their main street. In Ashern, the work will be more extensive and will include improvements to their main street, PR 603, as well as to Railway Avenue, including the PTH intersection on No. 6 Highway.

Mr. Speaker, these infrastructure improvements represent major investments in the Interlake region, its people and its economy. It is projects like these that provide benefits that will be felt for years to come.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

YMCA-YWCA Women of Distinction Awards

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): It is a pleasure for me to rise and pay tribute to a number of women who have made significant contributions to our community. Last night, the 35th annual YMCA-YWCA Women of Distinction Awards honoured women in Manitoba who have made a unique and exemplary contribution to the development of our community. It was a celebration of the talent, achievement, imagination and innovation that women in Manitoba have demonstrated throughout the year. Many of my colleagues and I attended this event last night and, as usual, it was an event that was very, very inspiring.

Mr. Speaker, 78 women in total were nominated for the Women of Distinction Award under a number of categories. Recipients of the award include: Cre8ery Art Gallery founder, Jordan Miller; 2010 University of Winnipeg Students' Association directors, Lauren Bosc, Rebecca Bock-Freeman, Katie Haig-Anderson, Lana Hastings, Ava Jerao and Danielle Otto; University of Manitoba Icelandic department visionary Birna Bjarnadóttir; U of M Family Science professor, Joan Durrant; Centralia creator, Mariette Mulaire; PR director, RoseAnna Schick; researcher, Dr. Yvonne Myal; Reverend Deborah Olukoju; Seven Oaks General Hospital President and COO, Carrie Solmundson; social

worker, Channing Lavallee; student leader, Gurkamal Dhillon; and fundraiser Ashley Jahns.

Dr. Mary Pankiw was the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award.

Proceeds from the Women of Distinction Awards support a variety of programs for women including Making Waves, Y Neighbours, Y Women, YWCA Canada's Week without Violence, YMCA-YWCA Youth Leadership Development Programs, YMCA-YWCA Community Development, and international YWCA partnerships.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to offer my congratulations to all of the Women of Distinction Award recipients and nominees on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus. Women in our province have done exceptional work to better our communities, and I am pleased that we have the opportunity to honour a small fraction of those who have made such a big difference.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* (14:40)

Southdale Business Community

Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy): Mr. Speaker, one of the most valuable roles an MLA can play is to build bridges between people in our communities. Over the last two months, I've been happy to host meet-and-greets for Southdale businesses at my constituency office. They're a great chance for entrepreneurs in the area to get to know one another and to strengthen ties with the local business community.

Entrepreneurship requires grit and determination when investing in a new endeavour. The challenge of businesses, whether it's starting small or expanding a well-established company, are best overcome by finding mutually beneficial solutions within the community. With 65 businesses in the immediate area around the Southdale constituency office, there is a clear indication that Manitoba's diverse economy is thriving.

Together with the Southdale branch of UPS Canada, we extended the invitation to businesses in the area to extend our first meet-and-greet on April 7th and our second one today, May 5th. Representation from several local businesses gathered to talk about building a team environment in Southdale. Businesses such as RBC, Southdale Dental Centre and Great Finds clothing strategized incentive plans such as coupons and discounts,

options for hosting community events and more. This morning, a guest speaker from the Manitoba chamber of Commerce presented to the group, and it was exciting to see the enthusiasm spread as ideas sparked across the room.

We will be working with the representatives in attending—attended to reach out to further business in Southdale. We are holding another brainstorming session next week and will continue to meet regularly after that.

Mr. Speaker, entrepreneurs are the engineers of our economy. It is the pleasure to facilitate these meetings with the help of Southdale innovators' collaboration on ways to encourage growth. A special thanks to UPS, who brought this idea forward and to everyone who attended. I'm looking forward to our next opportunity to meet and see which further ideas develop.

Caroline Sims

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): As the MLA for Minnedosa constituency, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate today an outstanding constituent of mine, Miss Caroline Sims of Minnedosa. At this year's Canada Games in Halifax, Caroline helped represent Manitoba in Female Air Pistol Target Shooting. At just 17 years of age, Caroline was awarded two bronze medals. The first she won under the category of Individual Female Air Pistol Target Shooting with a final score of 455.6. Her second bronze medal was awarded when she and Team Manitoba won bronze in the team event.

The story that resulted in Caroline's focusing on target shooting is an interesting one. She had initially started riding horses, through her riding coach, started in tetrathlon, meaning a race that includes swimming, running, riding and target shooting. Caroline competed for two years and went to the national championships until an injury forced her to retire. Caroline decided to follow the sport she fell in love with, besides riding horses, and began to focus on target shooting.

For the past four years, Caroline has worked hard to improve her skills at air pistol target shooting. Last year she participated in the 2010 Toronto Grand Prix Women's Sharpshooter, placing second, and in the 2010 Toronto Grand Prix Women's Junior Team, placing third. It has been only four years and this young woman has already accomplished great things and has such tough—and has had such tough competition.

Not only did Caroline bring her best game to the Canada Games, she also brought a wealth of enthusiasm and spirit. She is truly a remarkable young woman.

Mr. Speaker, as the MLA for the Minnedosa constituency, I want to congratulate Caroline on her bronze medals. We are so proud and happy to have you represent Manitoba and act as an ambassador to our province. We wish you all the best as you take time to celebrate your recent achievements, a successful year, and keep up the great work, Caroline.

Fort Richmond Mid-Winter Festival

Ms. Marilyn Brick (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, on a sunny afternoon in early March, I had the pleasure of being one of the many volunteers at the Fort Richmond Mid-Winter Festival. The festival was organized by leadership students at Fort Richmond Collegiate and Acadia junior high, who co-hosted the event. The second annual event was well attended by many families in the neighbourhood.

The idea for the festival sprang last year from a group of Acadia junior high students, now Fort Richmond Collegiate students, when they were asked to think of ways to encourage and promote safety in their community. Their idea was to create an event that would provide an opportunity for families from the area to come together, meet one another, and enjoy an afternoon of fun and activities. The idea became a reality with the launch of the first mid-winter festival.

This year's event saw over 1,200 people congregate on the big hill between Acadia junior high and Fort Richmond Collegiate for the free festival. An enthusiastic crowd participated in a wide range of activities including cross-country skiing, which some people tried for the very time.

Many people commented to me on how happy they were to be engaged in an outdoor activity that had no user fees attached. In their letter of thanks for another successful event, vice-principals Teresa Rogers and Troy Scott of Acadia Junior High and Fort Richmond Collegiate, respectfully, described how their event brings together people and shows us all how much we have in common in spite of our differences.

Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pride to be a member of this community where our youth are given the chance to take a leadership role and partner

with local organizations and businesses to be able to host and plan such a successful event.

I would ask all members to join me in congratulating everyone who was involved at Acadia Junior High and Fort Richmond Collegiate, along with organizations from the community, in hosting another successful event. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader, on House business.

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): Yes, Mr. Speaker, on House business.

I wonder if I could ask for leave to revert back to tabling of reports so that the Estimates of Water Stewardship could be tabled.

Mr. Speaker: Is there agreement to revert back to tabling of reports?

Is there agreement? *[Agreed]*

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Christine Melnick (Minister of Water Stewardship): Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to table the 2011-2012 Departmental Expenditure Estimates, Supplementary Information for Legislative Review for Manitoba Water Stewardship.

House Business

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader, on House business.

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you please canvass the House to see if there's agreement that, following consideration of the Department of Family Services and Consumer Affairs today in the Chamber at 5 p.m., it will then be moved to the bottom of the Estimates sequence in the Chamber following Enabling and Other Appropriations.

Would you also see if there is agreement for the Estimates of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade to follow the Estimates of Conservation in room 255.

And, further, would you also see if there is agreement for Infrastructure and Transportation to be considered in the Chamber section on Friday and then revert to room 255 starting on Monday.

Mr. Speaker: Okay. Is there agreement that, following consideration of the Department of Family Services and Consumer Affairs today in the Chamber at 5 p.m., it will then be moved to the bottom of the Estimates sequence in the Chamber following Enabling and Other Appropriations? Is there agreement on that? *[Agreed]*

And also is there agreement for the Estimates of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade to follow the Estimates of Conservation in room 255? Is there agreement on that? *[Agreed]*

And also is there agreement for Infrastructure and Transportation to be considered in the Chamber section on Friday and then revert to room 255 starting on Monday? Is there agreement on that?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: No? I heard a no. Okay, I'm going to put it again.

Is there—I think for members of the House if they're part of a party, I think they might want to let their House leaders handle the situation because it gets—it takes one no to stop the process. I'll just remind all honourable members of that.

Okay. Is there agreement for Infrastructure and Transportation to be considered in the Chamber section on Friday and then revert to room 255 starting on Monday? Is there agreement? *[Agreed]*

The honourable Government House Leader, on further House business?

Ms. Howard: Yes, on further House business.

Would you canvass the House to see if there's leave for private members' business next Thursday, May 12th, to be set aside in order to deal with the condolence motion for former Premier Sterling Lyon, and, further, that the sitting time next Thursday morning be extended to 12:30.

I'd also like to announce that on the afternoon of May 12th, following routine proceedings, the House will be considering a condolence motion for former Premier Duff Roblin. Would you please canvass the House to see if there's leave such that the afternoon sitting of the House on May 12th shall not rise so long as there are still members who want to speak.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, is there leave for private members' business next Thursday, May 12th, to be set aside in order to deal with the condolence motion

for former Premier Sterling Lyon, and, further, that the sitting time next Thursday morning will be extended to 12:30?

And, also, following routine proceedings, the House will be considering a condolence motion for former Premier Duff Roblin, and is there leave that the afternoon sitting of the House on May 12th shall not rise so long as there are still members who wish to speak?

Is there agreement on both of those? *[Agreed]*

The honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on House business.

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Official Opposition House Leader): Yes, Mr. Speaker. In accordance with rule 31(9), I would like to announce that the private member's resolution that will be considered on Thursday, May 19th, is the resolution on Moose Management sponsored by the honourable member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire).

Mr. Speaker: Okay. It's been announced that the private member's resolution that'll be considered on Thursday, May 19th, is the resolution on Moose Management which will be sponsored by the honourable member for Arthur-Virden. Okay.

Now—the honourable Government House Leader, on further House business.

Ms. Howard: Yes, Mr. Speaker, we're prepared to move into Committee of Supply.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, orders of the day. We will be dealing with the government business. We will be dealing with Committee of Supply. In the Chamber we will deal with Family Services and Consumer Affairs, and in room 255 we'll deal with Conservation, and room 254 we'll deal with Finance.

So would the respective Chairs that will be chairing those committee meetings, please go to the room that you will be chairing, please.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

FINANCE

* (14:50)

Mr. Chairperson (Mohinder Saran): Order. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of Committee of Supply will now resume consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Finance.

As had been previously agreed, questioning for the department will proceed in a global manner. The floor is now open for questions.

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): I know in our discussions yesterday, I had discussed with the minister and she had endeavoured to get me the numbers for the cost to service the debt at Manitoba Hydro. I was just wondering if she has those numbers for us today.

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Finance): No, we don't have that number here.

Mrs. Stefanson: Okay, so the minister will still endeavour to get those for me.

Ms. Wowchuk: Yes, we can endeavour to get that number, but there's also going to be a committee hearing where Hydro will be at, so we might be able to ask for the detailed questions at Hydro, but I'll endeavour to get that answer.

Mrs. Stefanson: Thank you very much. Just have questions surrounding the stadium—the new stadium agreement, and I'm wondering if the minister can indicate who brought this forward, who brought the memorandum of understanding forward for discussion at Treasury Board.

Ms. Wowchuk: The community—the CEDC committee of Cabinet, it is that committee that works through—that worked with the—on the stadium recommendation, and then it then came to Cabinet through—via CEDC.

Mrs. Stefanson: So was there a member—who's the chair of that committee of Cabinet? Is that the person who brought it forward?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Struthers, the member for, I apologize, the member for Dauphin, or the Minister responsible for Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, is the Chair of CEDC, and he would have brought that recommendation forward from CEDC to Cabinet.

Mrs. Stefanson: So CEDC to Treasury Board, or—how did it end up back for discussion at Treasury Board?

Ms. Wowchuk: The recommendation came via the CEDC to Treasury Board, then to Cabinet.

Mrs. Stefanson: Can you outline the process that followed to arrive at the stadium decision from a budgetary perspective since the March 2010 memorandum of understanding?

Ms. Wowchuk: We wouldn't—we would not have that here. This—the whole issue of the memorandum of understanding and moving forward with the stadium—on the stadium with the different partners comes and is worked through through CEDC, and then through CEDC makes a recommendation to Treasury Board and then through Treasury Board to Cabinet.

Mrs. Stefanson: How much money has been approved by Treasury Board for the stadium deal?

* (15:00)

Ms. Wowchuk: The money is under the Loan Act authority under the line for post-secondary institutes because the money is being loaned to the university. So on that line there's \$121 million, but—so that's part of it is for the stadium, but there are other items in there—that as well.

Mrs. Stefanson: And how much of the \$121 million is specifically earmarked for the stadium?

Ms. Wowchuk: As I said that \$121 million is for all activities in post-secondary education. So I'd like to take that question as notice and get back to the member of the exact amount that is earmarked for the stadium.

Mrs. Stefanson: Oh, so that's for—that's not just for the University of Manitoba, that's for—also for the University of Winnipeg and for—does that also include the colleges?

Ms. Wowchuk: It does not include colleges because colleges are under part B capital, so this is the universities.

Mrs. Stefanson: But, when this came to Treasury Board, Treasury Board had to have made some sort of an approval for how much they're going to include in—or how much they're going to either loan or flow to—for the stadium deal. So is that what you're endeavouring to get back to me on? Okay, that's fine.

Ms. Wowchuk: Yes. We want to verify the number because there is a few things related to universities that are in this number, in post-secondary institutes, so we'll endeavour to get the exact number to be sure that we're putting the right number on the record.

Mrs. Stefanson: Do you recall, is the number—was it money that was to flow just this year or was it over a certain number of years?

Ms. Wowchuk: The money flows over three years. It started in 2010, this year, and there'll still be money flowing 2012.

Mrs. Stefanson: So, for this year, what is in the budget Estimate books for the expenditures for this year for the stadium?

Ms. Wowchuk: Can I clarify. Is the member looking for how much the government is putting in or how much government is loaning to the university? I'm not quite sure which number—what you're now looking for.

Mrs. Stefanson: Let's start off with—I'd like to know—and that was going to be my next question, is whether or not it's done in the form of a grant or a loan, but perhaps it's done in a way both—maybe it's split, or there's some sort of a ratio there. So, if you could indicate how much would be a loan and how much would be a grant and how much of that is included in this, what the total amount is in this budget.

Ms. Wowchuk: There is a \$15-million contribution that the Province has committed to, which is our contribution, which will be a grant. There is money that—then will be loaned over a period of time, and those are the details that I will endeavour to provide when we can get them onto once—get them together, because it is over a period of time that this money is being loaned, and I'll endeavour to provide that information to the member next week.

Mrs. Stefanson: And the \$15-million grant or contribution from the provincial government, is that money all included in this year's budget? Will that money flow this year?

Ms. Wowchuk: It will probably flow next year.

Mrs. Stefanson: So, in terms of the three years, is—there's nothing—oh, unless it's a loan, perhaps, for this year, and that's the information that you're going to get back to me.

Ms. Wowchuk: That's right. I'll get back information for the member with the amount of what we anticipate we'll loan, what we anticipate will flow this year, and then the—and, as I indicated, the provincial contribution will probably flow next year.

Mrs. Stefanson: On the loan that's provided by the government, is there some sort of an interest rate that's attached to that and, if so, what would that be?

Ms. Wowchuk: As we had talked about yesterday when we were talking about the various loans, various loans are done at varying rates and we will provide that information as well when we put the other—we'll put a package together on what we've—

how the funding will flow and what the interest rate will be.

Mrs. Stefanson: I appreciate that.

If the minister could indicate who will be responsible for paying the interest on the loan. I believe there's three entities involved here, being the University of Manitoba, BBB Stadium Inc. and the Winnipeg Football Club. Who is—who, out of those three, are responsible for ensuring that the interest rate on the loan is paid?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, the Bombers have committed to paying part of it, and then there's the tax incremental financing that has been put in place that will be used to pay this loan off.

Mrs. Stefanson: Can you explain the tax increment financing to me, and how that will work?

Ms. Wowchuk: As the old stadium comes down and the land is developed, there will be additional taxes on that property because it is then developed as a business property, and those taxes will then be used to pay off the loan that is—has been put in place to allow the stadium to be built at the University of Manitoba.

Mrs. Stefanson: Is there a time frame placed on the loan in terms of when it has to be paid back?

* (15:10)

Ms. Wowchuk: There's two tranches of that loan, and I'll get the information with the other information as to the length of each of those loans.

Mrs. Stefanson: So, presumably, with—I'm just wondering what you're budgeting for, moving forward, in terms of the tax increments financing.

Clearly, to develop the land it'll take a few years, and I'm just wondering if the minister can indicate when she expects the money to start flowing from the tax increment financing side of things.

Ms. Wowchuk: You won't—the loan will not—nobody will have to start paying back the loan until the project is complete. So that's in a couple of years, 2012.

But, on the tax incremental financing, the City is responsible for managing the redevelopment of the old site, so it will depend on when that site is developed as to when the money will start to flow from the tax incremental financing.

Mrs. Stefanson: Is there a government guarantee on the loan at all, a provincial government guarantee?

Ms. Wowchuk: No, there is no guarantee on it because it's a loan from the Province. So there is no—you can't guarantee something that belongs—that's your loan.

Mrs. Stefanson: Right, I understand that. At the City, is the City—is there anyone—is there any government who is guaranteeing the loan will be paid back?

Ms. Wowchuk: No, the Province is borrowing the money. We talked yesterday about the amount of money we would be borrowing. It's part of the money that we're borrowing, and then when the project is complete, then the partners will start to pay it back whether it be through the Bombers or whether it be through tax incremental financing, but there—there's nobody guaranteeing it because it's a provincial loan.

We're borrowing the money and it's a provincial loan.

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, so if the loan doesn't get paid back, who ends up stuck with the loan? Who ends up stuck?

Ms. Wowchuk: The loan will be paid back over time. Over time, the site where the old stadium is will be redeveloped, and there will be revenues generated there, and the—and there'll be taxes there. Those taxes will flow to pay back the loan.

The Bombers have made commitments on how they will pay their portion of the loan back, so I'm confident that with the agreement and the partnership that has come together, there will be, you know—the property around Polo Park is prime property. There will be development on that property. I'm not sure what kind of development there will be there, but I am quite confident, and the City is confident as well, that once that stadium comes down, there will be development.

So there will be revenues. There will—and through that tax incremental finance. So I—I'm not sure—I don't understand how some—when you—who will not pay back the loan, but there will be taxes that will be generated. The Bombers have said they will pay parts of it, and as it's built, as the revenues come in, and if—as the Bombers become more successful, we all—and we all wait for the time when they'll be in the Grey Cup and the numbers go up at that stadium and there'll be more revenues there.

So I'm being facetious when I say that, but I'm confident that with the agreement that's been made,

there will be revenues that will then go to pay off the loan.

Mrs. Stefanson: The minister referred to commitments made from the Bombers to pay back the loan. Can she indicate what the commitments are?

Ms. Wowchuk: There were amounts that the Bombers had indicated—they're one of the partners and they have made a commitment to pay parts of it back and, again, we can get that information. We can get the member more, you know—the question she's asking for and also details on what the Bombers have said they are committed to.

Mrs. Stefanson: Is there an indication, though, between the Bombers and how much—is it in the agreement how much the Bombers will agree to pay back versus what's going to be paid out of tax increment financing?

Ms. Wowchuk: You know, I would—I can get that information. I could give some information about what the Bombers had—what the partnership is and what the Bombers had indicated they would be responsible for. And—but I don't have those numbers here. So that—if the member is okay with it, I will include that information in the numbers that we put together.

Mrs. Stefanson: Appreciate that. Just a couple of more questions. I know in—the Conference Board of Canada came out with a report today. And I know we talked about this in question period a little bit. I'm wondering if the minister could comment on their outlook for Winnipeg's economic growth, that it was last among the big cities in 2010 at 1.8 per cent. How does this figure into projected growth for Manitoba?

Ms. Wowchuk: Well, we always talk about Manitoba's slow and steady economy. When the recession hit, other economies dropped a lot more than ours did, and so they have more to recover. Manitoba stayed relatively flat. The member often refers to this, that the Premier (Mr. Selinger) calls—talked about the new—flat is the new, what does he say?

An Honourable Member: Up.

Ms. Wowchuk: Flat is the new up, that he talked about. But Manitoba's economy is quite much more stable than other jurisdictions. So, as a result, other jurisdictions are—went down greater than us, and now they're recovering, whereas we didn't decline as much, but ours is a much more steady growth.

If you look at the numbers that our financial forecasters—economic forecasters have looked at that we used in the budget, our economy is forecast to grow at 2.7 per cent this year, and this is based on economic forecasters on—in line with the national growth. The Conference Board has given a lower number but, again, I'm confident in the numbers that we have put forward because if you look at Manitoba's economy it's expanding. Our population is growing, we have a lower unemployment rate, there is some significant investments that are being made and our numbers that we're using—we know that the board considers Manitoba's economy performance—they considered it favourable in 2011, based on these factors. They have a lower number now, but over three years the Conference Board's forecasts real growth at 2.6 per cent every year on average in Winnipeg, which is very much like the average we've set for Manitoba.

So they have a different number right now, but when you look at the long-term numbers that they have projected for us, we are projected to have growth of 2.6 per cent on average over the next three years.

* (15:20)

Mrs. Stefanson: The average growth in Manitoba, if you look at the last five years, and, yes, one year in 2009 it was flat; in 2008, it was 1.9; 2007, 2.7; 3.4 in 2006. And I guess the number out there was 2.5 for 2010, which we will wait on, but, basically, the average growth was 2.5 per cent a year since 2006, yet expenditures in the province are up over 5 per cent on average annual over the last five years. Can the minister explain what happens when expenditures exceed growth?

Ms. Wowchuk: There are two sets of numbers to look at: the numbers that are referred to by the Conference Board and the member is referring—the numbers the member is referring to are growth that's adjusted to inflation and then we have actual growth. And Manitoba's nominal GDP is forecasted to increase 5.5 per cent in 2011, above the national average which is 5.4 per cent, and our forecast is to grow by 4.5 per cent in 2012 which is slightly below the national average. So, when you look at the forecast for growth and then you look at the real numbers, our economy is growing, and we take all of those into consideration when we put our budget together.

Mrs. Stefanson: But what's been shown over the last five years is that the government has continued to

spend beyond its means which is why the debt is going up, and I guess that's what our concern is moving forward and the projected deficits in the province.

You know, it's just—I'm wondering if the minister—I mean the first thing that needs to happen is that they need to get their expenditures under control so that expenditures are not exceeding revenues and especially the rate of growth. And is there any kind of an indication from this minister that she will commit today to ensure that future expenditures don't exceed the rate of growth?

Ms. Wowchuk: I guess this is where we have a very philosophical difference, very philosophical difference. The members opposite, as they said, would like the balance all in one year, and we took a very different approach, a much more different approach, and when we saw that the economy was in a downturn, we decided to work in the same vein as other jurisdictions. Every province, no matter what political stripe, the federal government, said that we would make investments to stimulate the economy and protect those front-line services and that's what we did.

And that's where we have a difference with the member opposite. We put in place the five-year plan. We exceeded the five-year plan last year. We expect to exceed the five-year plan this year. At the same time, we're stimulating the economy and keeping our front-line services going.

And then I would ask the member to do—she's talking about our expenditures and I want—would remind—ask her to look at the chart where there are provincial expenditures on a per capita—at the per capita increase on B10 in the budget book, and you can see on that chart that provincial expenditures per capita in Manitoba is—are about the fourth lowest. There are other jurisdictions that are spending much more per capita than we are. At the same time, we are spending much less—half the money on debt-servicing costs that we were spending, and our debt-to-GDP ratio has improved from the '90s.

So the kinds of investments we are making are building up our long-term assets that are very important. People ask all the time—they want something new built in their area, and I don't blame them. They want roads improved. They want the floodway improved. They want hospitals improved. They want all of those things done.

We have made the choice that we will make those investments, along with growing our population and improving our debt-to-GDP and keeping our interest rates going. But the most important thing is that when this economic downturn hit us, we put in place a plan. We're following the plan, we're exceeding the plan and we are investing in the things that Manitobans have asked us to invest in and Manitobans want us to invest in, and really moving the province forward much more quickly than it has moved forward during other times.

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, the member likes to go back to the 1990s so often and I think it's important to note, and I know we discussed this yesterday because there is some money coming due, I believe, later this year that was originally—the offering was back in 1991 and had an interest rate of 10 per cent. And, I think, obviously, what happened back in the 1990s is that interest rates were a lot higher than they have been since this NDP government came to power, and they had an opportunity during this time to take advantage of those low interest rates and to pay back some of the debt, but they chose not to.

They chose instead to spend the money, and rather than reducing the debt in our province, they chose to spend it, and now we're in a position where interest rates—the predictions are that they are going to rise and that's not coming from members on our side of the House, that's coming from economists and banks and professionals in the industry.

And we know that with a rise in interest rates so likely will be the rise in the cost of servicing the debt, but had the debt been decreased over the years since the NDP came to power, then we probably wouldn't be in this position and you'd be able to free up, say, at least even half of the \$800 million that is earmarked this year for debt-servicing costs. At least half of that—400, \$500 million could have gone towards more front-line services for health care and, oh, go figure, that half that amount is also the amount of the deficit.

And so I think that that's the reality of what we're dealing with here, and it absolutely is a difference in philosophy between how the NDP chooses to manage the hard-earned tax dollars of people in our province and how a Progressive Conservative government would choose to do it.

And I think what's also important to note, too, is back in the 1990s, transfer payments were significantly reduced. There was a \$394.6-million decrease in federal transfer payments from budget

1994-95 to 1998-99, and I think it's important that that is a significant reduction, that is something that this government has never realized since they have been in power and, yet, again, they continue to rely on the federal government for those transfer payments in the way of revenues.

Well, we know that those have stayed relatively stable over the last few years. They have increased significantly since the 1990s and rather than set some of that money aside and pay down or—and choose to maybe pay down the debt or give some of it back to Manitobans in the way of tax relief, the government chose again to spend it. And so now we're in the situation that we're in, and I think it's important for Manitobans to understand that, yes, there is a real difference between an NDP government and a Conservative government.

*(15:30)

Unfortunately, back in the 1990s, we were in very difficult economic times. And, you know, the member, the Minister of Finance, likes to talk about the tough economic times that we came through in Manitoba, you know, on one hand saying, oh, you know, we—the realized declines or the recession that was felt in Manitoba and, yet, you know, on the other hand, she's saying, well, we never saw the declines and we're very proud of the growth over the last five years except the one year where it was flat and flat is the new up, and this sort of thing. And it's just—it's very frustrating because, you know, she tries to speak out of both sides of her mouth when it comes to this. And so, right, you didn't realize the declines over the—in growth over the last number of years, yet, you know, you continue to run deficits.

And so these are definitely deficits of choice on behalf of—on the part of the NDP. They are not deficits had they properly managed over the whole—the last 11 and a half years. Had they properly managed the funds of this government, then the hard-earned taxpayer dollars of Manitobans, had they properly managed it, we wouldn't be in the situation we're in today. And now we're in a situation where we've got a desperate NDP government that is—it is tired and they want to do anything that they possibly can to stay in government. So I think it's unfortunate that, you know, the minister—again, they love to go back to the 1990s, but I think it's important to do—to put the facts on the record when it comes to this.

And I guess at this point, Mr. Chairperson, I'm certainly prepared to move on. I know there's many, many questions that we have surrounding the budget,

but there's only so many hours. And I know that, I believe, Health Estimates is coming in next and I know my colleague the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) is looking forward to asking the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) questions coming up soon.

So I'm prepared to move forward on a line-by-line basis now if the minister would like to do so.

Ms. Wowchuk: I would like to move forward, but—but—but—there is no way I would let the member end with the comments that she has put on the record, because she has put many inaccurate comments on the record and I have to address them.

I have to say the member has said, you know, what would this place look like if we had done what she suggested and that we had followed the Tory way? Well, what way we would have? We'd have crumbling roads, we'd have closed hospitals, we'd have fired nurses, we'd have doctors that weren't trained. We would have—we would not have the resources in education that we have. We would not have the apprentice show—program that we have.

You know, the member opposite talks about all of those things, but she forgets and she refuses to acknowledge that Conservative, Liberal and NDP governments, federal and provincial, all made the decision that we would, instead of trying to balance every year and shutting down the economy, that we would make investments and put in place a plan. We have put in place a plan that is keeping Manitoba moving forward.

But I want to also point out to the member that we balanced the budget. We balanced the budget for 10 years in a row, every year before the recession hit us.

And I would also remind her that we put in place record amounts of money into the stabilization fund and we did not have to sell a Crown corporation to do that. If you look at the amounts that were in the Fiscal Stabilization Fund when we took office and where it—even though we are using the stabilization fund now to help us come back into balance, we have more money in that stabilization fund than the Conservatives did after they sold the Manitoba Telephone System.

So they want to pretend that they are good managers, but I also—the member opposite talks about transfer payments and how they were reduced. And I want to share with the member, if you look at

the proportion of the equalization payments that—what impact it has on the budgets, it is very—it was very similar during the time of Conservatives, even though the member opposite says that they had cuts in transfer payments. Proportionately, it was very similar, between 20 and 17 per cent during Conservative times as it is now. And equalization payments, the impact of equalization payments on the—as a share of the total expenditure varies from 32 per cent to 34 per cent, whether it's a Conservative or an NDP budget.

So the member doesn't—shakes her head and pretends that that's not true, but I would tell her to look at the numbers, and the transfer payments were very similar, and a similar share of the total expenditures in this province for the past 15, 20 years—many years that they have been a similar proportion of the budget.

The member also talked about—I talked about the stabilization—that the member opposite said we should have paid down the debt. Well, this government has contributed almost a billion dollars, a billion dollars to the debt retirement since 1999 for and for pension obligations.

A very significant step that we took, Mr. Chairman, was the action we have taken to address the unfunded liabilities that the Civil Service Superannuation Fund and the teachers' retirement fund that began in 2007-8 with the—where the Province borrowed the funds and invested it in the two pensions.

And we've—in 2011 we included a further addition of \$240 million to the superannuation—Civil Service Superannuation Fund. So there have been steps, and now every department has to put money in their budgets. They have to allocate for money to be—for the pensions. They're not unfunded liabilities anymore.

So I know what the member opposite would do, and she's said it herself, that we have a very different philosophy. And her philosophy and her party's philosophy is, whatever you do make sure you balance—despite the fact that people will have no jobs; we won't have any stimulus; we won't take advantage of the federal dollars; we'll fire nurses; we'll fire doctors like we did in the '90s. That's her philosophy. Ours is much, much different. Ours is to stimulate economic growth. Ours is to manage government spending. Ours is to invest in vital front-line services, to restore balance. And we will restore balance, Mr. Chairman.

We will restore balance by 2014 and we will continue to keep our debt-to-GDP ratio below what it was in the '90s. And I'm very proud of our record and the work that has been done by staff in this department to ensure that our debt-servicing costs are half of what they were under previous administration.

And, Mr. Chairperson, the other very important fact that we want to ensure is we want to continue to ensure that Manitoba remains one of the top places in the world to build your future, have a high standard of living at a comparative low cost, and, above all, we want to ensure that we continue to develop Manitoba Hydro as a Crown corporation so that we can continue to have those revenues—those revenues that our export markets will give us, somewhere in range of \$21 billion over 20 years. That's our oil and gas. And we are committed to moving Manitoba forward and ensuring that we put in place tax reductions, that we'll put money in—more money into people's pockets, but expand the economy, grow this economy, bring more people to this province and move Manitoba forward. And I thank the member for her questions.

Mr. Chairperson: Now, there's no other question.

Resolution 7.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,167,000 for Finance, Treasury, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2012.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 7.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$5,986,000 for Finance, Comptroller, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2012.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 7.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$17,127,000 for Finance, Taxation, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2012.

Resolution agreed to.

* (15:40)

Resolution 7.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$4,456,000 for Finance, Taxation, Economic and Intergovernmental Fiscal Research, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2012.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 7.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$474,000 for Finance, Insurance and Risk Management, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2012.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 7.7: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$8,067,000 for Finance, Treasury Board Secretariat, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2012.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 7.8: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,153,000 for Finance, Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2012.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 7.9: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$42,558,000 for Finance, Net Tax Credit Payments, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2012.

Resolution agreed to.

The last item to be considered for the Estimates of this department is item 7.1.(a), the Minister's Salary, contained in Resolution 7.1.

At this point, we'll request that the minister's staff leave the table for the consideration of this item.

The floor is open for questions. No question. This completes the Estimates—

Resolution 7.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,605,000 for Finance, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2012.

Resolution agreed to.

This completes the Estimates of the Department of Finance.

The next set of Estimates to be considered by this section of the Committee of Supply is for the Department of Culture, Heritage and Tourism. Shall we briefly recess to allow the minister and the critics the opportunity to prepare for the commencement of the next department? *[Agreed]*

Ms. Wowchuk: If I could just close, I'd like to thank the—my critic for her questioning. And it has been—there have been some questions we haven't been able to provide answers for here, but I will endeavour to get that information to the member as soon as possible, and thanks for moving this on.

Mrs. Stefanson: Oh my goodness, I may have the last word. No, just kidding. No, I want to thank the minister and thank all the staff for being here. It's been a slice. It's been sliced. Thanks very much.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay, now we have a brief recess.

The committee recessed at 3:44 p.m.

The committee resumed at 3:47 p.m.

CULTURE, HERITAGE AND TOURISM

Mr. Chairperson (Mohinder Saran): Order. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

This section of the Committee of Supply will now consider the Estimates of the Department of Culture, Heritage and Tourism.

Does the honourable minister have an opening statement?

Hon. Flor Marcelino (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism): Yes, Mr. Chairperson.

Thank you and good afternoon, Mr. Chairperson, table officer. It is my privilege to introduce the 2011-2012 Estimates for Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism.

To begin, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the tremendous impact on our fellow Manitobans of the unprecedented flooding across the province and to highlight the roles—the role staff in my department play in the effort. As we know, 2011 is forecast to be one of the largest floods on record in Manitoba. Communications Services Manitoba continues to play a key role in the response to the 2011 flood in collaboration with Manitoba Water Stewardship, Manitoba Emergency Measures Organization, Manitoba Health, Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation and other departments.

CSM, Communications Services Manitoba activities include daily media briefings, responding to ongoing media inquiries, developing background

information and flood protection, assisting with media tours in the flood plain and developing and maintaining a public website. The division has also engaged with Manitobans via social media, including Facebook and Twitter, to convey important information about flood impacts, water levels, road closures and health and safety measures to be taken during a flood.

Translation Services has provided valuable services during the flood-fighting efforts, as well, translating brochures and websites on flood preparations, as well as other efforts to improve access to information important to francophone citizens.

While an extended flood season may offer some deterrent to visitors this spring and summer, I'm nonetheless very pleased with efforts undertaken to boost our tourism industry.

After a challenging 2008, Manitoba's tourism industry rebounded in 2009, one of only two provinces to post an increase in inbound tourism expenditures. Manitoba topped all provinces in the number of tourist visits, growing by more than 5 per cent between 2008 and 2009. For the first time in over a decade, US visits into Manitoba increased, bucking a national trend of ongoing annual declines in US visits into Canada over the past decade. And the trend appears to have continued in 2010 as average hotel occupancy rates were up from 63.9 per cent in 2009 to 65.2 per cent in 2010. Perhaps, most encouraging of all, Manitoba is experiencing a boom in hotel construction with at least eight new hotels slated for construction in 2011.

* (15:50)

The Province's support for the tourism industry extends well beyond support for Travel Manitoba and my department's own tourism development activities. New highway construction, capital infrastructure investment in parks, continuation of the free parks admissions program, expanded high-speed networks and support for the Canadian Museum for Human Rights and the new polar bear centre at Assiniboine Park all serve to strengthen Manitoba as a compelling tourism destination.

An additional attraction will be the new Waabanong Anishinaabe Interpretive Centre near Hollow Water where construction is scheduled to begin later this spring. The new \$3-million centre will be an environmentally sustainable learning facility for sharing of traditional Aboriginal culture,

emphasizing Aboriginal teachings about the natural world. We anticipate that the new centre will begin programming activities in January, 2012.

I also wish to commend the board of directors and staff of Manitoba Homecoming 2010, and the many businesses and organizations that participated in this celebration of our province last year. More than half of the \$3.5-million Homecoming campaign budget came from local governments and the private sector. According to data collected by Probe Research for Travel Manitoba, 81 per cent of Manitobans were aware of Manitoba Homecoming. Among those, one in five attended a Homecoming event and one in 10 invited friends or family members from outside the province to attend an event. These numbers, along with the hundreds of communities, organizations and businesses that participated in Homecoming 2010 activities, and the huge numbers of attendees at events across the province, point to the social and economic success of the year-long campaign. My staff will continue to work with Travel Manitoba and the many Homecoming partners from last year to encourage more visits to Manitoba this year as well.

Mr. Chairperson, I'm also happy to report that these Estimates fulfill the commitments made from my department in the 2007 election campaign. Manitoba is home to a vibrant film and television production industry with 1,600 full-time equivalent jobs annually, making a significant contribution to our growing economy. With Budget 2011, Manitoba Film and Music will receive a \$250,000 increase to its film and television production equity finance programs. These funds, in addition to an earlier increase of \$250,000, will further stimulate production activity in the 2011-2012 and into the future. In addition to equity financing, Manitoba Film and Music is responsible for administering supports to the industry, including tax credits, grants stimulus funding and training programs.

Budget 2011 will also provide for a \$78,000 increase for operating grants to public libraries and continued support of library services in Aboriginal communities such as Nelson House, Rolling River, Peguis and Norway House, as well as the establishment of new library services for residents in Easterville. This is a clear demonstration of our government's successful implementation of 2007 commitments and our ongoing commitment to Aboriginal people in Manitoba.

Mr. Chairperson, with this budget my department extends its significant track record of support to Manitoba's cultural community. We were very pleased in 2010 to assist a number of departmental clients, including the Children's Museum, Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation, Winnipeg Art Gallery, Western Manitoba Centennial Auditorium and the Winnipeg Folk Festival to secure federal stimulus funding.

The book publishing tax credit introduced in 2008 resulted in over 400,000 tax credits claimed by Manitoba publishers—\$400,000 tax credit claims by Manitoba publishers in 2010. There are dramatic technological changes and challenges facing publishers and the expansion of the credit to include electronic or digital versions of uneligible literary work acknowledges that reality.

This week we are joining our Saskatchewan neighbours in celebrating prairie talent through the National Arts Centre, *Prairie Scene 2011*. *Prairie Scene* provides national-international exposure to prairie artists in a variety of disciplines and media with the involvement of presenters and promoters from around the world. The event also enhances opportunities for prairie artists to tour nationally and internationally. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the minister for those comments. Does the official opposition critic have any opening comments?

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Chairperson, I won't take very much time in terms of opening statements, but I would just like to indicate and put on the record that I feel that there is a significant contribution that is made in this province through Culture, Heritage and Tourism, and I think those are valuable assets to our province.

And they—to the many people that are involved in them, you know, a huge thanks, I think, from many Manitobans because that it something that we are highly recognized for across this country is our vibrant, you know, cultural community, the strong sense of heritage that we have here. And, you know, in the area of tourism, I think that is one area that there is a lot of potential. I know that we have a lot that we can showcase here in Manitoba and we have a lot to be very, very proud of.

And to all those people that work in those industries, you know, I just want to say, you know, keep up the good work. It's valuable to enhance the quality of life in Manitoba, and we're very proud of

what we have to offer here. It's certainly disappointing to see, you know, when we're hearing other people from across Canada or even some of the NHL hockey players that, for some reason, don't think they want to come back to Winnipeg if there was a team here. And to make comments about our city and province is, you know, I don't think anything that sits well with any of us.

And, I think, what we have to do as a province and as a city is find ways to make the rest of the world know what we have to offer here in Manitoba. And, I think, we have a ways to go. I think, we have to—a ways to go within our own province, too, and making people within Manitoba realize what a great province this is too. So there are some interesting challenges out there and look forward to asking the minister some questions about some of these as we go forward.

Mr. 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 by the department in the Committee of Supply. Accordingly, we shall now defer consideration of the item 14.1.(a) contained in the resolution 14.1.

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 once they arrive.

* (16:00)

Ms. Marcelino: I'm delighted to be joined by my staff: Sandra Hardy, Deputy Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism; Veronica Dyck, assistant deputy minister of Culture and Heritage Programs; Terry Welsh, executive director of Tourism Secretariat; and Dave Paton, executive director of Administration and Finance.

Mr. Chairperson: Does the committee wish to proceed through the Estimates of this department chronologically or have a global discussion.

Mrs. Driedger: I think a global discussion would help us to proceed through the Estimates much more quickly.

Mr. Chairperson: Agreed? [*Agreed*] Thank you.

It is agreed, then, that the questions of the department will proceed in a global manner with all the resolutions to be passed once questioning has concluded. The floor is now open for questions.

Mrs. Driedger: In the departmental Estimates book, on page 6, it indicates under operating that Culture, Heritage and Tourism Programs saw, or are seeing, an estimate of expenditure for 2011-12 at \$48,059,000, which is slightly up from last year. Am I interpreting and reading this correctly?

Ms. Marcelino: Correct, there's a very slight increase.

Mrs. Driedger: And can the minister just indicate, is that still half a million dollars less than it was two years ago?

Ms. Marcelino: Yes, it's half—I'm sorry. It's 500,000 less.

Mrs. Driedger: Can the minister indicate why there's a cut that was made two years ago, then, and if I recall it, it—from '09 to '10 to '10 to '11, it was 1.2 million, and now I see that there is some effort to try to, you know, put some of that money back into the programming.

Has the minister been given instructions to cut back in certain areas of her budget?

Ms. Marcelino: There were no instructions to cut on programming, and as far as programmings—programs are concerned, no cuts were made.

Mrs. Driedger: Has the minister been instructed to cut in other areas?

Ms. Marcelino: There was no cut but a transfer from one appropriation to another two years ago.

Mrs. Driedger: Can the minister indicate whether, you know, with the financial crunch and the deficit that is increasing, whether or not there is any activity within her department to cut in—you know, cut back some of the expenses?

Ms. Marcelino: As the critic had mentioned in her opening statement, we are very proud of our cultural and heritage life in the province and, for that matter, our department has tried very much to maintain the support that have been given to all this—to our partners and stakeholders, and we have managed very hard to live within our means with the resources that were apportioned to us, and if we—even in the face of tight economic downturn—if we were to cut the vital—the programs that are vital to the quality of life of our province, I think that would not be a prudent way to pursue.

Mrs. Driedger: While there aren't any dramatic increases in any of the areas, I do note that there are areas that are receiving, you know, a minimal

increase in terms of resources being put into those areas, and I do notice that there haven't been, as compared to two years ago, you know, any further cuts. Certainly, two years ago we did see a cut in grants to cultural organizations, about \$604,000, I note. But I would recognize that in this latest budget, it does seem to be a budget that's, you know, maintaining spending, increasing in, slightly, in some areas.

Can the minister indicate—in costs related to capital assets, that has increased actually quite a bit from 2009-10—can she just indicate what that money goes towards?

Ms. Marcelino: The increase relates to the accounting of costs associated with the completion of capital upgrades to our own facilities, most notably Manitoba's Centennial Centre Corporation and the Franco-Manitoban Cultural Centre.

Also reflected are costs related to the new Hollow Water interpretive centre that will be completed this year in accordance with accounting standards. When the Province acquires or makes improvements to its buildings, the costs are required to be spread over a number of years, and these costs get reflected as amortization and interest.

Mrs. Driedger: The minister, in her opening statement, had indicated that for the interpretive centre near Hollow Water, if I heard her correctly, she'd indicated the price tag for that was \$3 million. Is that accurate?

Ms. Marcelino: Yes, that's correct.

Mrs. Driedger: Can the minister indicate what the change was, then, because in the November 9th news release put out by the government, they had indicated that they were providing \$2.5 million for the construction of that interpretive centre, and now, within just a few months, it's gone up to \$3 million? Can the minister indicate what the change was?

* (16:10)

Ms. Marcelino: As we go through the construction process, we—the estimates were revised for—was made into class C estimates, and prior it was class D.

Mrs. Driedger: Can the minister explain what all that means?

Ms. Marcelino: Class D estimation mainly consists of the rule of thumb, estimating the—per square foot of the building. However, if you were to undertake the class C estimates, it's the more detailed, precise

costing of the building, taking into consideration the location and the needs of the environment there.

Mrs. Driedger: I'm not sure that explains to me why the cost changed.

The—you know, certainly, when the determination was made to have this interpretative centre and the initial, you know, the initial concept was looked at, \$2.5 million was what was put forward as the estimate for this. I would have assumed that when one is looking at putting forward your plan that you're going to be pretty precise in terms of what that estimate of spending would be for the construction. And then within just a few short period—you know, the—a few short months, we see half a million dollars go up on a building project.

That seems like the estimate in the first place might have been way off, then, or were there changes made and enhancements made, and how do you justify that, then, within just a few months?

Ms. Marcelino: For the critic's further information, our department would offer her a detailed written response on the difference between class C and class D estimates.

Mrs. Driedger: So I understand it changed from one class to another. Why was the decision made to change it after the—you know, after it was determined to be one class and then it was made into another class, what were the reasons for making that change after the announcement?

Ms. Marcelino: For the critic's information, this is not a change in the estimates. This is a—in the—not just a change in figures, but a change in construction industry practice as estimates—as the project proceeds.

Mrs. Driedger: I'm sorry, I don't mean to be obtuse about that. I'm just trying to figure out what happened here, because there's now half a million more dollars that has gone into this, and I'm just—all I want to know is what changed to make this more expensive than what it started out to be.

Ms. Marcelino: Maybe this would help clarify why there's—where there's an increase.

In the class D estimate, it's an initial estimate based on historic all-cost ratios. However, when you proceed to a class C estimate, it is a more refined estimate and based on actual project cost.

Mrs. Driedger: I'm not sure that totally explains it to me, but I don't want to belabour this point, so we might come back to that a little bit later.

I guess I would wonder if the plan changed or whether constructions costs went up, because when you're making a, you know, an estimate on a job cost, you know, we look at bridges that get built and then they're way over cost, or we see buildings get built and then they're over cost. Half a million dollars seems to be quite a difference from only a couple months ago when the initial announcement was put out by this government. But I'll leave that one for now.

On page 10 of the Estimates book, it shows the Tourism Secretariat spending has dropped from \$450,000 last year to \$402,000. Can the minister indicate what that change was about?

Ms. Marcelino: In the Tourism Secretariat there were turnover—staff turnover, and with the new hire they started on a much lower salary than the one that we replaced, and so the slight difference from 450 to 402.

Mrs. Driedger: On page 14, under Tourism, I would like ask the minister, in terms of spending, it certainly hasn't changed dramatically at all since '09-10; in fact, stayed the same into '10-11 and now has just been bumped up a tiny bit. Can the minister indicate how that compares to other, particularly, maybe, western provinces in terms of their spending on tourism?

* (16:20)

Ms. Marcelino: There's just a very slight variation in figures from 8,231 to 8,258 because these figures are only representative of the support or grants to Travel Manitoba and the Regional Tourism association. And it doesn't reflect funding that were obtained or that were received through incremental economic partnership agreements and were used to support activities such as Manitoba Homecoming.

Mrs. Driedger: I note that in Saskatchewan, in their budget, they actually ended up doubling their tourism budget and they went from \$8 million to \$16 million. What does the minister think that's going to do in terms of challenges to this province in attracting tourism here, when the province next door has made a substantive investment in tourism?

Ms. Marcelino: I'm very pleased to let the honourable member know that, yes, Manitoba had not been spending a whack of millions just like other

jurisdictions, yet we're very pleased to know that the growth in the industry of tourism in Manitoba is on the top three in annual growth. So it's not just because we spend less that there's no growth in our industry, but our dollars are very well spent, so judiciously spent. We're unlike other provinces with multi-million TV advertising campaign targeted overseas. Our Travel Manitoba has done very well in using their resources to produce campaigns that are targeted and not very expensive, yet quite effective.

Mrs. Driedger: The minister indicated that Manitoba was one of the top three. Can she tell us who the other two were?

Ms. Marcelino: For the past decade, Manitoba was only out of the top three once, and for the rest of the decade we were—the rating fluctuates, but still within top three along with Prince Edward Island or British Columbia or Saskatchewan or Nova Scotia, and no fixed rating for all every year. It fluctuates, but thankfully, happily, we're always there in the top three, except for one year.

Mrs. Driedger: Last year in Estimates, the minister was able to provide a breakdown in terms of where our tourists come from. I wonder if she could indicate again this year what the latest figures would represent in terms of how many from Manitoba, from other provinces, from the US and international.

Ms. Marcelino: Some figures here of visitation for year overall of 2009: within Manitoba, there were 6,000,910 person visits—that's from among Manitobans; coming from other Canadian provinces, we experienced some 768 person visits—coming—thousand visits—768,000 person visits; coming from the US, we saw 371,000 person visits; and overseas, 82,000 person visits. That was in 2009.

Mrs. Driedger: Does the minister have those numbers then broken down into percentages?

* (16:30)

Ms. Marcelino: Yes. The 6,910,000 Manitobans is equivalent to 61 per cent of visitation; from other provinces, the 600—I'm sorry—wrong chart—I'm sorry—try again.

The—within—among Manitobans, the visitation of 6,910,000 is equivalent to 85 per cent of total of visitation, and the 768,000 visits from other Canadian provinces is the equivalent of 9 per cent of visitations. The 371,000 visitors from the US is equivalent to 5 per cent of the visits, and overseas,

82,000 visits is the equivalent of 1 per cent, for a total visitation in figures of 8,131,000.

Mrs. Driedger: Now, I note, and can the minister just confirm that those are the 2009 numbers. Is that accurate?

Ms. Marcelino: Yes, it is 2009.

Mrs. Driedger: I note, then, there's some interesting changes. In fact, from other provinces, we've dropped by 3 per cent from 2008. We've gone from 12 per cent to 9 per cent. The American visitors went from 6 per cent down to 5 per cent. International stayed the same. And Manitobans visiting within their own province went up from 81 to 85 per cent. So we seem to be dropping in terms of attracting people from outside of the province.

Can the minister indicate what her department is doing in order to address that?

Ms. Marcelino: Yes, that's correct. There was a slight—very slight decline in—from visits from other areas, but if you were to take the overall visitation, in 2009, we experienced an additional 400,000 visitors or 2.5 per cent. So, overall, there was an increase, not a decrease, if you were to factor other parts of—elements of the visitation pie.

Mrs. Driedger: But I guess what we're seeing basically is 85 per cent of tourism within Manitoba is based on Manitobans and 15 per cent of our tourists come from elsewhere. Is that accurate?

Ms. Marcelino: Yes, pretty much.

Mrs. Driedger: Can the minister then explain what is happening in terms of trying to draw more tourism from these other areas? I know that last year that Travel Manitoba hired a British Columbia firm to put together some kind of an advertising campaign. Can the minister just give us an indication of what happened with that, where it's at, and, I guess, some of the activities around that?

Ms. Marcelino: The campaign that was—that Travel Manitoba chose a BC company for is for the domestic high-volume tourism campaign, and that will roll out very soon this spring.

Mrs. Driedger: When the minister indicates that it's for a domestic campaign, does she just mean within Manitoba?

Ms. Marcelino: Under domestic we include not just Manitoba but also Saskatchewan, northwest Ontario, North Dakota and Minneapolis, Minnesota, yes.

Mrs. Driedger: Can the minister indicate what the content of that campaign will look like? Is it basically about attracting people to Manitoba. It's about the, you know, all the things we have to offer here. Is that the intent of where that campaign is going?

Ms. Marcelino: Yes, pretty much, that is the content of the campaign.

Mrs. Driedger: The contract that was gotten into with this company from British Columbia, can the minister tell us what the value of that contract for creative services was?

Ms. Marcelino: Yes, that contract which was awarded to a BC firm after a very competitive evaluation of agencies is worth or represents only \$200,000 or 10 per cent of Travel Manitoba's \$2-million high-volume campaign budget, and it is only about 2.5 per cent of the agency's overall marketing and development budget.

And I would add that most of the contracts associated with the campaign and with Travel Manitoba's other promotional initiatives have been awarded to Manitoba-based companies. So the bulk of the spending is done here in Manitoba.

Mrs. Driedger: Can the minister indicate when this campaign will start and how long it will run?

Ms. Marcelino: Time-wise, it would be starting very soon—spring, and then into summer and then the second phase is fall and winter.

Mrs. Driedger: Can the minister tell us how much money is budgeted for all of those components of the spring and fall ad buy?

* (16:40)

Ms. Marcelino: The high-volume campaign budget is \$2 million.

Mrs. Driedger: Can the minister provide for the last fiscal year a copy of the total spending and where it was spent in terms of advertising by her department?

Ms. Marcelino: We'll be very pleased to provide that to the member.

Mrs. Driedger: I appreciate that. Can the minister tell us where this Spirited Energy—I don't want to call it a campaign. I'm not sure what to call it, but is that still something that the Province is using? Is that still what you would consider the slogan for the province?

Ms. Marcelino: I'd like to let the member know that the Spirited Energy campaign is not undertaken by the CHT, but it was an ETT or Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade activity or project.

Mrs. Driedger: Is it still part of the—I'm not even sure what we call it, but is the government still using that, I guess, as a slogan, and then, I guess, I would ask the minister where is It's Manitoba Time at? Like it's starting to get confusing. There's a lot of things out there and Friendly Manitoba doesn't seem to be part of it, and yet it's still on licence plates. So, you know, are we Spirited Energy, are we It's Manitoba Time or are we Friendly Manitoba? Like, what are we?

Ms. Marcelino: It's Manitoba Time, we will all be seeing much of it starting next week as Travel Manitoba's tourism marketing campaign.

Mrs. Driedger: So is that part of the campaign that the British Columbia group has created for Travel Manitoba, and they will be incorporating "It's Manitoba Time?" Am I understanding that then accurately?

Ms. Marcelino: Correct.

Mrs. Driedger: The outgoing CEO of Travel Manitoba had indicated that—I think it was at the AGM—that, because of increased global competition, that it is going to be harder and harder to attract tourists. And he has also indicated that Canada dropped to 15th place from seventh in terms of the most popular destination for international travellers. I suppose because we only see 1 per cent of international travellers here anyway, maybe we're not so concerned about, you know, these other countries like Asia, Africa and the Middle East taking away our tourists, because we don't have many international tours here.

But he did indicate that, you know, those countries are spending huge amounts of dollars on infrastructure improvements and luring more international travellers, and he's saying that our biggest threat is all of this competition. He indicated that Manitoba needed to develop a long-term strategy for growing its \$1.2-billion tourism industry, and he did note that the federal government is already working on a long-term national strategy.

Can the minister indicate whether Manitoba has gone down that road of developing a long-term provincial strategy on tourism?

Ms. Marcelino: The statements of the outgoing CEO of Travel Manitoba, at that time we appreciated those statements, but we're encouraged by the developments that has happened since then. Although not codified into a single strategy format, the Province has undertaken a large number and range of initiatives that contribute to the industry's growth. These activities have had a major impact on the industry, supporting the sector's success over the past 10 years in attaining a growth rate that is consistently among the top three of all provinces.

Highlights of these actions have included establishment of Travel Manitoba as an arm's-length agency. Also, amendment of The Public Schools Act lengthened the summer break until after the Labour Day weekend. Commitment of financial support to the development of important new tourism attractions and infrastructure, such as the MTS Centre, Canadian Museum for Human Rights and the international polar bear centre. Significant infrastructure expansion upgrading, highlighted by the floodway expansion and twinning of the Trans-Canada Highway and Highway 75, and commitment of \$6.5 million toward Travel Manitoba's four-years, \$17-million enhanced tourism marketing program, and part of it included the support to Homecoming 2010 and Celebrate Manitoba, and also provided \$1.5-million loan guarantee to enable Travel Manitoba to enhance bid proposals to acquire the hosting rights for major events. Also, \$2.7 million under the Canada-Manitoba Economic Partnership Agreement as part of a \$5-million federal-provincial contribution to Travel Manitoba's expanded US and overseas marketing strategy.

* (16:50)

And, as you know, we have so much to offer to international tourists, and to that we have implemented a multi-year Aboriginal tourism strategy to expand Aboriginal participation in the tourism industry, including support for the establishment of the Manito Ahbee Aboriginal festival for all nations as one of Canada's premier Aboriginal tourism attractions; designation of 53 cultural, heritage and natural sites under the Manitoba Star Attractions program; launch of a new agritourism development strategy for rural Manitoba; expansion of tourism opportunities in the east-side region of the province, including a new conditional grant program to support the development and enhancement of local tourism enterprises; as well, we've invested over \$2 million in developing wildlife

viewing trails and interpretive sites in parks and on Crown lands under the Watchable Wildlife program; and also the initiation of the provincial licensing program for travel agents.

We're expecting all this will bear fruit, and this will—Travel Manitoba will have enough attractions to offer international tourists pretty soon.

Mrs. Driedger: I note that Mr. Mesman, at the time of the AGM, had indicated that Travel Manitoba officials will be holding strategy sessions, actually, in December to try to come up with a long-term strategy. So is Travel Manitoba moving ahead, then, in terms of the development of a long-term strategy? It's just that the minister and her department don't feel that they need to go down that same road?

Ms. Marcelino: Yes, Travel Manitoba did undertake a strategic planning session recently, and it's for their marketing strategies.

Mrs. Driedger: But can the minister indicate, is she referring to Travel Manitoba that undertook this strategy session?

Ms. Marcelino: Yes, it's Travel Manitoba.

Mrs. Driedger: And I understand that Travel Manitoba wanted to then take that to the government—to the provincial government to see if the government and industry officials would use it as a springboard for developing a more formal plan. Has that happened?

Ms. Marcelino: That hasn't happened yet.

Mrs. Driedger: Does the minister have any sense of when that might come forward from Travel Manitoba?

Ms. Marcelino: We anticipated the results of their strategic planning to be integrated into their forthcoming three-year business plan.

Mrs. Driedger: That business plan is quite a bit down the road, because their most current one, I see, goes till 2013, so if they're looking at long-term strategy, is the minister then saying that none of that's going to be available until 2014?

Ms. Marcelino: Travel Manitoba does a rolling three-year plan, and it's adjusted every year.

Mrs. Driedger: I'd just like to ask the minister how much involvement her department had in this Ukrainian Canadian heritage day and the determination to pick July as the date for that. It certainly seems to be going against what other

provinces are doing. Other provinces and I know our own private member's bill had looked at September 7th, which was the day the first Ukrainian came to Canada at Pier 21. And Ontario, I understood, picked September 7th. Other provinces are looking at that.

Did her department have any involvement in working on this bill?

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. I think it will be appropriate when that bill goes to the committee and at that time it can be discussed more extensively. So, at this point, maybe we should just stick to the—this topic.

Ms. Marcelino: I would defer that question to the proper committee, which is the legislative body for debate. And it's not for our department to determine the date.

Mr. Chairperson: Resolution 14.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$48,049,000 for Culture, Heritage and Tourism, Culture, Heritage and Tourism Programs, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2012.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 14.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$11,851,000 for Culture, Heritage and Tourism, Information Resources, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2012.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 14.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,750,000 for Culture, Heritage and Tourism, Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2012.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 14.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$110,000 for Culture, Heritage and Tourism, Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2012.

Resolution agreed to.

The last item to be considered for the Estimates of this department is item 14.1.(a) the Minister's Salary, contained in resolution 14.1.

At this point we request that the minister's staff leave the table for the consideration of this last item.

Resolution 14.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding

\$2,440,000 for Culture, Heritage and Tourism, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2012.

Resolution agreed to.

This completes the Estimates of the Department of Culture, Heritage and Tourism.

The time being 5 p.m., I'm interrupting the proceedings. The Committee of Supply will resume sitting tomorrow morning at 10 a.m.

Committee rise.

CONSERVATION

* (14:50)

Mr. Chairperson (Rob Altemeyer): Will the Committee of Supply please come to some semblance of order.

This section of the Committee of Supply will now resume consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Conservation. As has been previously agreed, questioning for this department will proceed in a global manner, and I understand the minister has some follow-up from questions that were asked yesterday, so with the opposition critic's agreement, we'll give you the floor, Minister.

Hon. Bill Blaikie (Minister of Conservation): Just answers to some of the questions that were directed to me yesterday by the honourable member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire). Further to the member's question on the detail related to the 310 staff hired last year, there were 211 seasonal staff hired, 55 internal job changes which were lateral moves, 16 new full-time staff hired, 10 term staff hired, and—I'm not sure if that's an eight or a three—and eight casual staff hired. And the number of retirements, there were 52 regular full-time employees who retired and 18 seasonal staff who retired.

The member asked questions with respect to the Nature Conservancy of Canada and the relationship of the department to the Nature Conservancy. The Nature Conservancy of Canada, NCC hereafter—although I still get chills when I say NCC because it reminds me of that rather disreputable organization, the National Citizens Coalition, but, anyway, when I say NCC, I mean National Conservancy of Canada—is a private non-profit corporation that partners with individuals, communities, business and governments across Canada to protect biological diversity and natural areas.

Since 1962, NCC and its partners have conserved more than 2 million acres over 800,000 hectares of land nationwide. Manitoba Conservation and NCC have had a successful partnership for over 18 years, co-operating in a number of conservation efforts, including the tall grass prairie reserve and the Manitoba Conservation Data Centre.

More recently, in 2009, the Province committed \$7 million in support for the NCC Natural Areas Conservation Program to acquire and preserve ecologically significant lands in eight areas in southern Manitoba over five years. NCC is raising matching funds from other government and private contributors for a potential benefit of \$21 million for environmental protection in the province.

The targeted areas include the Riding Mountain Aspen Parkland, tall grass prairie, West Souris Mixed- grass Prairie, Oak Lake Sand Hills and wetlands, the Souris River Valley Grassland, Turtle Mountain woodland and wetland, Whitemouth River Watershed and Interlake parkland.

These areas are home to a wide variety of plant and animal life such as tall grass prairie, buffalo grass, fescue prairie, the western prairie fringed orchid, hairy prairie clover, burrowing owls, Great Plains toads, prairie skinks, and others, presumably with more normal names.

* (15:00)

Funding will also be used to support other environmental protection priorities such as Pembina Valley and Tiger Hills natural area and Delta, and Netley-Libau marshes.

The criteria for management of the NCC lands, which the honourable member might also be interested in— NCC is responsible for the control and management of acquired lands, property management plans, identify conservation goals and actions, and a schedule of management activities for acquired lands. The plans are based on detailed inventories of species and habitats, document the condition of the land and identify priority actions needed to protect key species and habitats over the long term.

The government of Manitoba has signed a memorandum of agreement with Nature Conservancy of Canada. This agreement added 6,402 hectares of NCC-owned land that meet Manitoba's standard of protection to the protected areas network.

And in terms of other questions that were asked by the honourable member yesterday, this one having to do with conservation easements. We provide funding, that is to say, the Department of Conservation provides funding to support the Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation, hereinafter referred to as the MHHC. They work with landowners to establish easements to conserve habitat. MHHC put in place—has put in place 522 conservation agreements covering 91,050 acres and all are perpetual agreements or agreements in perpetuity.

The breakdown of these agreements is as follows: (1) 315 wetland agreements for 48,788 acres. And these are acres on which there will be no breaking of land and no drainage; (2) 169 species at-risk agreements, comprising 39,368 acres. Grazing is permitted on most of this land but no breakage and no drainage; (3) 38 riparian agreements comprising 2,894 acres. No agricultural use is permitted on these lands; and number four, 31 donated conservation agreements covering 12,505 acres.

Further to another question by the honourable member having to do with wildlife management areas, I'm very proud to say that we have established, in the last five years, the following new wildlife management areas, or WMAs, or additions to existing WMAs.

In October 2009, and I referred to these yesterday actually, Kaskatamagan WMA, that was an addition. And the name was changed and Kaskatamagan Sipi WMA which was brand new. In April 2009, the Pembina Valley WMA. In March 2009, the Whitemouth Bog WMA and Observation Point WMA. In June 2006, a Delta Marsh WMA, Hilltop WMA and Onanole WMA.

And finally, Mr. Chairman, the member inquired about provincial parks and park reserves established since 1990 and subsequent management planning and issues. So I'm here today to report to the committee that since 1990 Manitoba Conservation has established 18 provincial parks via the registration of amendments to the provincial parks designation regulation under The Provincial Parks Act.

Those provincial parks include the following—five wilderness parks: Caribou River Park, established in 2002; Colvin Lake, 2010; Nueltin Lake, 2010; Numaykoos Lake, 1995; and Sand Lakes, 1995. Five natural parks: Birch Island in

2010; Kettle Stones in 1997; Manigotagan River in 2004; Pembina Valley, 2001; and South Atikaki, 2003. Three recreation parks: North Steeprock Lake, 1997; Portage Spillway, 1997; and Yellow Quill, 1997. And five heritage parks: Criddle/Vane Homestead, 2004; Duff Roblin, 2008; Lockport, 2007; River Road, 1997; and the Trappist Monastery, 2002.

The department is currently implementing a strategy to complete management plans for all existing provincial parks by 2015.

Presently there are 12 park reserves, as designated under The Provincial Parks Act since 1990 and they include the following—there's 12 of them, as I said: Amisk Park Reserve, created in 1997; Chitek Lake, 1999; Fisher Bay, 2000; Goose Islands, 2001; Grand Island, 2001; Kinwow Bay, 2001; Little Limestone Lake, 2007; Pelican Islands, 2001; Pemmican Island, 2001; Poplar/Nanowin Rivers, 1999; Sturgeon Bay, 2001; and Walter Cook caves, 2001.

Manitoba Conservation remains focused on designating the park reserves as provincial parks or ecological reserves; for example, Walter Cook caves and Pelican Islands. Management plans will be prepared for park reserves designed as provincial parks in the future. Also, the department continues to work with Poplar River First Nation on preparation and implementation of their management plan for the First Nations traditional territory, including the Poplar/Nanowin Rivers Park Reserve area.

So, Mr. Chairman, just forgive the detail but now they're on the record for the honourable member and that way he has it as soon as possible.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you for that. The floor is open for questions.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): How's the mike today? Am I too close or all right to it? Yes, we'll try it.

Thanks, Mr. Minister, as well, and thank you for the information—pleased that you were able to bring that much forward and we'll—if there's more, we'd certainly maybe get it later this afternoon or whenever, as well. But yesterday I just finished off. I've got a few more questions on the WNO and then maybe some—just a few questions on the heritage—World Heritage Site.

But the last question I think I was looking at was the broad area plan for the east side of Lake

Winnipeg and I wondered if the minister could just maybe—I don't know if he had a chance to finish the answer there in regards to an estimated time frame for finishing that east-side plan.

Mr. Blaikie: With respect to the four communities that are related to the UNESCO World Heritage Site, their plans have to be completed in time for us to go forward with the nomination. But the other communities that are part of the WNO, it's much harder to predict exactly when those will be completed because that is something that depends on, you know, a combination of capacity and political will and technical detail, and all kinds of things that have to go into this. And, certainly, this is a process that has—that will take some time and will vary from community to community.

So it's very difficult for me to say exactly when all this will ultimately be completed. It'll happen on a community-by-community basis and we hope that someday all the communities will have filed plans and those plans will have gone through the proper process, and the goal that was set out at the beginning of this will be accomplished.

* (15:10)

Mr. Maguire: So there's no—for some of the ones that you're going to need for the plan, obviously, to move forward for the proposal you'll need those by—and I think we were looking at the date on that was September 30th, I think you gave me yesterday. Is that for the World Heritage Site or is this a different proposal?

Mr. Blaikie: The—yes, I think that's what I was saying yesterday and just now, that for the four communities that are part—the four Manitoba communities because there's five; one of them is in Ontario, Pikangikum—for the four Manitoba communities that are involved in the UNESCO World Heritage project, their land-use plans have to be completed by September the 30th so that the nomination can go forward and be analyzed by Parks Canada for—I don't have those dates in front of me, but maybe it was January 2012, something like that. Anyway, the deadline is very—for those four communities is very close, obviously. So that's our focus at the moment is doing what we can to enable those communities to finish those plans.

Mr. Maguire: Thanks, Mr. Minister. And so there's many others still that are in—many other communities in that area that have plans. Can you give me an idea of how many more that they're looking at?

Mr. Blaikie: They all have plans to have a plan. Some of them are further along than others, and so I don't have anything more to say than that, except to say that it's all in progress and just when each and every community completes its—the process associated with it will be a matter of a whole bunch of variables that I'm not able to predict for the honourable member at the moment.

Mr. Maguire: Just two things that arise from that then, and I guess one of them would be just what all is included and what all is the minister expecting in each plan and from them? And I know, in cases of some of the municipal plans, that sort of thing around the province, there's a, you know, there's a deadline that maybe six months a year, two years. It's—to my knowledge, they haven't been left open-ended when I was Intergovernmental Affairs critic in some of those areas, and I just wondered if you could be more definitive in regards to when the plans in those other areas—I certainly know when the four that you're looking at would be attained, and I suppose whether or not the fifth one can be—does that fifth plan, then, have to come to Manitoba as well, or does it go to Ontario and you work with Ontario in regards to the proposal?

Mr. Blaikie: I could stand corrected, but I think the whole plan goes to Parks Canada. It doesn't go—so we're enabling, you know, we're trying to help those communities have their plans ready so that all five plans together can be submitted to Parks Canada. So it's not a question of submitting them to us. It's a question of them submitting them to Parks Canada, and Pikangikum would have the same deadline, and those are the only deadlines for those five communities.

The other communities there is—it's not like the process that you're describing with respect to municipal or municipalities where there's some kind of deadline that they—this is an entirely new process that we're engaged in on the east side of Lake Winnipeg and there is no deadline to meet except the deadline that exists for the five—for the four Manitoba communities, which is a deadline imposed on us or on them by the UNESCO World Heritage Site process.

Mr. Maguire: And I guess just to follow up on that was somewhat just—what does the minister expect? What are the criteria, the basic criteria at least of the plan to be included? What do they expect from each of those communities?

Mr. Blaikie: Well, what we look for in these plans is the community laying out, if you will, what they regard to be the natural cultural values in the area, historical sites, sacred sites, the community traditions within that area, the things that are of historical value. And then, you know, making some recommendations in the plan as to what they want to see protected and available only for traditional activities—what the areas that they see as open to development of one kind or another, areas that they see as specially suited to ecotourism. So, basically, just say, well, you know, have to sort of what it sounds like—a land-use plan. Do you want this? These places are sacred; these places are historical; these places have cultural value; these places are for traditional activities; these places are open to development; these places are specially set aside for ecotourist possibilities, that sort of thing.

Mr. Maguire: And is there a particular deadline in the minister's mind, then, in regards to when he'd like to have that information? I mean, obviously, the sooner the better; it would be more valuable in planning from a minister's position in regards to things like the east-side road and others in planning. And there's a, you know, and I just wondered, you know, there's a—there are grants going out to WNO and that sort of thing, and making decisions would be a little easier, I guess, if those were to come sooner rather than waiting a couple of years.

Mr. Blaikie: Obviously, if things can happen faster, as long as they happen in a fulsome and adequate way, that would be better. So that's part of what our job is insofar as, you know, we can't do these plans for the communities. They have to—the plans have to come from the communities, but we can play an enabling and facilitating role. And, of course, that's what some of the grants are for, in order to provide them with the capacity to hire people to help them make the plan.

So I—you asked me what my deadline is. I don't have a personal deadline. I realize that these are going to take a while, but I do—but I am concerned in the immediate future that those communities from which we need to produce land-use management plans in order to put the nomination together for the UNESCO World Heritage Site, that those be completed within the time frame that's imposed on us by that process.

Mr. Maguire: Which, again, as the minister's indicated earlier, is by fall. He also indicated to me yesterday that they had four staff people, full and

part-time, working in that area to—with the First Nations to be able to develop those plans and others.

And, just in regards to the grants, maybe the minister can just indicate to me what status those are in—you know, how many grants have been made and that sort of thing.

Mr. Blaikie: Probably the best thing to do there is to, unless it's right at hand, is to undertake to get that kind of information to the member as quickly as we can.

Mr. Maguire: Yes, that's fair enough. If we get the amounts and the timing and perhaps, you know, who they were—who the grants went to, that sort of thing. If you could provide me with the that information, it would be good.

And also just wondering if there's outstanding grants or grants from this budget that will—that are planned to flow. How many are still to flow if there's some that haven't been put out, and can he provide me with the plans for grants for the coming year?

Mr. Blaikie: Yes. I mean, there's some money that flows, you know. Things are in stages. There's—it's not like all the money is provided to communities up front in order to get the next level of resources. They have to have completed the first level of what's been required of their resources that were given to them at the earlier level.

So—but we'll try and get a synopsis or have that kind of information prepared for the member.

Mr. Maguire: I'm just—so I'm assuming that it's the government's intentions to continue with the grants, and if that's the case, can he indicate to me what the financial contribution that they're looking at would be for 2011-12?

* (15:20)

Mr. Blaikie: Yes, in terms of funding that's been provided to communities that are part of the WNO, the sort of basic contribution to the communities for their land-use planning was 30 to 32 thousand dollars per community, which I think, you know, is not an exorbitant amount of money to try and put together a land-use management plan. But we did provide extra funding up to \$70,000 per community for those that were part of the World Heritage Site because we wanted to speed that process up. So all in all, I'm told that amounts—that comes to about \$800,000.

Mr. Maguire: Which is pretty much the budget for it, \$826,000, I think, on page 37 in the Estimates

here. So in that area of operating there's a bit of a breakdown there, and it would go into the different areas.

Just thank the minister for that. The WNO has a website, and I wonder when it'll be updated.

Mr. Blaikie: Is the honourable member implying that it's out of date?

Mr. Maguire: I just wondered when it'll be updated.

Mr. Blaikie: Honourable member says, I'm asking the questions here. No, the—all I can do is undertake to look into that. If the website is not being regularly updated there may be some reason for that. I'm told that there are various sites within the website that are updated and have been recently updated in terms of hunting regulations and various things, camping.

Mr. Maguire: Yes, no, thanks for that clarification. It was the WNO site that I was looking at or asking about. And I just wondered what Manitoba law—there's a great deal of activity in the east side of Lake Winnipeg there, and I wondered which Manitoba law takes precedent when it comes to the activities on the east side of Lake Winnipeg. You know, there's The East Side Traditional Lands Planning and Special Protected Areas Act. Do they take precedence, or are there other laws that would take precedence on activities in the east side of Lake Winnipeg?

Mr. Blaikie: Well, Mr. Chairperson, I think the best possible course of action at this point—because the member has asked what is ultimately a legal question—is to take the matter under advisement and get back to the member with a more fulsome opinion as to what our interpretation of the legal situation is, but it's the east side act obviously has some—has jurisdiction there, but I don't think it has jurisdiction in a way that eliminates the reach of other laws that have already been established, but I would only be speculating at this point.

So I think what I would say is that I'll ask for a legal rendition of the department's understanding of the answer to your question and provide it to you at the earliest opportunity.

Mr. Maguire: Yes, I was just wondering if the East Side Traditional Lands Planning, some of the acts that I mentioned there, take precedence because there's also the provincial Crown Lands Act and the parks act and others in regards to—and I guess, you know, it may depend on the circumstances.

If the minister can help me with that in regards to what acts would take precedence, I guess, in a

final analysis because there's a number of them there, some of them dealing with more narrow areas than others, but in regards to an overall eastern planning, just wondered which act would take precedence.

Mr. Blaikie: I take the honourable member's addition to his question as additional information as to what he wants in the answer.

Mr. Maguire: Yes, could I just get an update on the program that you had put in place, *Promises to Keep*, that report. You know, the government received it in '04, I believe, and the Promises to Keep program, and I wondered if he could just give me an update on where that's at at this time.

Mr. Blaikie: Well, Mr. Chairperson, the very thing that we've been talking about for the last little while, the WNO process, for that matter the World Heritage Site project, all these things flow from the document *Promises to Keep*. So the process, itself, is part of keeping the promises.

Mr. Maguire: Yes, I just wondered how many other recommendations in that report have been met.

*(15:30)

Mr. Blaikie: Well, as I'm—as I say, I think the process that we're going through is part of the process of implementing those recommendations.

If there are individual recommendations that the honourable member sees in the report *Promises to Keep* that he wants to know, how is this particular recommendation, you know, what's the status of that recommendation, how is, you know, how do we judge whether or not that recommendation has been implemented or not—does he have any particular recommendations in mind, or does he just mean all of them, because I think there were a lot of them? And the process itself, as I say, is the way—is what we've established in order to meet the promises that were made—or the recommendations, rather.

Mr. Maguire: No, I mean, it's been '04, and so I'm assuming that a lot of the recommendations in the report have had time to be implemented. And I was just wondering which ones haven't been, in pretty much a general nature, just to what might still be outstanding and when those might be expected to be dealt with.

So if he could just provide me maybe with a list at a later time of what's still to be done with that, with the recommendations that—if there is any. I mean, maybe they're all done.

Mr. Blaikie: Well, where it lends itself to a list of, you know, done/not done, we'll provide it. But, on the other hand, obviously, to the extent that some of these things are—can only be implemented fully by the completion of the process that the WNO represents, then they're not going to be in a—they're not going to be a state—in a state where they could be described as having been implemented until such times as the process completes itself. And we've already discussed just how difficult it is to say when that process will complete itself.

Mr. Maguire: The minister indicated earlier—he mentioned development along the areas. And so regarding future development on some of the east side, there's been, you know—I guess, wanted to know what Manitoba Conservation's plan is when it comes to the creation of new cottage lots on the Crown lands on the east side. Is there—can he elaborate on the discussions that are going on in that regard?

Mr. Blaikie: Just trying to gather my thoughts here.

In terms of cottage lot developments, I mean, there are the ones that are already known about. We're working with—we worked with Hollow Water First Nation before to set up the Driftwood, Blueberry cottage lot developments. We're working with Black River First Nation to create cottage lot development there, and that's going forward. And we are also working—it's not quite on the east—it is on the east side, but I'm not sure if it's in the area that the member was specifically referring to—but also have an understanding or a working agreement with Sagkeeng First Nation for cottage lot developments in their neck of the woods, so to speak.

So those three in terms of cottage lot developments.

Mr. Maguire: Those, I don't know if those are considered Crown land. I was interested in what the minister, you know, there's a—there's work in conjunction with the local First Nations and developments in those areas. There's an opportunity for them as well.

And so I just wondered if he—if there are other cottage lot developments that they're looking at on Crown land that the government has at this time or if it's—[interjection]—on the east side as opposed to if it's strictly the ones that are—that he's mentioned in dealing with First Nations or if it's strictly First Nations or whether there'll be others on Crown land as well.

Mr. Blaikie: The three that I mentioned are the only cottage-lot developments that are on the table, so to speak, as far as the Department of Conservation is concerned, on the east side: Hollow Water, Black River, and Sagkeeng. And we have—I should say that we have—I said we had an agreement—we actually had an MOU which we signed with Sagkeeng on September 14, 2010, right on the river bank; I remember it well. We signed an MOU with them with respect to the development of 118 lots in that area.

And the Black River First Nation cottage-lot development is larger. That would be—that's intended to be 600 lots, and it's all part of keeping a commitment that the government made to try and create, I think, an extra thousand cottage lots in Manitoba. And, of course, not on the east side, but nevertheless, in terms of cottage lots, we have an agreement with Fisher River Cree Nation. We've been working with them on an 88-lot joint cottage subdivision along Fisher Bay.

Mr. Maguire: And so I'm assuming that there is discussions going on with all four of those groups then?

Mr. Blaikie: Well, I know—yes, there's a process going on with all four of them. Of course, they're all in different stages, so I mean Hollow Water is much further along than Black River, and Black River is further along than Sagkeeng, you know, so, depending on the nature of the stage that these developments are at. But all of them are receiving attention from the department, the attention that's appropriate to the stage that the plan is in.

Mr. Maguire: Yes, in regards to the World Heritage Site proposal, the minister indicated to me—we talked earlier today about the timing and Parks Canada approvals and that sort of thing, and is it the same there, the same four people working from the Conservation staff in regards to the World Heritage Site that we just spoke about with the WNO?

* (15:40)

Mr. Blaikie: So if I believe—understand correctly, the honourable member was asking how many staff are working on the World Heritage Site. Is that right? So we've got two land-use planners, and my special adviser on this matter and others, Don Sullivan. So that's the three that sort of are full. We have other people that are, you know, get asked to provide this or do this or do that, but, in terms of people that are preoccupied with that, those are the three.

The ADM gives to it and, you know, we're all part of a team here, so all of us are spending little pieces of time here and there on that particular project. In terms of people that are actually assigned to it, those are the three.

Mr. Maguire: And so the minister indicated—was it two land-use planners and a special assistant?

Mr. Blaikie: Two land-use planners and the special assistant or special adviser, Mr. Sullivan.

Mr. Maguire: And can you just indicate who the special assistant was? You just mentioned—

An Honourable Member: Don Sullivan.

An Honourable Member: Don—yes.

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable minister.

Mr. Blaikie: Don Sullivan.

Mr. Maguire: The—I guess I just wondered what the budget was that Conservation allocated this year for, sort of, all of the work that was associated with the proposed UNESCO heritage site.

While the minister is getting information on that, I was looking at how much his plan is to spend in the budget, like, for this year, the budget that they just brought out, that we're looking at. And, perhaps, what was spent last year in total, or how much has been spent in total so far?

Mr. Blaikie: Yes, I think that's something we'd have to put together for the honourable member, but we will do that, what's been spent on the project so far and then what's to be spent in terms of the budget that's just passed.

Mr. Maguire: Yes, so I just wondered in the budget what—and I haven't seen a number. I just wondered if there was a number in there that they budgeted for the procedures for this year as well.

Mr. Blaikie: So, yes, Mr. Chairman, as I think probably the question reflects the fact that there is no line item in the budget for the UNESCO World Heritage Site, but the information that I have here is that all the total base funding in 2011-12 of those who are working in one way or another on the World Heritage Site comes to \$503,000. So that's maybe the global figure I thought I didn't have, but I do.

Mr. Maguire: I just wondered how many contractors are working on the World Heritage Site proposal.

Mr. Blaikie: Yes, so I had indicated to the honourable member that the global number was \$503,000 and earlier I talked about the three people that work on the World Heritage Site, Pimachiowin Aki, so they're paid out of that \$500,000, and then, out-again out of that \$500,000, there's grants to Pimachiowin Aki of—so for \$340,000. And that's—but it's Pimachiowin Aki that has—they then spend that. They contract with people; we don't contract with people.

Mr. Maguire: Then, I guess, that's what I was wondering about if—and I appreciate the minister giving me that answer because I was assuming that there may be some other flow, because, you know, it's a big project, and for a couple of people to be doing it, I trust that there are others that Pimachiowin Aki is doing contract work with, and I wonder if the minister could elaborate just who's working with them on that. Who else would be contracted through Pimachiowin Aki?

Mr. Blaikie: Pimachiowin Aki takes—you know, uses the money that they receive from us to contract as they so choose. The Ontario government provides them \$100,000 as well. I think the honourable member would find that there's actually not as many people working on this as you might think. That's—it's really a handful of people who are trying to do a big job here.

Mr. Maguire: Yes. No, I wasn't looking for a plethora of people just because—just to have a number working on a project, Mr. Minister. I appreciate frugality as well and efficiency in getting the work done. And I just wondered then, you know, when you're making that money available, they must have come to the government with a proposal for what they would do with, say, that \$340,000, somewhere in that area. And I just wondered what kind of a proposal or what type of work would be being done with those funds, even if it is only four or five people more.

Mr. Blaikie: And I think I can give the honourable member an idea of the kind of work that needs to be done. I'm told that there is eight project teams that have been recruited by Pimachiowin Aki Corporation to develop components of the nomination package. And the project teams are concerned with governance study, how the—well, I'll just leave it at that—a governance study, that would probably have to do with, I don't know, environmental planning and resource management, stuff like that; an economic study; an ecosystem

study, including natural comparative analysis; cultural comparative analyses, both national and international; a cultural landscape study; a management plan; and the nomination document itself, including an executive summary and communications work associated with the project. So that would be the eight different projects that are—that people are hired by with this money that I've referred to, to deliver for Pimachiowin Aki.

Mr. Maguire: I appreciate Conservation's involvement with this as well, and it's a large project. There are roads and other items as well, you know, power connections and other things that needed to be done. Are there other departments working on it with the minister's department as well?

* (15:50)

Mr. Blaikie: Yes, I mean, we might find ourselves in a situation where we seek information from time to time from another department, but we are the primary department when it comes to this, and I think it's fair to say, then, other than those occasions when we ask for information or assistance on an occasional basis, there's really no other department working on this particular project.

Mr. Maguire: Yes, so there's—you know, I was just thinking of water and sewer and those kinds of things. Some of them would be in more remote areas, and if local government or the Department of MIT was involved in any way with—you know, I was just wondering if MIT or local government was involved because of, you know, sewer-water needs, those kinds of things, and if those departments were paying any of those—any—putting—providing any dollars for those kinds of development or if the proposals got to that stage yet.

Mr. Blaikie: Yes, I think it's important to remember that these are land-use planning documents. They don't—they're not actually involved in doing anything at this particular point in time and they don't have to do with the creation of infrastructure.

There may be communities on the east side who have infrastructure needs and or plans, but they would be dealing with the East Side Authority or they might be dealing with other departments on that, but it wouldn't be in the context of Pimachiowin Aki.

Mr. Maguire: Can the minister give me an update just on the Pimachiowin Aki Corporation itself and just its sort of annual operating costs and any other information that he can provide me over the last year and what he looks—what he expects to see in the

future in the year that we're having the budget discussions with today?

Mr. Blaikie: Mr. Chairman, I think it might be helpful to the honourable member and to others that are interested maybe to just kind of lay out what the Pimachiowin Aki Corporation is so that, you know, the—in 2004, for instance, the Parks Canada published its new tentative list of World Heritage sites that would be forthcoming from Canada to the World Heritage Committee over the next 10 years, and the Pimachiowin Aki site was included on that list.

So the partners agreed, those that were involved in that particular area, the First Nations communities—agreed that a formal process should commence to develop the nomination document, and, in 2006, the Pimachiowin Aki Corporation was established.

This made available a legal entity that could manage money, hire employees and contractors and generally undertake all of the work necessary for the development of a nomination file for submission to Parks Canada and, ultimately, to the World Heritage Committee by February 2012.

First Nations partners have a board representative and an adviser to the board of directors of the corporation. The governments of Manitoba and Ontario are also represented on the board, and the board is co-chaired by an assistant deputy minister within the department, which I think is Mr. Bremner here, and a representative of the Pikangikum First Nation. Other advisers to the board represent Parks Canada Agency, the International Institute for Sustainable Development and the Whitefeather Forest Corporation.

I just think it's important to also put on the record, so I'll just establish how the corporation came into being. They do produce an annual report, an annual financial report, an audited financial report, which, if the member doesn't have it already, we can make it available to him. And they provide an annual report, a more general report, you know, beyond just a financial report, and, of course, the member's already referred to the website as well, so.

Mr. Maguire: Yes, thanks, Mr. Minister. Can you just indicate to me what their annual operating costs would be?

Mr. Blaikie: Yes, well, I think that information would be available in the audited annual financial

reports, so we'll get a copy of that report to the member.

Mr. Maguire: So I'm assuming that their bylaws would be public in that document as well, or—I would assume that their bylaws and that sort of thing, of the corporation, are public as well.

Mr. Blaikie: I'm not sure where their, you know, whether their bylaws are in their audited financial statement or not, but whatever bylaws or rules or regulations that are—go towards the makeup of the corporation, I'm sure must be available somewhere. We'll get them to the honourable member. It's not something that I have actually seen myself, but.

Mr. Maguire: Yeah, I appreciate that. If the minister could do that for me, that'd be a—certainly appreciate it.

Does—is there any, in regards to staffing, is there any provincial employees seconded to Pimachiowin Aki Corporation?

Mr. Blaikie: I've already described what the working relationship is between the Department of Conservation and who in the Department of Conservation works on that project, but nobody is seconded to Pimachiowin Aki.

Mr. Maguire: And just the last one in that area is: Can the minister provide me with how—I asked him about their costs, which we'll see in the annual report, I guess, but can he provide me with who would have cheque-signing authority in an organization—in that corporation?

Mr. Blaikie: Not surprisingly, Mr. Chairman, one of the people who have signing authority from Pimachiowin Aki is the secretary-treasurer of the organization who's from Ontario and whose name is Graham Swanwick, and the other sign—the other authority with respect to signing authority is the co-chair from Manitoba who's the assistant deputy minister here, Mr. Bruce Bremner.

Mr. Maguire: And how many First Nations are involved in the work of the corporation?

* (16:00)

Mr. Blaikie: I think I've said this a number of times, but there are four First Nation communities in Manitoba that are involved and one in Ontario.

Mr. Maguire: The—what's the relationship with Ontario in regards to the minister's department on that? Is it the Minister of Conservation in Ontario as

well that he works with, or is it another department in Ontario?

Mr. Blaikie: The Ontario department that we work with on this is the Ministry of Natural Resources. I did know they have a different structure in Ontario. They have a separate Minister of the Environment and separate Minister of Natural Resources, and maybe even a separate minister in charge of Forestry. A lot of the things that are all done by one, you know, belaboured minister here are spread out all over the place in Ontario.

Mr. Maguire: Well, I set myself up for that one. Yes, anyway the—how much money, you know, there are funds—and I appreciate the announcements that the government has made in regards to helping fund this. And I just wondered how many dollars have been raised through The Land that Gives Life campaign to date that has been discussed and talked about in that whole area, if the minister could indicate that to me.

Mr. Blaikie: Yes, the money that has been raised through the seeking of donations is something that's been co-ordinated by the Winnipeg Foundation. So it's not something that we have at our fingertips at the moment, but we can endeavour to get that for the honourable member.

Mr. Maguire: Yes, okay. Do you have any—I mean, I'm assuming the corporation keeps track and the minister's in touch in regards to what the annual spending would be of the corporation?

Mr. Blaikie: I mean, again, Mr. Chairman, I think that is information that would be available in the audited financial statement that we've already undertaken to get to the honourable member. So he can see how much they've spent and how much they haven't spent.

Mr. Maguire: And I guess I just wondered, you know, the Winnipeg Foundation has been very involved, and I wonder if he can indicate to me if—how much money the government has granted to the Winnipeg Foundation to date as well.

Mr. Blaikie: Yes, well, I think the member's question was how much money has—might the Manitoba government or Conservation given to the Winnipeg Foundation, and the answer is that we haven't given them anything at this point. They have a relationship with Pimachiowin Aki Corporation, but they don't have a relationship with us. Emergency caffeine delivery.

Mr. Chairperson: And the Chair has now officially gone off the radar.

Mr. Maguire: Yes, thanks, Mr. Minister, and so it wouldn't be just his department that I was asking about. It would be sort of the provincial government, but they probably haven't given any money. He's indicating there's been no funds gone to the Winnipeg Foundation.

Mr. Blaikie: From the provincial government? No, that's my understanding.

Mr. Maguire: And I'm just following a process here, and I just wondered, then, how do First Nations or how do the communities there access the monies raised as part of the campaign? I mean, the monies are there, but how do they access that? Is that—is there a process that they go through, and, I guess, how are the funding and granting decisions being made?

Mr. Blaikie: My understanding of it is as follows, Mr. Chairman. The trust fund that's there, for which money is being raised through the Winnipeg Foundation, is just that: it's a trust fund. And it ultimately will provide a revenue that will be accessible for whatever purposes, but at the moment that money is not money that is being—that is accessible or sought by the First Nations. What First Nations are spending, those four First Nations on the Manitoba side, is the money that is being given to them in the context of the WNO, the \$70,000 that I referred to per Pimachiowin Aki community, so to speak, to complete their plans.

Mr. Maguire: And so those \$70,000 groups, the four of them that the government has put forward, yes, from the provincial government will go into the corporation.

An Honourable Member: Not from the money being raised.

Mr. Maguire: No, no, not from the foundation, but that's operating for the province, and he—just so I get a—

Mr. Blaikie: Just to be clear, those grants that I talked about are—no, they're not grants from Pimachiowin Aki; they're grants to the communities to help them with their land-use plans to submit to the process.

Mr. Maguire: And is Ontario's hundred thousand that the minister referred to earlier the same thing? Is it going to their community there to fund their plan on their side, or is that more to the foundation?

Mr. Blaikie: I did refer earlier to the hundred thousand that Ontario's given, and I think it's in that range. Sometimes it might be a little more on a yearly basis, I'm told, but it's in that range. That's to Pimachiowin Aki itself, and then the Ontario government, like us, provides grants to First Nations communities as opposed to the Pimachiowin Aki Corporation, primarily to Pikangikum, but there is a bit of an overlap between some of the communities across the border. And so some of them, the ones that do cross the border, get some money from the Ontario government as well.

*(16:10)

Mr. Maguire: I have some colleagues that want a couple of questions, a little bit of my time and your time, as well, Mr. Minister. But I just wondered, again, The Land That Gives Life campaign to date, when would you be able to tell me what they have raised for funds—they—and how do they go about raising those funds? Is that coming out of the foundation from Pimachiowin Aki?

Mr. Blaikie: Yes, well, I mean, I think that question is a lot like the one that the member already asked. He wants to know how much money has been raised. I'm assuming, apart from the commitments that governments have already made, and I'll endeavour to get that information for him. As I explained, that's something that we'd have to find out through the Winnipeg Foundation, et cetera.

Mr. Maguire: Yes, I'm just—and just a question in regards to some of the advertising. Mr. Chairperson, I noted with interest the end of the year, I think earlier this year, there was some ads that Conservation ran on—I don't know if it was just all on TV or radio ads—about advertising in The Land That Gives Life, and I just wondered if the minister can provide me with information as to how much was spent from his department on those ads.

Mr. Blaikie: I just want to be sure, again, what the honourable member was asking me. He wanted to know—well, the advertising that the honourable member is referring to was not advertising that was done by Conservation; that was done by the Pimachiowin Aki Corporation. The Land That Gives Life, the ads that were on TV, I'm assuming that's what the member is referring to, and I think there were maybe some print advertising as well. That was advertising that was conducted by the Pimachiowin Aki Corporation itself. But it was done with funds that had been previously given to the corporation as

part of its operating budget, and that money was spent on that advertising.

Mr. Maguire: Yes, thanks, Mr. Minister, that's pretty much what I was looking for. I just wondered if you had any idea of how much that was.

Mr. Blaikie: I'll endeavour to get back to the member on that with exactly—because we'd have to ask them exactly what they were spending. I mean we have the co-chair here, but we'll make sure we get the details on that for you.

Mr. Maguire: Mr. Chairperson, I asked a few questions about websites today and I appreciate this one, and I want to congratulate Mr. Bremner and Mr. Alex Peters in regards to being the co-chairs of the foundation of Pimachiowin Aki itself. It's a great project, and I think we need to look at, you know, everything we can do to develop that particular area of Manitoba, making sure that we do maintain the cultural heritage issues that we've talked about with the minister here today.

I think there's great potential there for development of cultures and heritages recognition which, of course, is great for those people in regards to maintaining their cultures and heritages, getting it more well known internationally, never mind focusing as we would, I think, basically, on Manitoba's position as well. Because we've got a lot of great things right here in our own province that more people need to know about, and this is one of them, and I appreciate the work that's being done to try to expand knowledge, I guess more than anything, into that area.

So I'm going to end, for a few minutes here, just with one last—I was—just in regards to annual reports because I was asking about them earlier. There's—I just wondered, the last website that I could find, the last annual report of Manitoba Conservation on the website was for '08-09. I just wondered if '09-10 and '10-11 would be posted soon or if they're—or if I just missed them?

Mr. Blaikie: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, I mean, '09-10 is available. If it's not on the website, it's not unavailable; it's just unavailable on the website. So if the member would like a copy. And, of course, '10-11 is still being prepared because it just ended.

Mr. Maguire: So can he—does he have any idea when the '09-10 one would be posted? Would it be fairly soon or are you going to do them both together?

Mr. Blaikie: Yes, I'm not—I can't say when it will be posted. I think where it is posted, it's not posted on our website per se. Is it posted on Department of Finance's website? But it's not because the report isn't done or available, so, I don't know, do you have it, and you just want to know why it's not on the website, or do you want a copy of it?

Ms. Erna Braun, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Mr. Maguire: No, I was just curious why it wasn't on the website, and I turn it over to my colleague from Pembina here for a moment in regards to an issue there and—

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): Madam Chair, and I'm going to—the critic and I actually talked about this and I'm going to lay out a problem that I have with a constituent, or that he has, rather, and then you can determine as to whether this is your department or not. I guess that's the way I'll start it. But it has to do with an issue that's been taking place over a period of about 10 years, and it's called the Morden east drain.

Now, the landowners along this property had problems with the—Morden and them pumping the waste water, or the storm water, rather, into a lagoon which runs into a ditch, which they did not get the permit to do this. In fact, the permits that they got were to run in different direction.

And so the landowners, several years ago, wrote a letter to the Town of Morden. And the Town of Morden responded by saying that they knew that they were in violation of what they were doing; however, they could just sue the town. Well, this is not what the landowners were wanting to do. And so they have been working together with Jeanette Kelly [*phonetic*], I guess it is in that department—I'm not sure if I pronounced her word correctly—or their name correctly, but—and so, I know that she's been encouraging the town of Morden to get a permit for this, and they have not done it. And it's—the landowners have lost a lot of property over the years plus, of course, crops that's involved in this. So the concern here is simply encouraging and wanting the town to have the water go towards the creek where it is destined to go. They did get a permit for that, but they did not capitalize on that permit. So this is the issue and something does need to be done with it, but I'm just wondering if the minister could have his department look into that, if that is, in fact, a part of his jurisdiction or not. Thank you.

* (16:20)

Mr. Blaikie: Yes, Madam Chair, I'm told that Water Stewardship is the department that licenses drains, and that once licensed, it's MIT that maintains them. So, and the person that you referred to that the—either the landowners or the town is dealing with, I can't remember exactly which, is not someone who works in our department. So, it doesn't sound like it's Conservation, but I'll certainly undertake to—you know, we have the details as you described them—to find out who in other departments, in addition to the person that's already involved, you should be talking to in order to try and solve this problem for your constituents.

Mr. Dyck: Thank you, Madam Chair, and, yes, I appreciate that. And I think the frustration that has been out here is the landowners have been told, you know, to go to different departments and never really were able to deal with the issue, and this has gone on for many years. And, as things draw out, another year has gone by and we're into that same problem again. So I would appreciate that if the minister could—and his department could give me that information as to the correct area to go, so that this problem could be resolved.

Mr. Blaikie: I've asked people here to run it down for you and get it back to you. Okay?

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Carman): Madam Chair, as a result of the extreme wet conditions we've had the last couple of years, we've got some municipal lagoons that are facing some emergency capacity problems, so they're requiring emergency discharges. Could you outline for me the process that a municipality needs to go through to apply for—conditions of applying for an emergency discharge?

Mr. Blaikie: Yes, Madam Chair, you know, a request for an emergency discharge are made by municipalities who have a problem. They're made to the—Manitoba Conservation, and once an emergency discharge request is made by the municipal body, the request is reviewed, and if valid, the appropriate condition of the licence is suspended and a licence suspension is issued regarding how the discharge should be managed. Typical conditions might be discharge only from a secondary cell; discharge, usually to allow two feet of free-board in the secondary cell; discharge to occur over a time period of a number of days; mandatory sampling required, et cetera. I'm just giving you a kind of a—the kinds of things that are—that often accompany permission or alteration of a licence in order to permit an emergency discharge.

And I'm told that over the past two years, the vast majority of emergency discharge requests have been denied, but some have been granted in just recently because of the high-water situation that some municipalities have found themselves.

So you have to choose between a sort of a devil and the deep blue sea between discharging from a—discharging effluent that's not quite ready to be discharged or running the risk that it's going to overflow the—because of the conditions that the honourable member has described—going to overflow the lagoon and you have to deal with that problem. So some have been [*inaudible*].

Mr. Pedersen: Thank you for that. And if—I understand there are specific tests that have to be done in regards to that, and if you could even provide those to me in writing after rather than—if it's rather lengthy. If not, you can do it now.

But—and the other question, then, part of that, is there—are there new requirements this year that were not present in past years in terms of tests required before the discharge is either granted or not granted?

Mr. Blaikie: Last question first: no, there's no new conditions this year.

I'm not sure if this would answer completely what the honourable member is looking for, but current protocol generally dictates that after an emergency discharge has been granted—this is after so this is not how you get there, I guess—a director's order is issued to the municipal body to obtain the services of a consultant to review the municipal infrastructure, determine the cause of the need for an emergency discharge, and recommend action that can be taken to prevent or mitigate the need for future emergency situations. But that's sort of after the fact.

So I'm not sure what else is required. Presumably, when people ask for an alteration of their licence to permit an emergency discharge, the situation that they present to the department is analyzed and a decision is made as to whether or not those conditions justify an emergency discharge.

Mr. Pedersen: So is this engineering assessment, is this something new or was this always been in place? [*interjection*]-Post discharge, the need for an engineering assessment of the sewage system.

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

Mr. Blaikie: Yes, Mr. Chairman, the post-discharge situation can vary depending on what the

department's analysis is of, you know, what caused the emergency situation. But if, in the view of the department, there's—there is some kind of an engineering or structural problem that's either identified as having been there for a while or, for that matter, is something new that's developed, then this requirement to hire a consultant and to, you know, produce a report as to what needs to be done—I mean, the basic goal here is to make sure that, if people need to make an emergency discharge, that we want to have the kind of follow-up to make sure that they don't have to ask us again next year or the year after. So to get them to remedy whatever the problem was that caused that in the first place.

Now, if sometimes it's weather, you know, we can't necessarily do anything to deal with weather or with strained capacity as a result of weather. So it may not—there may be situations in which an engineer—you don't need an engineer to tell you that it had to do with too much water.

Mr. Pedersen: Yes, in this specific case, it's the municipality of St. Claude—town of St. Claude which has their municipal lagoon. I would suggest that 44 inches of rain last year has certainly provided some different circumstances for them and we certainly hope we don't see that again this year.

* (16:30)

But my information, and perhaps the minister, Mr. Chairperson, and his deputies could clarify this, but what I'm told if—at least tell me if I got the right information. In order to do a release of any kind, whether it's emergency or regular, you have to do a biochemical oxygen demand which is short—called a BOD, and a fecal and total chloroform count before any release, emergency or regular. However, the—and the—so the municipality did that but I am told—and I'm just asking—they're now being told that they have to do a test for ammonia and PH and the temperature of the water at the time of sampling.

And when they were asked—when they asked the department why they had to do this, they were told that it was to protect the fish. There isn't a fish within seven miles of this particular lagoon, so it seems to be—obviously, it's not taking into account a specific case. And I understand that when your lagoon is near a river or near a creek or near a water body that—you know, we can understand that. But it seemed that—it seemed a little heavy-handed by a department on this.

And then they're telling them they have to do an engineering assessment of their sewage system and, again, I just remind you that we had 44 inches of rain last year. The year before was not quite that much, almost as much, and it has—they've had problems in ground pressure, not being able to reduce their third cell enough in the fall in their normal release. They couldn't release enough water out of their third cell last fall and the fall before and that's what's put them into this emergency release situation.

So I'd certainly ask if the department can check into this. And, you know, common sense just kind of seemed to go a bit out the window here—and to do—have to do an engineering assessment. Like, I can understand that if they've had to have a number of emergency releases. I asked the town. They said they had, in memory, one emergency release in previous—years ago, so this isn't an ongoing system. But, if you're going to demand of them to do an engineering assessment now, it's very difficult on a small municipality and they've already—they did put in a plastic liner in about 1995-96, something like that, and they're still paying for that, which cost them a million dollars, and they're still paying for that.

So I just ask the department if they would take a second look at this and correspond with the municipality and—in regards to this particular situation.

Mr. Blaikie: Just—can I just ask what municipal—how—you said it's St. Claude, but has the municipality got another name?

Mr. Pedersen: It's the town of St. Claude. They are their own municipality. They're within Grey municipality, but the town of St. Claude is its own municipality.

Mr. Blaikie: When was the request made? Do you know?

An Honourable Member: Just this past—oh, sorry.

Mr. Chairperson: Honourable member for Carman.

Mr. Pedersen: Sorry, Mr. Chairperson, we're moving too fast for you.

The request was just made—I received notice April 23rd and—of this—like, two weeks ago, and the request was done—this exchange of information back and forth had already happened, so I'm assuming it's about April 15th. And, if I may add, they normally run, you know—or obviously they always run under the rules where ice has to be off so that you can have the sun and wind turn the water in the third cell, and

all the rest, but, obviously, we're a little late on getting rid of the ice this year, and so that was another reason for the emergency request. So, just, if you would check on that and get back to the municipality.

Mr. Blaikie: Yes, I think that's the commitment I'll have to make. I mean, obviously, we don't have the details of that situation at hand and we'll look into it, and either people from the department will get back to you or I'll get back to you, or whatever. Okay?

Mr. Maguire: Yes, just a couple of quick questions in regards to the Regional Services and Parks, the special investigations unit and the canine team. Just wondering where these units are currently based and how many staff are dedicated to special investigations.

Mr. Blaikie: Yes, there's two canine units, I think, as you indicated and one operates in the western part of the province, stationed in Grandview, and the other one operates out of the Interlake. What town is it out of? I think it's Lundar, but we can double-check on that, but the one in the Interlake and one in the west.

Mr. Maguire: Can he just indicate, I guess, the number of animals involved, the number of dogs that are used in the program and whether or not there's an expectation to put one in western Manitoba? I guess I would be thinking of the triangle that you'd form in that area if you had one in Brandon or something like that.

Mr. Blaikie: Well, the new one, the one that we announced last year, is deployed in Grandview near Dauphin so that it can—you know, and it's a movable unit. The dogs—dog can be transferred around where it's needed, where the services of the canine unit are needed on the west side of the province. So we've got one on the west side and one in the Interlake, and I think the one on the west side can—serves the area that you describe.

Mr. Maguire: Yes, so are there canine handler positions established there then? That would go with the dog then, obviously.

Mr. Blaikie: A unit is comprised of an NRO and a dog, and we've got an NRO and a dog in Grandview and an NRO and a dog in the Interlake, to—the two units.

Mr. Maguire: So the work that they do, is it based on tips? Is it—or is there a strategic plan to the locations of them, that sort of thing? Or how do they determine where to position them? Is it to do with

where the people live and how the handlers work or are there main corridors, that sort of thing, that you're looking at? And while you're at that, what are the major offences, I guess, that they're looking for?

* (16:40)

Mr. Blaikie: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Well, in terms of what the canine units actually do, I mean, their primary purpose is to deal with enforcement on the fish and wildlife side, though from time to time they are also—the department of these units might help out the RCMP if there is a special request to do so for a—on a search and rescue situation. But, primarily, it's one of enforcement and then, you know, this is a matter of whether you might get a tip or you might have a highway checkpoint, and the cars—the dogs can, you know, they can smell stuff that's stuffed away in a fender that you and I can't, or wherever it is. And we had a demonstration of that when we were out here—when they were out here last summer. The dogs were showing off their olfactory powers in terms of finding things that had been hidden.

They are also used in terms of retrieving evidence. Sometimes people are apprehended or—at night and the evidence has been disposed of, and the dogs are—come in handy in terms of retrieving evidence that NROs themselves might find hard to retrieve.

And then there's the public, sort of, educational dimension of it. They also do a lot of work with groups like Cubs and Scouts and other organizations, and it's an opportunity for the department through the interest, the obvious interest that young people would take in the dogs—the two of them—one of them is named, I think, Fauna, and the other is named Rebel. Rebel was the new one, if I remember correctly. *[interjection]* He's a rebel with a cause, yes. He's trying to find poachers.

So, anyway, it's an opportunity to relate to youngsters in terms of conservation and the importance of preserving our fish and wildlife and protecting it from improper exploitation.

Mr. Maguire: Yes. Thanks. Well, not to make a joke of it, but at least it wasn't flora and fauna—fauna and flora. *[interjection]* Yes.

Page 50. The expected conviction rate in this—from these units is about 80 per cent, it's expected. And I just wonder if the minister can indicate if they're meeting that target or that's an actual number, and just the success rate of these investigative units

in terms of subsequent prosecutions in regards to that as well.

Mr. Blaikie: Yes. We don't have a statistic for this year. I think the 80 per cent that the member is referring to is in the literature that's provided by the department, and that's based on past practice or past experience as to what the rate of conviction is and our, you know, expectations of what—that the future will mimic the past.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yes, thank you. My first question is in relationship to the climate change. The Auditor General's produced a report which clearly wasn't very pretty there, and there was identified a 2.6-megatonne gap in terms of what's needed to achieve the targets. And, in the report, the minister's or departmental response was that the minister is working to provide an updated climate action plan.

Can the minister indicate when that will be released, and what's going to be the major components?

Mr. Blaikie: Yes, well, first of all, I think with respect to the Auditor General's report of the department, you know, welcomed the Auditor General's report and thought that she had actually provided some good analysis and advice as to how the department could operate more—in a more focused way.

The other thing, if I remember correctly, was she talked about the need for us to maybe have more Manitoba-specific ways of measuring our performance in terms of greenhouse gas emissions. And that's also something that we not only accepted, but welcomed, because, as the honourable member might know, that—at the moment, we're dependent on ways of measuring Manitoba's contribution to fighting climate change that are sometimes developed in places where they don't particularly—where there isn't an appreciation of the specific sort of Manitoba context.

But, having said that, in terms of an updated climate change action plan, that is something that's still in progress and not available at the moment. What we can say is that in terms of meeting goals, we expect that we will meet the target that was set by the—that was put in legislation for 2010, which is that our emissions would be less than our emissions in 2000. And we are—we expect to meet that target.

Mr. Gerrard: I look forward to receiving the updated report as was committed to—by the

department and the minister in the departmental response to that report.

I note that Manitoba has been signed on to the western climate change initiative and in follow-up in terms of your comments about it being essential to, you know, have an approach which measures—which is consistent with, you know, the agreements that we're part of. And my understanding is that the western climate change initiative is—part of that is reporting emitters which are of greater than 25,000 tonnes.

And right now, in the national reporting, the level is—emitters which are greater than 100,000 tonnes. So when will the minister be moving to reporting at the 25,000 tonne?

*(16:50)

Mr. Blaikie: My understanding is that what the honourable member's talking about is something that would happen in the course of establishing the cap-and-trade system that the members of the W—of the Western Climate Initiative are committed to as a group. And what's going on here in Manitoba now is that we've had a consultation on cap and trade as an idea. We didn't put forward a particular system, but we invited many stakeholders and—to comment on what they thought of the whole idea of a cap-and-trade system, and that—I think that consultation ended at end of March, around in there. And what we're doing right now is sort of analyzing all the responses that we got because there actually was quite a significant feedback, if you like, from various sectors of the economy as to, you know, whether they supported it or they supported it but they had these concerns or whatever.

And so that's where we're at now, and it would be at some stage further, you know, further along the line, so to speak, when we'd make decisions as to which emitters would be designated in the way the honourable member spoke of. And it's a bit of a moving target, for that matter, because I think you mentioned the 100,000 figure and I'm told that the federal government has recently actually lowered that themselves to 50,000.

So these are decisions that we're going to have to make in the context of whatever policy decisions are made coming out of the cap-and-trade consultation.

Mr. Gerrard: Part of the plan that the government has put forward is—involves a carbon tax on coal. When will people be required to start paying that carbon tax on coal?

Mr. Blaikie: I mean, there was a \$10/tonne of carbon dioxide-equivalent tax on coal was reannounced in the April 2010 budget, and that is effective January the 1st, 2012. And a ban on coal use for space and water heating will become effective on January the 1st, 2014.

Mr. Gerrard: Let me move to a question on forestry. On forestry, it's my understanding there's no new long-term forestry plans or environmental reviews or public hearings for a forest company in Manitoba since 1997. When is the minister planning such—to have, you know, present such plans and have public hearings and so on?

Mr. Blaikie: Yes, well, I guess the first thing that comes to mind, at least the first thing that came to my mind, is that we've had a major development in the forestry industry in Manitoba with the closure of the Tembec mill, and that's a plan that we would have been in the middle of at the moment, but the member knows what happened. And so that—the Tembec plan is no more, so to speak.

The one that's under preparation at the moment is the Louisiana-Pacific plan, and that should be ready to be submitted to the government very, very soon.

Mr. Gerrard: Yes, just a question about the forestry inventory that's being conducted, I mean, because this is very important in terms of assessing the resource and so on. I mean, my understanding that one of the things which is very important is having a series of sample plots around the province that can be monitored closely. So how many sample plots has the Province got, and can the minister provide details about how these are being monitored?

Mr. Blaikie: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, I'm told that there are literally hundreds of sample plots throughout the province. Some are permanent and some are temporary, that are created only for getting information that's needed on a temporary basis. We do some with the federal government, as well, in the north. But, if the member would like an actual sort of numerical summary of exactly how many there are and where they are, we can provide that to him, if he's—

Mr. Gerrard: Yes, I thank the minister and I look forward to receiving that. That would be very helpful.

The next question has to do with—caribou's now covered under the endangered species. And what are the minister's plans in terms of protecting calving

grounds, migratory grounds, winter grounds and so on for caribou in the various parts of Manitoba?

Mr. Blaikie: Well, Mr. Chairperson, I mean, the first thing to do was to declare them an endangered species, and the follow-up to that is to prepare a strategy. And with that in mind, we sponsored the workshop that took place in the winter. We had people from all over the world here, if I remember correctly. And the information gathered there and the suggestions gathered are being fed into the process, if you like, and we hope to have a strategy as soon as we can.

Mr. Chairperson: With apologies, the time now being 5 o'clock, I have no choice but to inform the committee that I am interrupting proceedings, and our section of the Committee of Supply will resume sitting tomorrow at the bright and early hour of 10 in the morning.

FAMILY SERVICES AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

* (14:50)

Madam Chairperson (Marilyn Brick): This section of the committee of supply has been dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Family Services and Consumer Affairs. Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber?

We are on page 80 of the Estimates book. As previously agreed, questioning for this department will proceed in a global manner.

The floor is now open for questions.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Consumer Affairs): Just to brief on outstanding matters, I wanted to confirm Nancy Anderson is the deputy registrar general, district registrar of the Winnipeg Land Titles Office; Barry Effler is the head of the Property Registry. That relates to comments made on May 3rd. And, further to—I said I would—further to an undertaking to have more information on the direct deposit program, the direct deposit usage was 63 per cent in March of 2010 and, as I mentioned, is now at 78 per cent, which is getting very close to meeting the target we set for ourselves of 80 per cent.

The effort that has gone into promoting direct deposit for EIA participants in the last year or so includes promoting direct deposit through information mail outs; providing support to people to get the identification they need to open a bank account; providing direct deposit forms with

applications for EIA; working with some banks to see how we can best get people linked to banking services; and partnering with SEED Winnipeg to provide financial literacy training. And, of course, the whole objective is recognizing that direct deposit is safe, reliable and convenient, and we'll continue to promote it for EIA participants.

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): And I just want to thank the minister for that information, and I also would like to welcome the deputy, Grant Doak, to the table today and glad to see him back safe and sound, and, hopefully, the trip was one that was worthwhile and would bring something back to Manitoba that—or some things back to Manitoba that might be able to be used as a result.

I'd like to ask a question around the family violence prevention area and would like to indicate, as I've reviewed the grants to external agencies over the last number of years, I see that there is, in many instances, they—an almost flat increase in operating expenditures. In a few instances there's a slight increase, but in many instances there's been a flattening of the support to external agencies in this area, and I wonder if the minister could indicate why that might be. Is there not a need? Is there a decreasing need for violence prevention programs in the province and would that be the reason that operating grants haven't been increased?

* (15:00)

Mr. Mackintosh: The member will note that on the line External Agencies, there is some adjustment to the External Agencies, but I will also note that there is no adjustment for the division internally.

The objective has been to significantly invest in family violence over the last number of years. And I think the member will note from the record of investments in family violence prevention that there have been double-digit increases, for example, from '07 to '09. I have a note here that showed the funding for External Agencies up by 12.4 per cent, \$1.3 million, and that is just for operations, but also was part of the investment in family violence. We made an historic commitment in the fall of '07 for shelter security and for children exposed to violence, as well as the operations that go to the challenge of workforce stability and training.

We established, for example, the At the Roots program launched in '06 to target funding, new funding for children who are exposed to violence, recognizing that they were significantly at a risk for

later being both perpetrators and victims of domestic violence and trying to get involved and stop the cycle. That was entirely new funding and has been distributed to existing resources like shelters and resource centres, for example, and Wabnung here in Winnipeg to design and develop different approaches for interventions for children.

I say that with some passion. I think that was an important move forward. And I, as well, I want to just thank Marlene Bertrand who was in office at the time when I was interested in pursuing this, and she kind of beat me to this, recognizing that there was a need to target more funding for children, in addition, of course, to the very fundamental and overwhelming need to support the safety of women.

The program, as well, has seen increases for particular strategies, awareness campaigns, for example. There's a workplace initiative that was launched in the partnership with the chambers—the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce. There's a technology safety initiative with regard to cyberstalking that has been launched. And there are still some security upgrades going on now, rather than just at shelters, looking at women's resource centres.

The budget this year also includes enhanced support for what's called the MAPS program. And, as well, from time to time there are some crunches that some of our programs face, and we try our best to deal with those as they arise. I think the only other point I'll say in answer to the question is we're continuing to look to see at how we can strengthen our supports for victims of family violence.

And, while there has been some holding of the line in terms of our internal operating and last year there was attempts to hold the line on the external agencies grants, the number of shelter bed nights does not appear to be increasing. In other words, the demands at the shelters do not appear to be increasing. I do have some numbers, for example, to share with the member where we see for one shelter, one of the larger shelters, quite a significant change from '05-06 where there were 12,550 bed nights to '09-10, a projection of 8,095. We're seeing that at more than one shelter. Women in second stage housing is a number—another one where the bed-night use is down very significantly. In fact, we're getting rather alarmed at lower bed use there where it—I understand from the last numbers I was given, they're at less than half capacity.

So I hope that answered the question for the member. I do see here, now, I've been passed a note that since '01-02, we've been increasing our investments in this area by 34 per cent, and it looks like it is a dollar amount of \$3.3 million. So, with the attempts to hold the line last year, and moving ahead with an increase this year to operating for external agencies of 1 per cent, effective November 1, I understand, we are, at least, in a period where we're not battling very high inflation numbers, at least. But we do recognize that some of the resources can face some crunches from unexpected costs, and that is why this budget we were able to move ahead with some increases for external agencies.

Oh, and, I think this is an interesting statistic to put on the record, though. I just have a broader number in terms of bed nights but—shelter bed nights in '01-02 were 46,970 across the system, and in '09-10, the final numbers were 38,738.

So I think, to just—the member was looking for a context about, you know, increasing demands, but we do see, of course, that there's important increases in some services provided through the resource centres, and we have to recognize when there are adjustments that are needed there. So I think we've been nimble, and I know, for example, with W.I.S.H., for example, they've been concerned about funding levels. And the department has been working on this one, looking at the grants and the funds that they've otherwise raised, making sure that they're being used appropriately; that the wages, for example, are within the guideline for the sector, because this is one area, social service supports, where the Province has been able to move towards a sector guide for wages right across the sector which provide some symmetry, if you will, some fairness within the sector for supporting the wages of those who work in this critical area. So I think that's as wholesome an answer or as robust an answer as I can provide.

* (15:10)

Mrs. Mitchelson: I just would like to ask a question on autism funding. And, in 2007-2008, the government set up an interprovincial or interdepartmental committee, I guess, on autism. Could the minister tell me who sits on that committee and when they last met?

Mr. Mackintosh: I've noticed a very strong interdepartmental linkage when it comes to autism supports across departments, and I've been in meetings even relatively recently with the

representatives. The Department of Family Services and Consumer Affairs does play an important role, as does Education and, indeed, the minister has had a very active role in working on the challenges of children with autism in the education system, Healthy Child Manitoba and Health.

I can say first-hand that I'm well aware of how the departments are working together in this way, and I will say, too, though, that the purpose of having the departments work together so that there are common strategies and communications and sometimes common meetings with some of the key stakeholders—for example, MFEAT is one group that has been very active in—and providing strong advocacy for those particularly that are enrolled in the applied behavioural analysis approach to supporting children, but, as well, the autism society, the Manitoba autism society and others, including our Education partners.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I did ask the minister for the names—maybe he could give me the names of the lead people in all of the departments that sit on that committee.

Mr. Mackintosh: We can get the updated list. The ones from our department that are involved in providing leadership are John Leggat and Ralf Margraf, and I certainly just know from memory—I don't know all the names of the representatives, but I do know that Joanna Blais is an Education rep that has been working on the applied behavioural analysis file for some time. But we'll get the other names for the member.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Can the minister indicate when they last met as an interdepartmental committee?

Mr. Mackintosh: I know there are ongoing meetings, across-departmental communications, sharing of documents, sharing of outreach, and I believe it's just ongoing. I don't know if the process is one only of just meetings. I think it's ongoing communications, email, sharing of draft documents, like I say, meetings with stakeholders like MFEAT, and involving the other key partner, which is St. Amant Centre. But I can say, first-hand, I know there's been a lot of activity in that regard, even very recently.

We've been able, as a result of this cross-departmental effort and the attention being paid to autism, that we've been able to significantly increase supports. In fact, it's my understanding that the Province funds supports for about 1,500—over

1,500 children, and I think there will even be more likely this year. And that is both predominantly in Family Services and Consumer Affairs and in Education. But there's as well, of course, I think, been one of the biggest line increases anywhere in the department, let alone with Education, for the stronger investments in children with autism. I think that there's been an increase of about 700 per cent, actually, since 1999 in autism supports.

So it's a very important area, one that is increasingly important in terms of not only investments, but making sure that we understand the latest science and service delivery. I just notice that the ABA Program alone, in '02-03, served 22 full year and 15—well, I guess we just go to the total, 37 children in that—in '02-03, and the Estimate as of '10-11 was 107, just for that particular program, of course, a very intensive program.

The one that has been shown, as a result of all the studies, to appear to have some benefit. When there are some serious questions being raised about some of the other interventions or therapies or pharmaceutical approaches, some of it can be kind of discouraging, I think, but ABA, I think, does hold out some greater measures of success. And so we've really tried to pay attention to what the literature has been telling us, particularly about what ages it is most effective at when it comes to when the services should be supported.

So I might as well say, too, that aside from the preschool ABA delivered by St. Amant and the numbers I just talked about, the school-age ABA has gone from 12 in '04-05 to an estimate last year of '10-11 being 93. So very significant enhancements, even just on ABA services.

* (15:20)

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chair, I guess the question for me—I know the minister indicates there's ongoing work, but it was specifically stated in the annual report of Healthy Living, that an interdepartmental committee on autism has been formed. So normally speaking, committees meet. So I would ask the minister to provide for me the names of the people from Healthy Living, from Education, and from Family Services, and I would imagine those might be the three departments, or Health, I suppose, would be the fourth. Who is on that committee? When did they last meet? And a subsequent question would be: Is there any sort of report that would be generated as a result of these

committee meetings and is that a report that might be made public?

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, we can endeavour to provide a description of the activities in this regard and get that to the member. As I say, I caution her that the work of the committee is one that takes many forms in terms of moving ahead with the development of strategies and options for improvement, and whether it's just sitting around a table or not is one thing, and I've certainly seen that in my office, for one, and in the Minister of Education's (Ms. Allan) office in terms of some of the discussions that have been ongoing. But, as well, there have been ongoing communications. In fact, I know, myself, personally, have had ongoing communications back and forth with the staff when it comes to looking at where we can best make a difference for children with autism in Manitoba.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I'll look forward to getting the information on who is on the committee and, again, when they last met.

I just want to move on now to some Child and Family Services issues, and the minister and I have some healthy debate, I suppose you might call it, in question period from time to time around children in care, and I know that question period is sometimes theatre, and we don't necessarily get answers to specific questions that are asked, and I thought that this might provide a better opportunity for the minister to give some direct answers to some pretty serious questions that I have asked of him and also some communication that I've sent to him.

And I want to, at the outset, say that, from time to time, I have gone to the minister's office with some case-specific issues that are pretty heart-wrenching, and I have to say that, from time to time, the minister has been able to resolve the issue fairly expeditiously. So I want to say thank you to him for those instances where that has happened.

But there are some other pretty serious issues around safety and well-being of children, and when I'm talking safety, I'm talking about emotionally, mentally, developmentally too, for children that have been apprehended, for obvious reasons, and placed in alternative arrangements, very often, long-term foster placements. And for whatever reason, you know, as the Child Advocate said when we had her before committee, that on day one, when a child is apprehended, a permanency plan should be started. And, in many instances, we have children that have been in long-term foster placement for a year, two

years, three years, and there has never been a plan started, and then, all of a sudden, there appears to be a plan come out of nowhere where those children should be moved very quickly to a new circumstance and situation.

And I know the minister likes to stand up and indicate that, you know, I don't support family reunification. And nothing could be further from the truth. If it's safe, if it's healthy, if it's developmentally the right thing for a child, I have no problem with that. But, when I see practices that might jeopardize the bonding that a child has done and the developmental regression of a child because that reunification hasn't been done appropriately, then I have concerns. And those are the kinds of issues that I've brought to the minister's attention.

And I am somewhat disturbed that, in some instances, the minister, for whatever reason, hasn't taken the issue seriously or hasn't been able to get to the bottom of the issue and ensure that the proper process has been followed, that the proper plan is in place, that children have been seen as they should have been seen, and has he—has indicated that every child will be seen every time. There are instances where children haven't been seen for six or eight—or eight months and then, all of a sudden, there's a call two days before a child is to be moved for a weekend visit to a strange community, picked up by strangers that they have never met and visiting with family for a weekend—family in a completely different community that they have never met or have never had the opportunity to have more than an hour or two-hour supervised visit.

And those are the kinds of things that are happening in the system. And the minister knows that, and I know that because I hear those things. And there have been emails and letters that I've received from foster parents that I've sent to the minister. And it appears to take an awful lot of time for the information, or for any response to come back from the minister. And then when the response does come back, it's not satisfactory; it's not adequate.

And, Madam Chairperson, there's one instance and one case that I really need some answers on, because I do know that the department has spent an awful lot of time dealing with the issues and there hasn't been a resolve to the issues.

And it goes back to a case where, in January, two children that have been in long-term foster placement were taken for a four-day weekend visit and never returned to the foster family. And the

foster family questioned and asked and went all kinds of different places trying to get some answers as to what happened. And, in frustration, they called me and I—they were from out-of-town. They call and so I attempted to advocate on their behalf to get some answers.

And the department was kind enough, was good enough to agree to meet with that foster family. And, you know, this foster family was from out-of-town, but they came into town and the department spent several hours with them one day and, in fact, asked them to stay over in Winnipeg for another day because they wanted to spend more time. They had the authority that was involved and the department, and they spent hours dealing with this family, listening to their story. And that family left with some sense that they were going to get some answers, and that was in February. So that was a month after these two little girls had gone for a weekend visit and had never been returned. And that goes against any plan.

And I know that the department had some concerns at the time, and I know that legal counsel from the department was even there at the meetings, because there was concern. And I know that when I wrote to the minister, when the foster family went home back out-of-town and didn't get any answers back from the department, I wrote to the minister. And the response back from the minister indicated that he was going to bring the Child Advocate in to review the case. So he must have, himself, had some concerns, because this is not a natural process. Unless there are some concerns, why would he bring the Child Advocate's office into the review process?

Now that was back in February, Madam Chairperson, and I had a pretty quick response back from the minister and he indicated the Child Advocate—that was mid-February.

*(15:30)

And I'd like to ask the minister today, because he did send me a copy of the letter that he sent to the Child Advocate's office asking for an urgent review. I'd like to know if that urgent review has taken place and whether he's received a report.

Mr. Mackintosh: I had some information shared with me about the allegations raised by the foster parents here, and I'll say at the outset that, while there may be almost 5,000 foster parents in Manitoba, each and every one of them is important,

not only to a child, but important to the foundation of child welfare in Manitoba.

And, whenever there are allegations raised that raise questions about whether it's respect for foster parents or the application of standards for the protection of children that are of concern, it's important that there be appropriate responses. And so this situation, while it may be somewhat unique, I think every time we have allegations like this, they have to be taken seriously and you have to make inquiries to determine what, in fact, was the situation, what is the view and the facts of the matter.

The background, whether it's—and I know from time to time when you have over 9,000 children in care, you will have very differing circumstances when it comes to the relationship between agencies or the worker, specifically. Sometimes when there's new workers, and sometimes when there's workers that have been assigned to a case for some time or a foster family for some time, that there can either be a breakdown in relationships, there can be a breakdown in communications. But none of that can ever excuse veering off of the standards that are in place, but sometimes it does provide explanations that have to be addressed.

Some of that may have been at play here, but I am not one to know all of the circumstances, which is why I thought it was important that, in addition to the involvement of the branch and the hours that they have put into dissecting or attempting to dissect what occurred here, and the regular contact with the foster parent–foster family that I understand occurred, it was important that there be some outside assessment of this one. Particularly recognizing the need to keep our eye on the fundamental question always, which is the best interests of the child.

So that's why I—we asked the Children's Advocate to look at this, and we will make an inquiry to determine if Children's Advocate is prepared to provide any status update or advice to us, recognizing, as well, that we do have a new advocate, but we'll make that inquiry.

The foster family understand—does have appeal mechanisms available, and I've been advised that that may, in fact, be pursued by the foster family. And, of course, in cases like this where there was a—I'm advised that there was a strategy or a plan that had been developed to return the children at some point. There are questions raised about whether all the proper procedures were followed, and I think that remains the subject of the Children's Advocate's

review. But, as well, the court has a role in this case, I understand.

Madam Chairperson: Prior to recognizing the honourable member, I'm going to ask the Minister of Family Services and Consumer Affairs if he can introduce the additional staff that has joined us at the table.

Mr. Mackintosh: Joining us at the table is Claudia Ash-Ponce, who is the director of Child Protection for Manitoba.

Mrs. Mitchelson: And I welcome staff to the table.

Can the minister indicate to me what the review that the Child Advocate does will look like and what the end result of that review will be? Will it be recommendations to the government or to the department on what should happen? Are there recommendations that are binding or is there anything that would hold the department accountable to the Child Advocate's review?

*(15:40)

Mr. Mackintosh: Just was advised that the Children's Advocate's review is indeed under way. My understanding from the advice was that we had no information that it was yet concluded. We couldn't make further inquiries of the Children's Advocate and—to determine if she is prepared to give us further information on status. And I also was just told that the appeal by the foster family is under way.

In terms of the role of the Children's Advocate, of course, being a wholly independent voice, we have to recognize that and respect her approach to these matters. I just met with her. I was introduced to her in the last several days, and I certainly wish her well and, by the way, just as a side note, say it seemed to me that the standing committee did an excellent job because she has a very determined approach to protecting children and to strengthening the operations of the office of the Children's Advocate.

But the questions that we would expect the Children's Advocate to address are whether the standards—what the applicable standards are in the circumstances, whether they were followed and whether the agency and department and others acted appropriately, including the foster family themselves, in all the circumstances.

I'm also, though, advised that if the Children's Advocate had immediate protection concerns, the usual course would be that that would be information

that would be provided then to the director of child protection or the agency or both. And it would then be the—they would be a—it would be a consequence, then, of directions being pursued and issued.

Mrs. Mitchelson: And I guess, and I mean, I—oh—*[interjection]*

Madam Chairperson: The honourable Minister of Family Services and Consumer Affairs, to conclude your remarks.

Mr. Mackintosh: I'm sorry to interrupt, but at—the concluding point was that we have not received that notice of child protection, immediate child protection concerns from the Children's Advocate, at least to date.

Mrs. Mitchelson: And I guess I—the standards that are set out in the Child and Family Services under The Child and Family Services Act are the minister's standards. They're directives to agencies on how to conduct child welfare activity.

I question why we have to wait for a Child Advocate's review when whether the standards were being followed. Is it not the role and responsibility of the director of—or the executive director of Child and Family Services to ensure that the minister's standards are being followed? Why do we need the Child Advocate to look into that, and does the department do anything in any way to see whether standards are being met? And, if they aren't being met, is there any corrective action that's taken by the department?

Mr. Mackintosh: In this case the department certainly got involved in the matter and pulled together the parties, and made inquiries and attempted to—or took steps to determine the applicable standards and, where there were concerns, work with the parties for a resolution.

But, in all the circumstances here, we thought it was important to take this to another level, and that's why I think the Children's Advocate can take a—can fulfill an important role here in supplementing the efforts of the department and working with the authority.

Mrs. Mitchelson: And his department, then, did a thorough review of whether standards were being followed. Can the minister indicate to me, in this instance, whether standards were being followed?

Mr. Doug Martindale, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Mr. Mackintosh: With the information that was obtained from the foster family and from other sources, there was a focus on the nature of the transition planned for this situation and there were, as a result of the available information, some concern about the frequency of visits and the expectation of increased frequency of those visits, I understand.

So that was the question that is—was essential to the determination as to what unfolded. So that will be key to the Children's Advocate's review and—

Mrs. Mitchelson: And the minister indicated in one of his previous answers that the appeal from the foster family was under way. It's clear in the *Foster Family Manual* and regulations that, while an appeal is being considered, the children are to be returned or remain with the foster family. That has not occurred, and I'd like to ask the minister, why?

* (15:50)

Mr. Mackintosh: There was a question, I am advised, as to whether that would apply in the particular circumstances, given that I understand that there was some transition planning there. But that is a question, then, for the Children's Advocate to address, and whether that particular provision even applied in these circumstances.

Mrs. Mitchelson: But I guess the question becomes: When does the minister accept some responsibility for the legislation and the standards and the process that he has put in place? I mean, now he's—since January, these children who were taken for a four-day visit have never been returned to the foster family. That's four months ago. For four months now this foster family and these children have no answers. Now, the minister says that's up to the Child Advocate to determine, and he's asked the Child Advocate to deal with this in an urgent manner. I guess my question to him would be: What's urgent when it comes to the lives and the well-being of two innocent children, who I don't believe have had their best interests served? And I think that everyone, including the minister, has forgotten about the children in this process. They are the ones that are going to be damaged and severely damaged as a result of what is going on, and I don't know how the minister cannot take some responsibility and try to get to the bottom of it and try to get some answers.

Could he tell me today, you know, if someone walked into his house and said they were taking his kids for a weekend visit and never brought them back, what would he do? You know, this is a serious

issue. It's not the only issue where children are being treated in a manner under this minister's watch that could be very harmful to them and their ability to live the best possible life that they could live. And I guess I just need to ask the minister what he believes is acceptable when there is a dispute going on that puts the children in the middle and in limbo. What time frame does he believe is acceptable for these children?

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, the member is taking a view which the Children's Advocate can consider, if so be it, that the children should be returned to the foster parents. She uses a comparative about children being taken—my children—being taken from my home. This is the opposite situation, where children were returned to their biological family and, I understand, actually, other siblings. It was a situation where there was some transition expectations that were to be in play. And, in fact, the children have been returned to their biological family by an order of the court. So that is why it would be appropriate that the Children's Advocate take the role that is given in law to the Children's Advocate's office, which is one of independence and recognizing the best interests of the child to review the situation.

So we think that by the actions of the branch and the Children's Advocate then being called in specifically to this case, that the Province is being respectful of the need for a dispassionate and objective analysis and view and advice and, indeed, if necessary, any direction that may be necessary if there are immediate child protection concerns, as I raised earlier.

Mrs. Mitchelson: The minister just indicated in his last answer that the courts had ordered that the children be returned. So the courts did indeed make that determination and that decision? It is a court order?

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, those are the—that was the information I had, and I shared it in even question period with the member. This was a matter that was before the courts. The court had a key role to play, as it does in these kinds of matters. We understand that the court issued an order of—that whereby the children were to be returned. And I—as I—I'm just been advised and we can double-check, but the order did not contain conditions as, you know, caveats on that return. We can just double-check that.

So that is why this is a case that really does call for—if there's to be a review, the role of the Children's Advocate coming into play.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Well, you have a situation where a foster family that was a long-term foster family, and I think they want only to see what's in the best interests of the children happen. And they wanted to see an orderly transition which they certainly didn't see. But they wanted to see that.

They have never been told, to my understanding, that the courts ordered that the children be returned to the family.

Can the minister indicate to me whether anyone in his department has told that foster family and indicated to them that that was indeed the case? Why would there be any hope held out that an appeal process was under way and the minister didn't indicate in an earlier answer that the appeal process was under way. But if the courts have ordered the return of the children, how could an appeal still be continuing? And why wouldn't the foster family just be notified so that they could put closure to this?

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, first, I just had the—a more fuller description of the proceedings that the matter was heard before the courts. And on April 18th, 2011, the judge granted the agency a three-month supervision order, and I was somewhat incorrect with conditions. And the conditions include that the parents were to follow the recommendations made in a recent parent-child assessment completed by an independent professional.

So that is the information I have from the director of child protection.

In terms of the information to be shared with the foster parents, I'll ask the department now to look at what the proper protocol is. And, if in fact, there has been a lack of protocol or protocols not been followed in terms of that kind of advice, we'll ask them to make the necessary adjustments to their communications. But that is information I have.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I guess it's—I still believe that the process that was used and a four-month delay and having vulnerable children being in the middle of a situation where the minister can't ensure that his own legislation, his own standards, are being followed does a great disservice to children that need to be in the child and family services system because of unfortunate circumstances.

And I know that this is not the only case, and the minister won't hear the end of me on these cases, because there are more and more families that are coming forward. And these are families that aren't families that are wanting to be parents forever to

children. These are people that have opened their homes to children, wanting and hoping that those children will eventually be reunited with their families.

But they want it to be done in a way that's sensitive to the children, that gives the children an opportunity to move from one family setting to another with care and consideration and not to be moved in—with an overnight decision into a circumstance or an environment that they've never been exposed to before with complete strangers.

* (16:00)

And I know for a fact that there have been some families that have contacted us that have just said, well, if that's the way it's going to be, let it be, and we are not going to be part of a process that's going to confuse children to a point where they don't know which direction to turn. And my fear is that we're going to lose good foster families that have their hearts in the right place and want to see children thrive to their full potential and don't want to see the kinds of things that are happening.

And, you know, I don't want to paint the whole child and family services system with the same brush. But I do know that we've seen mistakes happen in the past. We've seen mistakes happen with Phoenix Sinclair, and we saw mistakes happen with Gage Guimond when we had a caring foster family that was concerned about the process that was used to move Gage Guimond and reunify Gage Guimond with family, and we saw what happened. And, you know, Mr. Acting Chair, I'm just not wanting to see another statistic like Gage Guimond in the system. So, when families that have cared for children raise red flags that indicate that they feel that the process for reunification isn't moving as it should, I take those concerns very seriously, and I would hope that the minister would take those concerns seriously too. And from time to time I wonder if he isn't burying his head in the sand and pretending that these circumstances don't exist.

And I would like to see, very much like to see a process that doesn't leave kids in limbo for four months before a decision is made, and I know, Mr. Acting Chair, that I'm not the only one that has made these observations.

And I will continue to bring cases forward, and, from time to time, these issues may become public issues. And the only reason they would become

public is if we find that the minister isn't taking the issues seriously.

And there are several kids that have died in care over the last number of years and I think we deserve some answers as to what happened. I do know that, in the case of Phoenix Sinclair, we saw several recommendations from a report. We've never seen the actual report, but we've seen the recommendations, pretty scathing report and recommendations after the death of Gage Guimond. But the minister's been very silent on reviews that have happened on cases after Gage Guimond's death. And I'd just like to ask him about a few of those, because I know that, again, in question period we don't get really the chance to ask a full question and get a full answer.

The case of Jaylene Sanderson-Redhead who died in care, she was a 20-month-old little girl whose mother was charged with second degree murder and, at the time, her mother, along with Jaylene, were residing in the Native Women's Transition Centre in the North End. And the minister did indicate, at the time, that there would be an investigation done into what happened at the Native Women's Transition Centre. I wonder if he could give me an update on what the results of that investigation were.

Madam Chairperson in the Chair

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, this is, indeed, a troubling tragedy for everyone and just a horrible crime. The court, it appears, did heed the position of the prosecution. If any—you know, if a sentence can ever—well, a sentence could never be sufficient to overcome this tragedy. We understand that that decision of April 20th may be the subject of appeal. At least there was some speculation in the media from the defence counsel. So we will see. I believe that the time is running still on that, and I haven't been advised as to whether an appeal will be filed.

So the criminal proceedings are one aspect of it, where there were police investigations and, of course, prosecution action following the tragedy. And, as well, the legislation requires the Children's Advocate to conduct a special investigation. I'm advised that our understanding is that that is under way. And we—but we have not received a report to date.

As well, the Chief Medical Examiner had a role in this one, and the Child Inquest Review Committee is a process that is in place in the Chief Medical Examiner's office to review circumstances of deaths

like this. And so, whether the Chief Medical Examiner calls an inquest is a decision that he would be left to make in consultation with the Child Inquest Review Committee. And the usual practice for the Chief Medical Examiner is to await the conclusion of legal proceedings. So I can't speak for the Chief Medical Examiner in that regard, but that is another option that may unfold, which would mean, then, that there would be a full public inquiry, judicially lead, by way of an inquest.

* (16:10)

Another analysis that has been launched is a review, an operational review of the Native Women's Transition Centre where the tragedy occurred, and that is being launched jointly with with skilled representation from both the child protection branch and the Family Violence Prevention Program.

The—I should just comment briefly on what we understand from our early inquiries were the circumstances of this—of the placement of the child with the mother. It was our understanding, subject to the outside reviews—and so this was preliminary and always subject to vigorous drilling down and determination by, particularly, the Children's Advocate—and that is that the child was placed with the mother, as ordered by the Court of Queen's Bench, on the recommendation of a doctor, a psychologist in this case, who completed a parental capacity and a psychological assessment of the mother. And it was our understanding as well that there were regular visits by workers and including, you know—and some relatively close proximity to the time of the child's death.

And I put this on the record to say that that continues then to raise questions, perhaps not ones—one that might at first come to mind. So when we have professional assessment and determination by many professionals, including social workers and, of course, lawyers and judges in this case, it does raise questions as to how can we better—still better predict murder; it comes down to that kind of question—and abuse.

That is why, of course, efforts are being relentlessly pursued to strengthen risk assessments, but it appears in this case that there was professional involvement. So we await, in particular, the Children's Advocate's review and we will see what decision the Chief Medical Examiner makes, and that may be within weeks, even. But, again, I can't speculate. We, as the member knows, in this province, leave that determination to the Chief

Medical Examiner, in terms of whether inquests are appropriate in circumstances, or not.

Mrs. Mitchelson: And when was the review started of—the operational review of the Native Women's Transition Centre by the branch and the family violence division?

Mr. Mackintosh: The department had indicated, earlier on, an interest in pursuing a review of the Transition Centre pending the conclusion of the criminal proceedings, clearly, to avoid any perceptions or allegations about interfering or, you know, interviewing people who may be the subject of trial proceedings. And so now with—it appears that a trial has, at least for now, been avoided. The work has begun on the process to look at the operations of the Native Women's Transition Centre.

I just had a note provided to me. The interdepartmental autism committee is comprised of Brent Epp from Education, who, I guess, reports to Joanna Blais, and Cheryl Osborne in Health, Leanne Boyd from Healthy Child, Ralf Margraf from Family Services and Consumer Affairs, as well as Allan Hendrickson-Gracie. The date of the last meeting was March 31 and the next meeting is May 6.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I thank the minister for that timely response.

So is the minister indicating to me, then, that the operational review of the Native Women's Transition Centre has not started yet?

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, I understand the terms of reference have been concluded. The individuals to do the work have been identified, and now that the sentencing hearing has taken place and a trial was avoided.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I guess my question would be that—I mean, the incident happened back in 2009. I'm trying to find the date here—July, I believe it was, of 2009. So can the minister—is the minister saying that there's been absolutely nothing done to try to find out what happened at the Native Women's Transition Centre until now?

Mr. Mackintosh: The Children's Advocate's special investigation would be launched at the time the Children's Advocate deems appropriate, so I can't speak to that. But I do understand that that work has already begun. So whether the Children's Advocate would share information with us in terms of the

timelines that were chosen, we could make efforts to ask if she wanted to share that with us.

But immediately following the tragedy, there was, in concert with the police, in co-operation, a child abuse investigation, and the child abuse investigation looked to determine whether there were any immediate actions that were necessary to—that responded to any concerns and that may impact on policies and procedures in place.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Back in July of 2009, when this incident happened, it's my understanding that the first—the Child and Family Services agency—that the northern authority in that—yes, the agency and the northern authority would both be undertaking reviews. Can the minister indicate whether the agency did a review, and has he seen any results from that review?

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, I'm advised that the child abuse investigation was conducted by ANCR, which would be the appropriate agency in the circumstances.

Mrs. Mitchelson: But when this event happened I know that—and I don't think the minister was quoted anywhere, but I know that his assistant deputy minister indicated that the agency will do their own review. It was also said at the time that the First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority would do their own review, and that the Child Advocate would do—advocate's office would do its own review. So there were three reviews at the time that, apparently, were going to be undertaken.

So my question would be, did the agency do the review that they were supposed to do, and has the minister seen the results of that review?

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, the agency involved here was the All Nations Coordinated—it was ANCR, and that's the agency that did the child abuse investigation. I just wanted to make that clear.

Mrs. Mitchelson: But I—my understanding was that it was the Awasis agency that had responsibility for this girl and the family.

Mr. Mackintosh: ANCR does the child abuse investigation in a circumstance like this, so if there was some misunderstanding, it was ANCR and can confirm that now.

Mrs. Mitchelson: So the minister, then, has received a copy of that review?

Mr. Mackintosh: It's my understanding that the child abuse investigation looks at protection concerns. They would look at the circumstances of the family. They would look at, not only what the circumstances of other children or siblings may be, but whether there were any other actions that are necessary in order to protect other children in the family. That would be the main focus, I understand. And the report goes to the director of child protection for follow-up.

Mrs. Mitchelson: So, Madam Chair, then the minister has received a report of the review that was done by the agency, the child protection branch has received that? I'm not asking for detailed information on the review. I want to know whether the review was done, whether it was completed and whether the minister and his staff have seen it and whether there was any action that needed to be taken.

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, as the minister knows, the child investigation reports don't go to ministers. They go to the director because they're dealing with the specific issues with regard to the specific family and not dealing with systemic issues.

Mrs. Mitchelson: So I guess, could the minister just ask his department, then, whether the review was completed and they received it?

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes.

* (16:30)

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chair, could the minister just find out from his staff when that was?

Mr. Mackintosh: The director can make the inquires and let the member know, yes.

Mrs. Mitchelson: And it was stated back then, in July of 2009, that the First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority would do their review. How would that review be different from the agency's review, and has it been completed?

Mr. Mackintosh: The northern authority launched a review of the Awasis Agency in this case, and that may be what the member is referring to.

Mrs. Mitchelson: There was a statement that was made in July of 2009 by the assistant deputy minister that said that correct processes and procedures were followed. She said the agency, the First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority, and the Children's Advocate will do their

own reviews, and that was related specifically to this case.

So I'm asking—so I think we're not talking about the same review process. I'm talking specifically about the Jaylene Sanderson-Redhead case, and so I'm just wondering whether that review was undertaken and completed.

Mr. Mackintosh: I think we've clarified the record. The child abuse investigation was done by ANCR as the appropriate agency. The Children's Advocate does the special investigation review, and there's an operational review by the department of the Native Women's Transition Centre. The northern authority is doing a review, an operational review of the Awasis Agency, and I'm advised by the assistant deputy that the authority review that she would've referred to would've been appropriately the Awasis review.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I have asked the minister some questions in question period about this case and in one of his answers—and I will quote from his answer—and I'm trying to recall which date this was. I don't have the date up at the top of the transcript that I have. But my question, and I believe it might've been last session when I had asked about accountability and public information about what went so terribly wrong in this case, and I know that the minister said, and I'll quote what he said: Right now there is a sentencing hearing that is pending in this case. And it is important to be reminded at this juncture that the Children's Advocate has full powers and has launched an investigation, as has the police, as has the branch, into the shelter where the woman was housed.

And I don't know if the answers today really reflect the answer that he gave in the House on that day, whether they're exactly the same answer, because I think he indicated that there hadn't been, to date, an investigation by the branch into the shelter where the woman was housed, unless there was a different type of investigation done other than an operational review.

So we have two different statements from the minister, and I'm wondering if he might just indicate to me which one is correct.

Mr. Mackintosh: I'm advised that the decision and, I understand, some communications with the Native Women's Transition Centre was held on—earlier on, following the tragedy. And a decision was made at

that time to proceed with an operational review of the Native Women's Transition Centre.

Of course, though, there were the necessary considerations that justice has to prevail and cannot be interfered with. And so the interviewing process of that review were pending the proceedings, the criminal proceedings.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thank you, Madam Chairperson, and it was a few years ago that the minister indicated that—with great fanfare—that every child would be seen every time. And yet when we look at this little girl, there was certainly evidence of long-standing abuse. It just wasn't just a one-time incident.

And I'm not saying that it was the responsibility of the Native Women's Transition Centre. But I guess the question would become, was he satisfied that this child was seen and assessed every time, as he's indicated publicly should happen by the standards that he has put in place.

Mr. Mackintosh: It's always important that when there are these tragedies that there be a recognition that the facts have to be as best deciphered from the circumstances. So the member put on the record a conclusion that she has made that there was long-standing abuse against the child by this mother.

* (16:40)

And if she has that evidence at hand, then I'd be prepared to hear that. But the early indications, again subject to the special investigation, but what I understood was reported from the criminal proceedings was that there was some indications of physical abuse in the days, in a week, or maybe two before the death. But again, those are facts that will be drilled down on. But I—just putting on the record that the member is drawing some conclusions that independent processes should be allowed to conclude and one of them being the criminal proceedings. And so I'm not aware of that being a finding in the criminal proceedings, from the information that I had at least. And if there is other information, then I would welcome that from the member, but again, too, the facts are that this was not a child in care. The mother was receiving services. She had supports around her. That is the known circumstances that have been brought to our attention.

Mrs. Mitchelson: And I do appreciate the clarification. The child wasn't in care and so that was something I really wasn't thinking about. And I also, if I put false information on the record, I apologize. If the minister has information, I may have been

thinking about another case where there was longstanding abuse. So I correct that and I apologize for anything I may have put on the record that might look like I was fabricating things. Because I must have been thinking about another case so I want to clarify that right at the outside—at the outset.

I want to move on and I will come back—well, maybe—just let me ask the question of the minister. When he says every child is seen every time, exactly what does he mean? Does he mean that standard, that every child should be seen on a monthly basis and that when those visits occur by social workers, that the child is actually looked at and examined? Is that what he says—is that what he means when he says every child's seen every time, that the standard should be followed, and that it is being followed, and that children are seen every time?

Mr. Mackintosh: I was suggesting here with staff, and I think they agree, that perhaps we could provide the standard to the member so she sees that it's—she will see then the full extent of it. There are some circumstances when there can be other ways of determining well-being of a child. But the fundamental, general standard is that when a child is to be seen by a worker, the child should receive a face-to-face contact.

Mrs. Mitchelson: And then, according to the standard, is that every child should be seen every month by a worker?

Mr. Mackintosh: The standard expects that there be monthly meetings with children in care, or monthly face-to-face contacts. I should be specific with that.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Does the minister have any indication from any of the reviews that have been done that that is happening in most instances, or what percentage of cases would that standard be being followed?

Mr. Mackintosh: The standard and, indeed, the mantra that the member talked about came from a very serious concern about a lack of adherence to what was an expectation, historically, and in that, when there are to be visits, the child—the purpose of that was to actually look—you have an observation of the child.

And so, given that very serious concern that had grown, the legislation, the standards, training and, indeed, some different options for monitoring the oversight of the application of that standard were developed. And there has been considerable effort

gone into enunciating that standard, and there is an expectation that it be followed.

And, of course, we know that when it comes to the application of standards and—the oversight has to be relentless. There are many pressures on workers; we know that. And I know that—and I've just been advised that there have been repeated communications to agencies about the importance of the standard and the need for it to be followed, and that will continue.

And, indeed, there have been more recent discussions and options developed in terms of incorporating a monitoring process in CFIS itself to make sure that this requirement is lived up to in the fullest way. Of course, any standard is an ongoing challenge, but this is—the development of the initiative represents a stronger emphasis on this and expectation that it be followed in all cases.

So the—I would say this—the application of all standards, including this one, are always dependent on efforts to address workloads for front-line workers. And the member knows full well the challenges over the last couple of decades, and those are the only decades that I'm familiar with here.

But it is our expectation now, with the new—let's put it this way: There have been historic investments in both front-line relief and workers. At the same time, there has been an increase in the number of children in care, although, last year, the increase was cut in half, so there's some optimism there. But the efforts to address workload relief are challenged by the ongoing number of children in care and the historic lack of response from the federal government on reserve resources, which now is moving in a different direction, I'm very pleased to say. And I'll give credit to the federal government fully and to Minister Strahl in particular.

*(16:50)

But now with the agreement for the new funding model, we have some new-found optimism now that we can provide even more resources to move ahead, which can only result in stronger adherence to standards by front-line workers, who will get more workload relief in the years ahead.

Mrs. Mitchelson: In September of 2010, I wrote to the minister after a terrible story about a six-year-old boy who suffered horrific abuse over several months at the hands of his mother and stepfather and he had sought help. Luckily he's still alive today. But he had sought help four times before, and was returned to

his abuser, before anyone took him seriously. Now this was a young boy that had been living with his grandmother and was returned to his mother and stepfather by Child and Family Services.

And I wrote to the minister because there were some very specific questions that needed to be answered, and I have as yet not received a response back from the minister. So I would like to ask him now whether he might be able to answer some of the questions. What review has been done and what information does the minister have that might shed some light on this case?

Mr. Mackintosh: This was such a heartbreaking case and thank goodness for these neighbours. So I know that after this incident became known, there were statements made, I think initially by police, about some of the follow-up actions that took place. And obviously, there were questions raised about whether everything that could have been done was done. I believe the police, at the time, said that there were some explanations given and so there were, I guess, some conclusions drawn. Whether that was appropriate or not, I think, are questions for all of us.

So, because of this case, even though it was not a child death here, it was appropriate that, in all the circumstances, there be an external review done. Because, of course, the Children's Advocate would not be, under the legislation, mandated to do a special investigation. So we called an unprecedented external review to ensure appropriate action was taken and can be taken in the future. One of the reviewers from the Phoenix Sinclair tragedy, Andy Kostner, from Ontario, was contracted, and I understand he's gone to work on that review. We haven't received that yet. When we do receive it—we also undertook to do another unprecedented action and that was to agree to forward it, then, to the Children's Advocate just for a second look and for her to follow up on any of the recommendations in there. And we thought that that one-two approach was called for, and we await that report.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chair, I just missed the first part of that, that the child—it was referred to the Child Advocate. But the other review was undertaken by who?

Mr. Mackintosh: I regret if I was speaking, perhaps, too—or not loudly enough.

There was an unprecedented external review called into this matter, and the person who was contracted to do the work was someone who, I think,

had gained the confidence of observers in Manitoba looking into the Phoenix Sinclair tragedy and circumstances around that.

His name is Andy Kostner, and he's from Ontario. I think that was the answer I was giving, and I concluded by saying that when the review is received, it will be immediately sent to the Children's Advocate. And whether—and the Children's Advocate will be invited to provide any comment, any oversight or may take the review in a further direction or a different direction—can do as she pleases to make sure that there was a thorough canvassing of what took place there because of these concerns.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chair, that was eight months ago, and I guess I might just ask the minister when he might anticipate or expect a report from Mr. Kostner.

Mr. Mackintosh: I've just asked officials to make inquiries to determine if, you know, Mr. Kostner can provide an expected date for receipt of the external review.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes, thanks, Madam Chairperson, and I find it a little disconcerting. I mean, we seem to be reviewing and reviewing, and the results of the reviews aren't known. And, you know, how long do we have to wait to try to find out what went wrong in these cases? Because if we don't have the results of a review or recommendations, how do we go about trying to fix the problems, if there happen to be problems throughout an agency or, you know, if

there needs to be some remedial action taken according to recommendations?

You know, how long do we have to wait? We seem to be having all kinds of reviews going on, and it seems to be months and months and years, and we don't ever seem to get any answers. And there's no sort of accountability, even for the recommendations that might get made. We have everything that's sort of shrouded in secrecy. Are the reviews going to be made public?

We do know that recommendations and reviews were made public when Gage Guimond was killed, but we seem to have all kinds of reviews. And every time we have a child death or a child that is—well, the only one circumstance where a six-year-old child didn't die was because he had the ability to run and try to protect himself.

I guess the question is—I mean, when are we going to have some accountability from this minister on what action has been taken on reviews and recommendations? We're not even seeing the results of the reviews, so we have no way to hold the government accountable for any action that they're taking to fix some of the problems that may exist within the system that is creating death and abuse that continues to happen within the system.

Madam Chairperson: Order.

The hour being 5 p.m., I—I'm interrupting the proceedings of this committee. This section of the Committee of Supply will now recess and will reconvene tomorrow morning at 10 a.m.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 5, 2011

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