



First Session - Thirty-Seventh Legislature

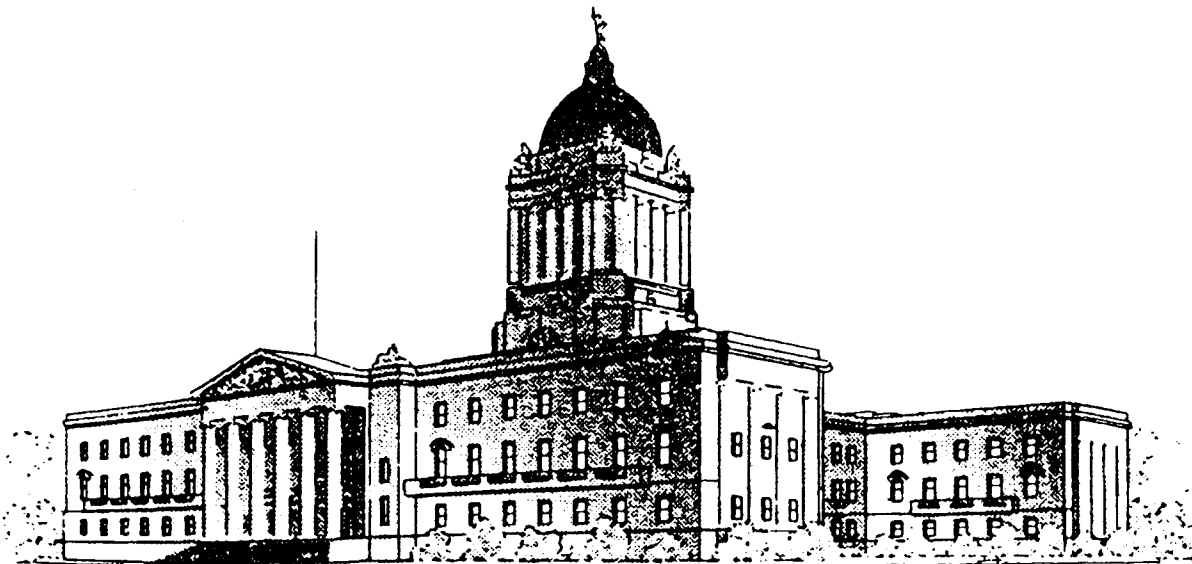
of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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



MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Seventh Legislature

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ASPER, Linda	Riel	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky, Hon.	Inkster	N.D.P.
CALDWELL, Drew, Hon.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
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DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	P.C.
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ENNS, Harry	Lakeside	P.C.
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GILLESHAMMER, Harold	Minnedosa	P.C.
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PENNER, Jim	Steinbach	P.C.
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TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
WOWCIUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 20, 2000

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

**PRESENTING REPORTS BY
STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

Committee of Supply

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

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

Motion agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill 4—The Elections Finances
Amendment Act**

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh), that leave be given to introduce Bill 4, The Election Finances Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le financement des campagnes électorales, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, by way of brief introduction, this bill, when it becomes law, will prohibit the donations to political parties by unions and corporations and restrict individuals to a maximum of \$3,000 donations per year. It will have reasonable limits on third-party activity during an election campaign and will continue to build on Manitoba's integrity on a level playing field during election campaigns.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 17—The Elections Amendment Act

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Ms. Friesen), that leave be given to introduce Bill 17, The Elections Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi électorale, and that the same be now received and read for a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, by way of introduction, this bill now removes from Cabinet the right to appoint returning officers for election campaigns and proposes, in its place, a non-partisan process where the Chief Electoral Officer will now appoint returning officers in the province of Manitoba. It encourages the participation of citizens, in a similar way to jury duty, to participate in election campaigns. We think, again, it builds upon the ability of Manitobans to participate in a non-partisan way in democracy.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the gallery where we have with us, from West Kildonan Collegiate, 70 Grade 9 students under the direction of Mr. Rick Kraychuk, Mr. Jay Macleod and Miss Terri Mackenzie. This school is in the constituency of the Honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak).

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

* (13:35)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

**Teaching Profession
Collective Bargaining Legislation**

Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, as the NDP move to appeal Bill 72, groups all across the province, such as AMM, MAST,

individual school divisions, parent councils and taxpayers, are mobilizing to express their concerns over the long-term implications of the NDP's political payback.

Mr. Speaker, to the First Minister: Has anyone in his government or in the Department of Education completed a cost analysis of what their proposed changes to teacher collective bargaining will cost taxpayers in year one, year two and year three?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): We have analyses from, I believe it is, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959, all the way up to 1996 when there is a consensus between trustees and teachers to prohibit teachers from striking, to prohibit the locking out of teachers so that we could have a made-in-Manitoba arbitration process that was fair and balanced. We have an over-40-year analysis of how well that has worked for the students, the parents and the educators of Manitoba, and that is why we believe in balance.

Mrs. Smith: Mr. Speaker, instead of the First Minister giving a non-answer, could he please answer for this House what the projections are of mill rate increases that will have to be sought to maintain the educational services that currently exist in the year 2000?

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, I believe the word "hypocrisy" is out of order; therefore, I will not use that word in this House, because my taxes, my school taxes and my home doubled in the 1990s under the former government's administration, and for the first time ever, my property taxes, education taxes, with the property tax credits that were introduced by this government, went down. Your taxes went up; our taxes went down. That is the record, and those are the facts.

Mrs. Smith: Mr. Speaker, is this First Minister willing to allow public hearings to travel throughout the province, seeing that this legislation impacts on all Manitobans, teachers, taxpayers, everyone?

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, since 1996 we have committed ourselves to repealing the breach of balance that was unilaterally—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have been consistent throughout the period from 1996 on at school trustee conventions, at municipal conventions and at teachers' conventions. I know this is interesting for members opposite. We actually said the same thing to each group in the same way.

Members opposite who have no regard for this Legislature, regrettably, may want to read Hansard where we said, when the bill was being dealt with, that we would repeal the bill. We thought the balance—this balance from the early '50s brought in by a former Liberal government between teachers and trustees—we have thought that that has worked very well for students. The key feature of this is that we do not have the right to strike for teachers or the right to lockout for trustees, but we have replaced that with an arbitration process which is good for kids, good for communities.

All we need is a balanced approach and prohibition of the right to strike and lockout for teachers. That is the made-in-Manitoba solution, that is the balance we promised before the election, and that is the balance we are going to deliver after the election.

Health Care System Nursing Shortage

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, according to the Manitoba Nurses' Union, Manitoba now has the worst nursing shortage in the country.

I would like to ask the Health Minister if he agrees with the Manitoba Nurses' Union's numbers, and if the nursing shortage has indeed grown to 1100 nurses since the NDP took office.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, when I stood up in this Legislature three years ago as an opposition member and asked the Government what they would do about the nursing crisis and the nursing shortage, the members on this side of the House said nothing. There was no nursing crisis. I asked, and we asked from our side of the House to do something.

That is why within the first few months in office, we put in place a comprehensive five-point nursing plan that is opposed by members opposite to deal with the nursing situation. I might add, since we have been in office there have been 121 nurses who have come back with respect to the Nurses Recruitment and Retention program, 98 have received upgrading, and I might add that there is 3 percent more full-time RNs in this province than there were last year. There is 5 percent full-time more LPNs since last year and 6 percent full-time more RPNs since last year.

* (13:40)

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on a point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Beauchesne's 417: "Answers to questions should be as brief as possible, deal with the matter raised, and should not provoke debate." The question was clear and concise and to the point. The Minister was asked if, indeed, the nursing shortage had grown to 1100 positions since he took office.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Health, on the same point of order.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I was responding to the question from members opposite. If the members opposite do not want to know what members on this side of the House are doing with the nursing shortage, that is at their own peril. But we took action.

Mr. Speaker: Order. On the point of order raised by the Honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on the answers to questions, I was under the understanding that the Minister was responding to the question.

But I would like to take this opportunity to remind the Honourable Minister that answers to questions should be brief. I was rising because the time was expiring.

* * *

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell us if 625 vacancies are in rural and northern Manitoba, as Wayne Byron of the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority has said recently on CJOB, that Winnipeg has 475 of the nursing vacancies?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, when we came into office, we used the same statistical basis for determining nurse vacancies as was done by the previous government. We used the same ratios and the same numbers because we wanted to have accurate assumptions that we could base it upon. The number of vacancies when we came into office was 700, and when we made our nurses plan announcement it was down to 600.

The number the Member is referring to is the part time, casual, et cetera, that were not figured into our calculations.

Mrs. Driedger: I guess I would like to go back to my first question then to this minister and ask him if he agrees with the Manitoba Nurses' Union's numbers, and if the shortage in Manitoba has indeed grown to 1100 nurses since the NDP took office.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, just two responses to that. One of the things we did when we came into office was, rather than sit back and do nothing as had been done for 10 years, we decided to take action with respect to matters. We opened beds. We increased the home IV program that provides care at home, that hired nurses. We increased cancer care treatment to provide cancer care, and that hired nurses. We opened the personal care home beds, and that required nurses.

One of the factors that is affecting this very dramatically is we did something very novel to members opposite. Rather than cut programs and cut beds, we actually expanded programs and we expanded beds, which took a greater demand off the system. We are very proud of that in terms of dealing with the health care system in this province.

Bostrom Report Recommendations

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Mr. Speaker, the Minister responsible for gaming often cites

the Bostrom report as a basis for his decision to massively expand gambling in the province of Manitoba. Now that the Minister has appointed Harvey Bostrom to the implementation committee, I would ask the Minister, who is failing to tell Manitobans that his government is ignoring significant issues identified in recommendations from the Bostrom report, this minister who is responsible for gaming, can he advise whether Mr. Bostrom has been directed to ignore some of his own recommendations, the same recommendations currently being ignored by his government?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister charged with the administration of The Gaming Control Act): Thank you very much for the question. It is indeed a pleasure today that certainly I announced the other day as well that Mr. Eric Luke has been asked to be the chair of the casino implementation committee. There are members of the AMC on that committee. There are also members of government, Mr. Harvey Bostrom and Ms. Liz Stephenson.

* (13:45)

Mr. Loewen: Mr. Speaker, the Minister again fails to answer the question. I would ask him if he agrees with the recommendation in the Bostrom report that states: "Proposals must demonstrate that all demonstrable material, issues and concerns of adjacent local governments have been dealt with prior to implementation."

Does he agree with that from the Bostrom report or not?

Mr. Lemieux: We as a government are not going to be forcing any casinos in any community that does not want one. We have made that absolutely clear throughout the debate with regard to this issue.

I know First Nations people as well want to work closely with the communities to ensure that not only First Nations people benefit as a result of the casino proposals, the casino initiative, but that the communities surrounding, businesses and so on, that they would benefit from these proposals as well.

First Nations Casinos Implementation Committee

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Minister if this implementation committee will be reporting regularly to Manitobans on their progress in an open and honest fashion, or will the Minister be using this implementation committee just as an excuse, the same way he used the selection committee as an excuse to hide questions from the public?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister charged with the administration of The Gaming Control Act): I again thank the Member opposite for the question. I know there is a difference between this government and theirs. You know, you just slap up a VLT in any gin joint in Manitoba, you also put Regent and McPhillips in place without consulting with anyone, and that is their approach.

We decided to have a depoliticized process, an independent selection committee to take a look at all the proposals. You go from 62 First Nations down to 12 proposals. Now we have 5. Now the ball is in their court to show that they are going to meet all the conditions for success and, if they meet those, then they have to pass the Manitoba Gaming Control Commission's strict guidelines, and then we will look at giving them a licence so they can then enter into contractual negotiations with the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, that is the difference, I believe, in members opposite and our government. We believe in the depoliticized process to look at the casinos and now we have that in place, and Manitobans, I am sure, appreciate that very much.

First Nations Casinos Gaming Agreement Compliance

Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale): Mr. Speaker, I will continue to ask a question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Over the weekend, we learned of events occurring within the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority that resulted in two proponents being ordered to find alternative operations managers. Last night, in discussions with some of the friends that were

here visiting from North Dakota—the senators in the Legislature—we learned that the Spirit Lake tribe, another operations manager, has never been in compliance with their requirements since 1993 to submit audited or accountability studies to the Legislature of North Dakota.

Has the Minister of gaming completed a review in a situation where the information that was funnelled through the Manitoba Gaming Control Commission in regard to the compliance reports, was that information passed on to the selection committee when they were making the final proposals?

Mr. Ron Lemieux (Minister charged with the administration of The Gaming Control Act):

There have been no agreements between First Nations people and management companies. The Member opposite raises this, trying to tarnish somehow an organization that may not be in compliance in the United States, and now he is trying to use that to tarnish First Nations proposals in Manitoba. At one time, members opposite were in favour of First Nations people. PC stood for pro casino at one time. Now what have we got?

Mr. Reimer: I will tell you what you have got. You have got a group over there that is playing with half a deck, that is what you have got.

Mr. Speaker, in the request for proposal it says the proponent and any participants must be in compliance with all gaming laws and regulations. I am asking this minister now—

* (13:50)

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): On a point of order, I am wondering, given *Beauchesne's*, and the fact that the Member is on a supplementary question, would you please draw a question note of the Member, so that we can follow the rules in this House, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader): On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker, *Beauchesne's* 417 says answers to questions should be as brief as possible, deal with the matter and should not provoke debate. The Minister was clearly provoking debate in trying to enter into serious discussions with the Honourable Member for Southdale, and that is what is provoking this discussion to be going both ways. We have a minister here who thinks that the hotels in this province are gin joints. He shows no respect for the business people in the community.

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

* * *

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

Mr. Reimer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question then to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs: Will he not confirm that the proponents that had made application had to be in compliance, total compliance, before the consideration of their applications for casinos and not after, as he is saying now, that they will do the due diligence on it?

Did they compromise the selection committee's process by funnelling everything through the Manitoba Gaming Control Commission?

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Speaker, I just want to state that on page 25 of the recommendations of the selection committee it states: Final approval for operations should be subject to all proponents, participants, financial participation and participants and partnership agreements receiving MGCC clearance once participation in the project is confirmed.

Now those are recommendations that were made from the selection committee to us as government.

Now we have an implementation committee in place that is going to be working with those First Nations communities to ensure that they meet all those conditions for success. If they do not, there will not be a casino set up. It is as clear as that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Reimer: My final supplementary to the Minister of gaming. Can he not confirm under the rules that the submissions had to be funnelled through the Manitoba Gaming Control Commission before they went to the selection committee?

Was the selection committee compromised by not getting the proper information in regard to the non-compliance of those bands that put forth applications? They were not in compliance. Was that information passed on to the selection committee?

Mr. Lemieux: Recommendations that certainly came to government, there are a couple of participants within a consortium that are not in total compliance, and I stated that last week, trying to be open with members opposite when they asked the question, and informed them. Also, the recommendations coming from Mr. Nadeau and Mr. Freedman, they must have felt certainly why do away with a full consortium and a whole proposal that is certainly viable with regard to the financial component, with regard to jobs, with regard to all kinds of economic spin-offs for First Nations people and surrounding communities. They must have felt why dispose of a consortium and a proposal because a couple of First Nations that may be participants are not in full compliance.

* (13:55)

First Nations Casinos Security Checks

Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, this is unbelievable today to hear the Minister say: Well, just because the proponents were not in compliance with the law, just because their operators are not in compliance

with laws in the jurisdictions where they are operating, it is okay.

I have to ask the Minister today on behalf of First Nations people, who seem to have no one looking after their interests on that side of the House, what security checks were conducted to ensure that the applicants were in fact in compliance in their own jurisdiction. Were no checks made?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister charged with the administration of The Gaming Control Act): Once again, I just want to reiterate and to mention to the Member opposite that no casino proposal will go ahead or receive final approval until all participants are investigated and registered by the Manitoba Gaming Control Commission. Once the First Nations proponents make decisions on management companies, they will apply for registration and the investigations will take place.

First Nations Casinos Implementation Committee

Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet): My supplementary is to the Premier (Mr. Doer), who is responsible for gaming in the province. Since his minister will not provide any satisfactory answers to Manitobans, I would like to know who he has appointed under the terms of today's press release to negotiate the Government's interests? We understand that this committee that he has appointed is to negotiate with the Government. Which minister has he assigned to negotiate on behalf of the Government with the implementation committee as his press release has indicated?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister charged with the administration of The Gaming Control Act): Certainly one of the duties or jobs that the implementation committee will be doing will certainly be looking at comprehensive agreements between the First Nations people, or proponents, and the Government of Manitoba. The Member for Lac du Bonnet is correct.

Certainly this particular body, the casino implementation committee and Mr. Luke as the chair will be reporting to me.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, since the Minister is incapable of understanding the question and the Premier is responsible, and given that the scenario he has established where this implementation committee, which is a joint committee of First Nations and government, says in the press release it will negotiate with the Government, Sir, I want to know who on that side of the House is responsible for the Government's position and what are the terms of reference that the Government, the Cabinet, the Premier have given to that negotiator to enter into negotiations with the implementation committee as the system has been set up. Who is it, Mr. Premier? Come clean with the people of Manitoba.

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Speaker, it is hard not to get a little worked up because of the inflammatory questions that are posed by the Member opposite, but that is his style, granted.

I just want to say that, you know, in Manitoba, First Nations people are looking for an opportunity, and as the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Robinson) stated last week, they want to know that members in this Chamber support their bid for casinos, their proposals. They are looking forward to attempting this business venture, and the Member opposite, as well as others, has made continual remarks with regard to inflammatory statements used in reference to some operation in the United States to try to taint their proposals in some way. I just want to say that we have stated we have a plan in place with the implementation committee. We are going to proceed with that, and they are going to be reporting back to government.

Hepatitis C Early Diagnosis/Treatment

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, there are about 3800 Manitobans now who have hepatitis C, and it is felt, on reasonable evidence, that there are an additional 6200 Manitobans who are suspected to have hepatitis C but have not yet been diagnosed. Since early diagnosis and treatment of this condition will prevent major illness and huge costs to the health care system down the road, it is important to diagnose these individuals and to treat them early. If not treated early, they have liver failure,

liver transplants, huge costs, huge agony, huge problems for the individual as well as the system.

I ask the Minister of Health: What is he doing to ensure that these individuals are diagnosed as quickly as possible and treated as quickly as possible?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, it is true that there is a serious potential health risk to those individuals, and I can indicate that the Department of Health has commenced a Look Back program with respect to notification and a number of other measures in this regard.

* (14:00)

Mr. Gerrard: Since the program at the moment in hepatitis C under Dr. Kelly Kaita, people have to wait a year often in order to get treatment. This is unacceptable. I ask the Minister: What is he doing to accelerate the diagnosis and treatment?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, the Member may not be aware, but we have put in place a specific program, a special committee to work with Doctor Kaita. In fact, I talked with Doctor Kaita last Friday in this regard, and we are attempting to—there are two issues here. There are issues regarding the present, dealing with victims of hepatitis C as well as the Look Back program.

I might indicate that, in fact, there is a deputy minister's conference that is taking place in Yellowknife with the federal government tomorrow. We asked, Manitoba asked that the item with respect to the federal payment to pay and flow through money to the provinces to deal with hepatitis C be put on the agenda because of the fact that the federal government is withholding the funds awaiting six or seven provinces signing on. We are signed on and ready to go, and I specifically directed that that item be on the agenda at tomorrow's federal-provincial meeting so the money can flow with regard to this.

Mr. Gerrard: The people of Manitoba want not just words but action. We need some deadlines. What are those deadlines going to be to diagnose the extra 6000 people? What are the time frames for being able to treat them?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, the Look Back program has already commenced with respect to notification. Secondly, I have also directed the Department of Health to begin, and I discussed this with Doctor Kaita and others, to provide treatment despite the fact that we do not have federal money in this regard. I would urge the Member opposite to perhaps talk with federal officials with respect to the holdback with the funds so that the funds can come through, but notwithstanding that, we are proceeding on our own to deal with this issue.

Agriculture Seeding Update

Mr. Scott Smith (Brandon West): This question may not be of great interest to members opposite; however, many people in Brandon West, being a very strong agricultural community, due to the substantial rainfall over the past few weeks, could the Minister of Agriculture identify what effects and impacts on haying and seeding operations and the agricultural industry in general are?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food): I thank my colleague for that question because, indeed, it is a very important issue, particularly when we see additional rainfall right now. The area that is the heaviest affected is the central region of the province right around the city of Winnipeg where as of June 14 there was anywhere from four to eight inches, and certainly that has had a negative impact on the crops. The southwest part of the province is also an area of concern, although they have not had that much moisture. The water table is very close to the surface and that is causing concern for the producers in that area. This wet weather is causing concern for people in haying and also a concern with the development of diseases, and certainly the lack of heat is impacting on crops such as corn, beans and sunflowers. An important issue, and one we are following very closely.

First Nations Casinos Gaming Agreement Compliance

Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain): Mr. Speaker, the Minister responsible for gaming in Manitoba always refers to the request for

proposals. I would refer him to page 14 where it says: participants based in the United States must provide the following information for up to the last five years: annual report and annual audited financial statements; year-end income statements; balance sheets and cash flow statements and securities and exchange commission 10-K filings, if applicable.

I would ask the Minister: Have they met those requirements?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister charged with the administration of The Gaming Control Act): The MGCC conducted preliminary investigations by consulting gaming authorities in jurisdictions in which those companies are registered to conduct gaming activities. No irregularities were reported; at least, I have been advised certainly no irregularities were reported.

Mr. Tweed: Well, my question then: Has the Minister of gaming in the province of Manitoba not spoken to the people in North Dakota who said they have not been in compliance since they opened the casinos in North Dakota?

Mr. Lemieux: Once again, Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Member opposite to look at the map of North America. This is Manitoba; the casinos are going to be in Manitoba. There is no contractual obligation with any gaming authority or any management company with regard to the United States or in North Dakota. As a matter of fact, I have been advised there are no contractual obligations set forth with regard to any management company whatsoever.

Mr. Tweed: Acknowledging that the group that is representing Sioux Valley as their management company are not in compliance with any rules in North Dakota, is the Minister prepared to tell the Sioux Valley organization that their application is not valid?

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Speaker, I am not in contact with Sioux Valley every day, nor have I spoken to anyone from Sioux Valley, but I had read in the newspaper on the weekend and I have been advised that Sioux Valley is using Lake City out of British Columbia, not out of North Dakota, as is being put forward by the Member opposite.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Minister has said that Sioux Valley is not using Spirit Lake. Is he saying that the report that was issued and tabled by Freedman and Nadeau is wrong, because it says Spirit Lake tribe for the Sioux Valley First Nation?

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

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, there is no point of order. Yesterday, the Opposition moved a motion on a point of order. Today, they are getting up and they are arguing facts. It is a dispute on the facts, and clearly not a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: Order. On the point of order raised, the Honourable Member does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts. But, also, I would like to caution all members that a point of order cannot be used to ask a question.

First Nations Casinos Gaming Agreement Compliance

Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet): Then let us get to the facts. I want to ask the Minister—he just told the House that the Sioux Valley First Nation was not using Spirit Lake tribe, North Dakota, as outlined in the document that he tabled in this Legislature. Is he telling us today that this Spirit Lake tribe from North Dakota is not an operations management participant as defined in the report that he tabled in this House?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister charged with the administration of The Gaming Control Act): Those recommendations were made to government with regard to successful proposals. Spirit Lake may have assisted, as was reported, with their proposal. Now I understand that Sioux Valley has changed management companies from Spirit Lake to Lake City management.

They are entitled to choose whichever management company they wish.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I would like to take this opportunity to remind all members of *Beauchesne's* Citation 168: "When rising to preserve order or to give a ruling the Speaker must always be heard in silence." I would ask the co-operation of all honourable members.

* (14:10)

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary to the Minister: Given that the Minister brought information to this House, to the people of Manitoba, to other First Nations people who are studying these documents, can the Minister tell us then what confidence he is going to have in that report if their operators, who are a critical part of these proposals, are changing without his knowledge? Does he have confidence in the security check process that was supposed to have been done?

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Speaker, Spirit Lake did a good job. They assisted Sioux Valley in putting forward their proposal, obviously, and now—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lemieux: I know it is hard sometimes to be heard. It is hard to hear questions, as well.

I just want to repeat that it is a business decision, obviously, that Sioux Valley has made, and they decided to change to Lake City management company out of British Columbia. I am not sure what other answer the Minister opposite wants, but on page 25 of the report it states: It is possible that individuals and businesses that originally applied to the MGCC for business and personal background investigations in this process may differ from those who eventually comprise the proponent or participant relationship.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary again to the Minister is: Given that the same report states that the operation of the casino must

comply fully with all aspects of the applicable law and regulations and the applicants must meet that, can the Minister confirm that Spirit Lake has never been in compliance, and that is the reason they have been dropped?

Mr. Lemieux: Well, I am glad that the Member opposite raises the point with compliance because compliance in the report states: Compliance with the law and regulations will also require notification to the MGCC of any change of any proponent, participants, financial participants, partners, directors, or any other individuals involved with the project and eventual casino operations.

This business plan is proceeding, Mr. Speaker. The recommendations from the selection committee have been made now. The First Nations have a great opportunity now—the ball is in their court—to put forward their proposals to their local communities and people of interest, and now the casino implementation committee will ensure that all the conditions for success are met. If they are not met, those First Nations casinos will not get a casino.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet, on a new question.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, on a new question to the Minister.

Given that we have casino operations companies who are critical parts of any operation and seem to be changing as soon as they come under public scrutiny, can the Minister provide to this House and the people of Manitoba a copy of the criteria that was used to assess whether or not these operators were in compliance and the results of the inquiries made by the Gaming Control Commission? Three of the five casinos no longer have the same operators. Please come clean with the people of Manitoba, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Speaker, the Member opposite was mentioning about hypocritical. They should take a look in the mirror with regard to their own gaming initiatives and so on that took place in Manitoba without consulting Manitobans whatsoever and decided to do this all on their own.

We had a process here in place depoliticizing the process, an independent selection committee that did a lot of hard work. You take a look in the report, at the back, of all the people that they consulted to look through their proposals with a fine-tooth comb, you take a look at Jan Collins, Mrs. Susan Darvill, Laurie Davidson, and so on. They took a look at these proposals and they looked at all the criteria which is listed in here—and the members opposite have it in front of them—and they made sure that these proposals had an opportunity to be successful.

We wish First Nations people the best of luck, and we wish them success. I would also wish that members opposite would join us and join with First Nations people and hope that they can make this endeavour successful.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, we on this side do not want a bunch of casino corporations outside of the province who cannot manage their own affairs to be the big winners in this, as the Minister seems to do.

I want to ask the Minister, given that his own call for proposals said any casino participant from the United States had to provide an annual report, year-end report, securities, 10-K filings, how then can he have any confidence in this process if this particular operator got through what appears to be a very flimsy net indeed.

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Speaker, this government had a great deal of confidence and continues to have a great deal of confidence in Mr. Nadeau and Mr. Freedman. We are not going to get into slandering them and making all kinds of accusations and pointing the finger at these two gentlemen who have a great reputation in Manitoba as being very, very competent people.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is to the Attorney General (Mr. Mackintosh).

If obviously his colleague who is responsible for the Gaming Control Commission is unable to do the job of a security check, will he do the job and undertake now to have his depart-

ment and the RCMP undertake proper security checks of all of these casino participants?

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Speaker, I just want to repeat again and continue to repeat—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, order.

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Speaker, the Manitoba Gaming Control Commission has our confidence. The Manitoba Gaming Control Commission was brought into effect by members opposite under their watch. The Manitoba Gaming Control Commission's reputation is absolutely intact. With regard to any gaming across the country, we have a great reputation with regard to—*[interjection]*

Well, Mr. Speaker, comments are made by members opposite about gangsters and so on. Again this is trying to slur the process; it is trying to be inflammatory, attempting somehow to defame and to pass disparaging remarks about First Nations people and their proposals.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Speaker's Ruling

Mr. Speaker: I have a ruling for the House.

During Oral Questions on Thursday, May 18, 2000, I took under advisement a point of order raised by the Deputy Government House Leader (Mr. Ashton) concerning the use of the word "dishonest" allegedly spoken by the Honourable Member for Tuxedo (Mr. Filmon) while addressing a question. The Deputy Government House Leader (Mr. Ashton) and the Official Opposition House Leader (Mr. Laurendeau) spoke to the point of order. I took the matter under advisement to peruse Hansard and to consult the procedural authorities.

I thank both House Leaders for their contributions to the point of order.

Although the word "dishonest" has been ruled unparliamentary in the past, it is important to look at the context in which the word is being

used. In reviewing Hansard, on page 1260, the Honourable Member for Tuxedo (Mr. Filmon) is reported as saying: "that statement is not only misleading, it is downright dishonest." In this case, the remarks were not directed specifically towards a member but by implication to the comments of a member; therefore, it is difficult for me, as the Speaker, to request that the words be withdrawn.

However, I would like to point out that the use of the word did create a disorder in the House, and I would also point out that it is not good practice to be using words that have been subject to interventions by the Chair and to withdrawals in the past. I would therefore request that the Honourable Member for Tuxedo (Mr. Filmon) and all members of the House select their words with care. Thank you.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Gimli High School Awards

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Mr. Speaker, it was my pleasure to attend the 12th annual Gimli High School awards night on June 14. This awards banquet is an opportunity to honour the students of the Gimli High School for their achievements in both academic and extra-curricular activities. Awards were presented to students for achievement in athletics, volunteerism, drama and academic excellence. It was great to see so many of Gimli's best and brightest students being recognized for the hard work and effort that they have displayed during the school year.

* (14:20)

Mr. Speaker, I was honoured to present Miss Heather Chic with the MLA book award, an annual award that is presented to the student with the highest standing in Grade 30S at the Gimli High School. I again congratulate Heather for her academic success, and I wish her all the best in the future.

Honours such as these awards do not come without hard work and dedication. I urge all members to join with me in congratulating all of the students honoured for their efforts at the Gimli High School awards night. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Selkirk Avenue BIZ

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to talk about the activities of a local business improvement zone in my constituency, and also in yours. The Selkirk Avenue BIZ has been working to ensure that its area continues to prosper. Empty buildings on the street are slowly disappearing to make way for exciting new ventures. Promising is the recent relocation of the North End Community Renewal Corporation to Selkirk Avenue.

Members of the business improvement zone are currently preparing for another exciting summer. Popular historic walking tours on Selkirk Avenue will be offered again this coming year. Selkirk Avenue has a diverse history as an avenue, supporting a variety of multicultural merchants. It was once the heart of the Jewish north end. Selkirk Avenue was and continues to be the starting point for many immigrant groups. The area tour, co-ordinated by the local business improvement zone, was featured in the *New York Times* travel section, along with a profile of the neighbourhood, last year. The historic walk drew more than 1200 people to the area.

Congratulations to all the volunteers for co-ordinating such a successful showcase for the area. Visitors to the neighbourhood this summer can also enjoy 16 new murals depicting Manitoba's history and aboriginal culture in scenes painted by artist Richard Manoakeesick. It gives me great pride to report on the initiatives undertaken by an active business improvement zone in the north end. Renewal in this area is in no small part due to the determination and optimism of this dedicated group.

Killarney United Church

Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain): On Sunday, this past weekend, I had the opportunity of attending the 100th anniversary of the Killarney United Church. I just wanted to let the people in the Legislature know, and Manitobans, that many of the ministers who had worked in Killarney and in the area returned for the event. A lot of the commentary was on the building of

the new facility, the new United church that they are talking about in the community of Killarney.

It was a well-attended event. I think that the importance of the discussion we had that day was the creation of a mission statement which talked about attracting new people back to the United Church or attracting them to the United Church and the ones that had left in the past back to it.

I want to just comment that it was a very enjoyable day. Many old acquaintances were renewed and friendships made, and there was a lot of good discussion about the new facility. I look forward to, in the future, announcing the construction date and the completion date of the new United church in the town of Killarney. Thank you.

Highways Capital Program

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give thanks to the new Minister of Highways (Mr. Ashton) for the long overdue attention he has paid to our region and the latest approved Highways program. Foremost is a \$2.9-million commitment to begin upgrading Highway 7 north of Fraserwood to the ARTAC level.

This two-phase project will end at the town of Arborg at the junction of Highway 68. The upgrading of this highway is crucial to the region, given the almost inevitable closure of the CP railroad running parallel to this route. Second in importance is the rebuilding of PR 329 west of the Vidir line to Morweena.

This two-phase project eventually terminating at Highway 17 will commence the following summer. Development of east-west lines such as these is crucial to business promotion at a regional level. Two communities, Moosehorn and Riverton, are to have their main streets upgraded and paved. The former project has already been tendered, while the latter is scheduled to commence next year. I could go on, but I think the message is abundantly clear. As Moses and the Israelites languished in the desert for many years, so, too, have the people of the Interlake been waiting for over a decade now for their needs to be addressed.

I applaud the new Minister of Highways (Mr. Ashton) for recognizing this fact and for taking action to correct the imbalance that has become so apparent under the control of the previous administration. On behalf of the people of the Interlake, Minister, I thank you.

Winnipeg Kite Festival

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Seine River): Mr. Speaker, thousands of Manitobans spent Father's Day at Assiniboine Park and enjoyed the Winnipeg Family Kite Festival. This annual event raises awareness and much-needed funds for Manitobans with disabilities. This event is quickly establishing itself as a Winnipeg institution. Organizers estimate that over 20 000 people attended the festivities in the park this year. Fortunately, the weather co-operated and thanks to the hard work of the more than 500 volunteers, the festival went on as scheduled and was an overwhelming success.

The Winnipeg Family Kite Festival is organized and raises money for the Independent Living Resource Centre. The festival, founded by the late Allan Simpson, celebrates the spirit of independent living in a panorama of fun, music and brilliant kites. It has become the annual Father's Day activity for many families where young and experienced can share wholesome outdoor activity while supporting persons with disabilities.

* (14:30)

I would like to congratulate the Independent Living Resource Centre and all the volunteers for ensuring that the Winnipeg Family Kite Festival was once again an overwhelming success. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

CULTURE, HERITAGE AND TOURISM

Mr. Chairperson (Harry Schellenberg): Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This afternoon, this section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 254 will resume consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Culture, Heritage and Tourism.

When the committee last sat, it had been considering the motion moved by the Honourable Member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay). When the committee recessed for a recorded vote in the Chamber, the Honourable Minister had been speaking to the motion.

The Honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism, who has 26 minutes remaining, to continue.

Hon. Diane McGifford (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism): Mr. Chair, thank you for the opportunity to continue. As you have rightly identified, yesterday I was addressing the motion put forth by the Member for Seine River, and I think I opined that it seemed to me strange that in this motion the Member is choosing to censure me, to point fingers at me, and to suggest that certain actions that she alleges I took, which, of course, are total fabrications, were responsible for a loss of reputation on the part of members opposite. I think that I was suggesting that members opposite had certainly taken care of their reputations all by themselves, and I think I pointed to several examples. I pointed to the broken promises on MTS.

If I might just interrupt myself, I do not think I have yet introduced Lou-Anne Buhr, who is the ADM of Culture, Heritage and Tourism. I think we have introduced Mr. Paton before but not the ADM. So thank you, Mr. Chair.

So I think that I had mentioned MTS, broken promises. I had mentioned that terrible event in the Legislature when the mikes were turned off and nobody had an opportunity to speak or I suppose people had had an

opportunity, but when points of privilege, et cetera, were raised, they were not able to speak. It just seemed to me a terrible violation of the democratic process and certainly brought reputations into question, particularly the reputation of the then-Speaker.

Several other scandals, greater and minor, have occurred since MTS, and I do not see much point in my outlining them. I think we are all very familiar with those scandals. I think I did say yesterday that what I was hearing from members opposite was an incredible concern with their reputations but really very little concern about the art, certainly no respect for the processes of this Legislature and certainly no respect for advice which was given to me with regard to an inventory.

You know, Mr. Chairperson, further evidence of loss of reputation is that I have had two or three constituents who expressed interest in the Estimates process sitting at the back from time to time. They were certainly shocked at the behaviour that they saw and heard and, of course, I could not put their words on the record because what I heard were things that would be judged unparliamentary, but they were truly appalled.

I suppose another way of looking at this whole process might be to look at it as a kind of art form itself, Mr. Chairperson, because it certainly is fictitious, it certainly is a fabrication, it certainly is, at the very least, theatrical. On the other hand, it is a narrative so remote from the intention of the process, because let us always remember that the process here, the intention of the process here, is to provide information and education to members opposite so that they can fulfil their duties as members of this Legislature, in the case of the Member for Seine River as the critic for Culture, Heritage and Tourism so that she could fulfil her duties, and it would seem to me there has been very little concern with public information.

I guess I did hear a couple of questions, one about somebody's salary and one or two of similar kinds of matters, Mr. Chairman, but really any attempt to learn, to become informed, to understand the workings of this department have been insignificant, to say the least. But, as I

was saying, I suppose in the spirit of art one could look upon some of the antics at this table as theatre because they are fictitious, they are fabrications.

I do not know whether there is a narrative stream running through these antics or not, but what I do find is some sort of invention, a fairly ugly invention, but we might think of it all as performance art. I certainly, as I have been sitting here listening to members opposite, listening to the kind of fabrication and mean-spiritedness, the kinds of fictions that are put on the record, I have certainly been shocked, and I do think it is something that I would like to do today and that is to apologize to Manitobans for the extent to which the quality of debate in this House has been degraded.

You know, I stand here falsely accused of stating that Tories have stolen art from this Legislature. I am being threatened with a continuing waste of time, the waste of time of the entire Legislature, not only the Legislature, but the waste of time of staff people who have serious work to get on with. The constant threat is unless I am willing to apologize for something I did not do and for something I did not say, these kinds of antics, this kind of theatre, this kind of abuse of the legislative procedure is going to continue.

This seems to me to be the way of inquisitors throughout the ages. Whether we talk about religious inquisitions, for example, I could cite the conflagrations of the Renaissance and the Reformation where people were subjected to this kind of pressure. This pressure to confess to things that they did not do, and then when they confessed, they were tortured and burnt and whatnot.

* (14:40)

Now, I am not worried about being tortured and burnt, but what I am saying is the mentality is the same kind of mentality whether we talk about, as I said, the Reformation and the Renaissance, whether we talk about the burnings at Salem in the late 17th century made famous by Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible* and whether we tie *The Crucible* into the obvious

happenings in U.S. politics. Of course, I am referring to the McCarthy era.

The process is the same; the mentality is the same; the way of behaving is the same. You first put an untruth on the record and then you try to dress it up, to embroider it, in order to give it legs. So, as I say, we can go and read Arthur Miller and see the same kind of mentality at work. In the 17th century, people ended up getting burnt, literally burnt to death. In the 21st century, the result is just simply to harass and to bother and to abuse people. I think the behaviour that I have witnessed at this table is certainly abusive.

So, as I said, the big idea here or the drive is to get me to apologize for something I did not do, for something I did not say. So, of course, I can say, after having been in this chair—I think this is my fifth day—I could certainly say, and with great ease, that I know what it is to be falsely accused, as does the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger). The Minister of Finance was subjected to a similar kind of process, so he knows what it is to have his name and character impugned by the very same committee as the one who is harassing, abusing and threatening me.

So I suppose the classic work of manipulation and a volume that really embodies what has come to be called the big lie is Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*. I do not know if members opposite are familiar with Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*, but if they want to see a portrait of themselves, they might consider reading it. They might consider doing something that is actually related to culture, by God; a novel idea.

So, as I was saying, I do want to apologize to Manitobans for the degradation of debate in this Legislature because it really is shameful. I do not think it does any of us any good.

Mr. Chairperson, the responsibility of my position as Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism really precluded and will continue to preclude then, now, and in the future, the sweeping of the matter of dislocated art under the rug. It is not the nature of my person, it is not the responsibility of my position, it is not the

way of my party to turn a blind eye to the public interest. In this instance, it would not be proper to ignore the trusteeship of a very valuable provincial asset.

I would like to take this opportunity to address everybody in the building who followed the procedures outlined in the memo circulated by the former Clerk to the Executive Council, because I think it is unfortunate for those people who did follow the rules, if they were inconvenienced by the inventory or anything else. I really want to thank those people for their role in this important process. I know that those of you who followed the process, of course, do deeply care about the public good.

I might just take the opportunity to table the memo sent out by the former Clerk, Mr. Don Leitch. It is dated September 22, 1999, and the subject is Legislative Building Office Accommodation—Post Election.

His memo reads: "Some office changes will occur over the next two weeks. It is requested that the procedures outlined in the attachment to this memorandum be followed. They are similar to the procedures followed after the election in September 1995.

"Topics of immediate concern here have been referenced. If there are any questions please contact my office or that of Gerry Berezuk, Acting Deputy Minister of Government Services.

"The attached procedures are provided for your information and guidance and I would ask that you keep in contact with your Minister's staff as appropriate to ensure the necessary actions are undertaken."

Then it goes on to talk about art: "As with furnishings, art will remain in existing locations. Government Services will deal with requests for changes or specific pieces of art when everyone is settled in their assigned offices."

So it seems to me that the instructions for codes of behaviour were very clearly outlined by Mr. Leitch. It is, as I said before, really quite regrettable that everybody did not follow those. So, to those members who did not follow the

procedures, I certainly hope that they have learned that not following these procedures simply will not do now or in the future and that we are collectively responsible for the Manitoba art bank. I really urge all members to respect this public collection.

Mr. Chairperson, I have been talking about the fact that I know what it is to be falsely accused and to feel pressures to confess to things that I did not do or I did not say, and I think I have quoted historical precedence. I referred to Renaissance practices on more than one occasion, and I would like to just quote from Martin Luther, because when Martin Luther nailed his thesis to the door in, I think it was, Augsburg in the year 1520, he was asked to recant and take back what he said time and time again. Martin Luther, of course, did not recant. He said you cannot recant the truth. Luther was, I suppose we would call him, a pious individual, a simple individual, so his response was very plain. Please excuse my German, but I believe he said: Hier stehe Ich. Ich kann kein anders so helfe mir Gott. His answer of 1520 is one that I think is a good one for me to reiterate today because what he said was: Here I stand. I cannot do anything else.

Here I stand. I cannot do anything else but tell the truth, as I have been doing. So I want to make that point.

Now, it would seem to me, since the point of these Estimates is about culture, that members opposite might like to hear about a new piece of art that was recently purchased by my department. It is called *Women We Have Come a Long Way and Still*. It is produced by the artist quilt maker, Marilyn Stewart Stothers, who is, I understand, famous throughout the world for her particular techniques. The medium is cotton and other fabrics with a cotton filling; cotton, polyester and rayon threads are involved; acrylic painting is involved and computer printing. So it is quite a pastiche, I suppose one could say.

* (14:50)

As far as the technique is concerned, the fabrics are cut and pieced in a planned order. They have been machined together, as well as what else is involved is hand-guided machine

quilting. Quilting and binding are hand finished. Words are printed by computer on fabric and treated with dye fixative. There is an interesting story involved here because Marilyn Stewart Stothers came to the Legislative Building on International Women's Day on March 8, 2000, and apparently she was quite moved by the ceremony we had here. So she went home and, by her own reckoning, closed herself up until she had finished this piece, so she finished it in short order. My department has been very fortunate in buying this particular piece, so let me continue.

As far as comments, this work commemorates and recognizes the considerable courage and energy of many women who challenged men and the status quo in Canadian provincial and federal politics. Women rightfully wanted equality with men to vote in elections as well as be recognized in legal terms as persons. The vibrant colours of the fabrics used in the surface design represent the energy and the celebration of their successes. The pencil and ballot images speak for themselves.

If people care to come and see this piece, it is in my office, and I would certainly be happy for people to see it. I think that they can see the relationship, simply by looking at this piece, between this piece of art, between women and between women's desire for the vote. I would like to point out that the comments that I just read were prepared by the creator of the quilt and not by me.

The quilt was first exhibited at the Manitoba craft guild and then at the Canadian Quilters' Association in York University in Toronto. As I said, it is now hanging in my office, and I do invite members on both sides of the House, particularly members who seem to feel that their reputations have been besmirched, Mr. Chairperson, because I think I mentioned on one of the other days that I was speaking that art is a great healer. I think that day I cited Andreas Llama's book, *Shamanism, The Beginnings of Art*, and talked about the relationships between psychosis and Shamanism. I think that might be something that we could all think about, and I do urge members to come and see this absolutely wonderful piece and perhaps consider the importance of creativity in our lives as opposed

to the importance of abuse. Let me just leave it at that.

But I would like to say a word about Marilyn Stewart Stothers. Growing up in south-western Ontario and presently living in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Marilyn is a non-traditional art quilt maker, teacher, and lecturer in original quilt surface design, in 2000 were juried into the Manitoba Crafts Council annual juried show, won a jurors award. Her art quilts were also in the 2000 and 1998 Canadian Quilters' Association national exhibitions. In 1996-97, her work was juried into the international Visions: Quilt Art exhibition in San Diego, California, published in a catalogue, as well as selected to travel in the U.S., Japan, and other countries. In December 1995, her art quilts were shown locally in a solo exhibition at the Piano Nobile Gallery in the Concert Hall.

Marilyn has exhibited and received awards in national and international juried and invitational exhibitions in other areas of Canada and the U.S. as well as Australia, Japan, and Southeast Asia. Her work is in private and public collections. She has written and published a book on her original method of curved, strip piecing of fabric.

At one time, Marilyn owned and operated a quilt shop in Winnipeg. With those students and customers, she was instrumental in the formation of the Manitoba Prairie Quilters Guild. She is the vice-president of the World Crafts Council, North America region, a past president of the Canadian Crafts Council, a recipient of the Governor General's Canada 125 medal, and two Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba medals. She is listed in the *Who's Who of Canadian Women* for 1999 and 2000. Marilyn continues to explore art quilting in her original work commissions and fabric surface design.

So, I think, Mr. Chairperson, as I am sure members have deduced, hearing both the description of this particular quilt as well as the description of Marilyn Stothers' many accomplishments, that members would agree that it was a good idea to purchase this particular piece of art and that it will contribute to our Manitoba art collection.

One of the things that we try to do with this art collection, and probably members opposite know this as well as members on my side of the House, is to create a balance between the different art forms, obviously between the different regions of our province, obviously between men and women, for example, obviously between the early and later work of an artist.

There are some guidelines in purchasing art. For example, we only purchase the art of living artists, which is not to say, of course, we do have art of artists who are no longer alive in our collection, but when we are buying current art, it is only the work of living artists. We try to buy from galleries so that we can support both the efforts of the gallery as well as those of the individual artist.

Speaking of galleries, I thought perhaps I could put a few comments on the record about one of our, well, it is not brand-new, but one of our newer galleries in town, and that is Urban Shaman. Urban Shaman is Manitoba's only Aboriginal artist-run centre. Indeed I think we are very fortunate to have an Aboriginal-run centre. What I wanted to mention is that Urban Shaman is currently presenting a new exhibition. It is called Riel's Rebellion, then subtitled Riel Bends Premier Exhibition, created by Debra Prince. This particular exhibition will run until the 29th of July.

I could provide a brief description of the show to be running very soon at Urban Shaman, Riel's Rebellion, placing celebrated historic Aboriginal leaders such as Sitting Bull, Quannah Parker, Medicine Crow and Geronimo on the covers of contemporary magazines. This series of 12 large paintings has offered this young artist an opportunity to showcase famous North American chiefs, elevating each to the position of pop icon.

In 1997, family friend Henry Jeanson of Birtle, Manitoba, brought Riel to see Bev Carriere of Cedar Gathering First Peoples Art Market. As a result of ongoing discussions with Cedar Gathering, Urban Shaman is honoured to present Riel's Premier Exhibition, thus realizing one of Riel's greatest desires, that the series be shown in exhibit form to a broader audience.

Winner of the visual arts category in the 1999 YTV awards, Riel's contemporary magazine covers were also featured in the November 1999 issue of Saturday Night. In this first year of the new millennium, Riel was nominated for a National Aboriginal Achievement Award in the youth category. His home and studio are located at the Birdtail Sioux First Nation west of Brandon, Manitoba.

So, once again, Urban Shaman urges people to come and see Riel's exhibition, significantly entitled Riel's Rebellion. I think the symbolism of an Aboriginal person titling his exhibit Riel's Rebellion is quite clear. It is a symbolism that I certainly appreciate, and I am sure all members of the House do, so I do urge members to attend Urban Shaman, the gallery.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. The Honourable Minister's time has expired.

* (15:00)

Mr. Gary Filmon (Tuxedo): I appreciate the dissertation that we have been given by the Minister, and I would like to address a number of the points that she has made. I am hopeful that in being here, I can be helpful in solving what appears to be an intractable difference between the Minister and members on our side of the House.

I appreciate the comments of the Minister, but I suggest it is a stretch to suggest that she is being victimized here, and presenting herself as a martyr because she is being asked to answer for and be responsible for the actions of her department is taking it a bit of a stretch. I suggest to her that what this is all about is ministerial responsibility. It is a time-honoured tradition in our representative form of democracy, that as a minister she has to respond not for her actions alone but for the actions of all of the people over whom she has administrative responsibility in the Department.

I will take exception in the beginning to the statement that she made that members on our side of the House in pursuing this issue have demonstrated no concern about the art. I would like to read into the record the letter that I wrote her on January 11 of this year, the day that the

story first broke that was entitled: Bureaucrats baffled by vanishing art; More than 100 works have gone missing since fall.

It is addressed to the Minister. I say: "Dear Diane, I am writing to you today in response to concerns that have been raised about artwork belonging to the Province of Manitoba which appears to have gone astray. I want to assure you that the Progressive Conservative caucus values greatly the cultural importance of the vast collection of largely Manitoba art that is showcased in the Legislature and in other provincial buildings. Our caucus will co-operate fully with your department staff to identify all artwork—

Mr. Chairperson: Order. We will recess for a recorded vote in the Chamber.

The Committee recessed at 3:02 p.m.

The Committee resumed at 3:51 p.m.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. Prior to the recess, the Honourable Member for Tuxedo (Mr. Filmon) had the floor. The Honourable Member for Tuxedo has just over 27 minutes remaining.

Mr. Filmon: I want to just complete putting into the record the letter which I sent on January 11 this year to the Minister: "Our caucus will co-operate fully with your department staff to identify all artwork belonging to the Province of Manitoba, so all Manitobans can be confident that this treasured collection remains intact and in the possession of the Provincial Government. If I can be of any assistance in ensuring that the inventory of this collection is carried out in a thorough and rapid fashion, please feel free to contact my office at 945-3593."

On February 18, I received a response from the Minister indicating that the inventory, which had been ongoing, had located most of the missing art and was continuing to be completed. I read then in the *Winnipeg Free Press* subsequent to that an article in May of this year—I am sorry, it was April 27, and I wrote to the Minister on May 17 saying: "I note from a recent article in the *Winnipeg Free Press* that there are still four pieces missing from the provincial art

collection." So what was considered to be in excess of a hundred pieces was now down to four, according to the article. "In order to be of assistance to your department in tracking down the missing pieces, I would ask that you provide me with a description of this art and the last known location."

The point that I make with the Minister is that we were indeed concerned about the art. That was our first and foremost concern, and I expressed that in writing to her. So the statement that she makes is regrettably a false statement when she says that we are showing no concern about the art. I clearly did that and that was our initial concern.

My further point to the Minister is that I am not, and I would believe that none of our members are, accusing the Minister of having attempted to besmirch the reputation of members of our caucus. On the other hand, I do say that she has to take the responsibility for whoever in her department leaked the memo to the *Winnipeg Free Press* and commented off the record to the *Winnipeg Free Press*. Various things within that January 11, 2000, article I believe are defamatory, and certainly designed to diminish the reputation of members on our side of the House.

I will quote one: "A large amount of publicly owned art was shuffled around the legislature last fall—and sources say some has vanished. . . . A government source said a detailed audit of the collection is about half completed, and there are already more than 100 pieces of art unaccounted for.

"We are still in midstream, so there may be even more items missing."

Further in the article: "At least some of the blame is falling on the Tories, who held office for 11 years before being defeated late in 1999.

"According to the memo, one defeated Tory minister was caught taking a painting to his new office."

Further quote: "In another case the memo says a departing minister has claimed the art in his office as part of his personal collection and

removed it from the building. The Province is still trying to determine the owner of the art."

Mr. Chairman, my point to the Minister is that these were very damaging comments, that they were, regrettably, ones that, intentionally or not, diminished the reputation of members on this side. The whole issue of artwork having gone missing has now apparently been rectified. According to information I am reading in *Hansard*, the Minister has now acknowledged that there is one piece missing. I might indicate that she did not respond as yet to my letter of May 17 asking for the description so that we could assist in looking throughout any offices that we occupy.

I understand that some of the art was found in cupboards, that others were found in different places, even as far away as in the Lotteries Corporation office. This is not the work of Tories having attempted to steal or misappropriate the art collection of the provincial government. This was art that got moved around. I can tell the Minister from personal experience that, in my office, members of staff dealt with members of the incoming staffs and had discussions about whether or not artwork could or should be moved. Certainly, it was my request to leave everything to the incoming Premier. We were told by his staff that some of the things he wanted and some he did not. We were free to move other things over.

The memo that she refers to that she says was given to all ministers is addressed, in fact, to all deputy ministers. It is a memo I never saw. The suggestion that she keeps attempting to sell that somehow ministers were responsible for all of this, I believe, is inappropriate. I am suggesting to her that, in the time-honoured tradition of ministerial responsibility, she ought to take responsibility for the leaking of the memo to the *Free Press* by somebody on her staff, for the comments of a person on her staff unattributed but clearly identified as part of her staff, and say that it is regrettable that this happened, that the issue has been cleared up by virtue of a thorough inventory having been done and that she certainly withdraws any suggestion that members on our side of the House were responsible for attempting to improperly remove from the provincial collection pieces of art.

I believe that is the way in which it should be handled, and I think that is a matter of her acting in a professional and sensitive manner in her responsibilities as minister. I believe that she ought to take this under consideration and allow us to get on with the review of the Estimates of her department. Then we can deal with the rest of the issue.

If not, then we are going to have to, I think, reconsider this as we talk about her ministerial responsibility when we get to the line of her ministerial salary. The other thing, I would say, is, as a matter of privilege, since the *Winnipeg Free Press* has a copy of that memo, then I think it should be given to all members of the Legislature.

Mr. Chairperson: The Minister for Culture, Heritage and Tourism.

Ms. McGifford: [*interjection*] I am sorry. Apparently, somebody else was just—
[*interjection*]

Mr. Chairperson: On a point of order, the Member for Turtle Mountain.

Point of Order

Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain): Mr. Chair, just for clarification, we are speaking on a motion. I understand that the Minister has had her 30 minutes to speak on the motion. The floor should be open to other members, if I understand procedure correctly.

Mr. Chairperson: Members can speak more than once on the motion in the Committee of Supply. I was just alternating from side to side.

* * *

Ms. McGifford: I will certainly bow to the Member for Turtle Mountain. I would like to hear what he—[*interjection*]

An Honourable Member: No, I did not want to speak. I just was looking for a rule clarification.

* (16:00)

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Highways and Government Services): I want to just add a few

comments, because this issue did come up in my Estimates. In fact, my former Highways critic is here, and I believe he may have been there, although the Government Services critic was not. I just want to clarify a number of things.

First of all, in terms of the memo or any briefing note, I mean, it could have come out of my department as well. I just want to make that clear, because the Department of Government Services is responsible for the administration of the artwork. So I think it is fairly important to note that.

I think any leaking of information—I am sure members opposite, having been in government, would appreciate certainly my view, and I know the Minister of Culture's (Ms. McGifford) view in this would be it is highly inappropriate, particularly given some of the editorial comments that were put in place.

I do know that what essentially happened was there were difficulties related to tracking down the artwork, and I think the Member for Tuxedo (Mr. Filmon) has pointed that out in his comments, that, essentially, it has been narrowed down to a very small number of items, some of which may be damaged, is my understanding, that may have been broken. We do not have just wall hangings. We have other types of artwork which are easily broken. I know in my case, I went to my office after this report and checked the list and found there were several paintings in my office that were on the list as being unaccounted for. I essentially assume that that is essentially what we have been able to follow through on in terms of that.

I think my view of this is that certainly the article that appeared in the *Free Press* I think was—I will go beyond unfortunate. I think it really was an unfair article. I think it painted people with a broad brush, not just members opposite, by the way, who were involved with this, because the art that was misplaced was from the building generally, including members on our side. I think a lot of it was, quite frankly, we did not have adequate tracking procedures in one sense—perhaps that is the lesson—but also perhaps some sense amongst a lot of us that we did not know that the art did not go with the

Member; it stayed with the room until you transferred it afterwards.

I was in the same office for 13 years. Quite frankly, I had to change offices before that 13-year period, but I certainly was not aware myself of what the procedure was, and particularly when you add staff on top of that, a lot of new staff, by the way, I think explains how we ended up with that situation.

I did want to put that on the record, because I made some comments obviously in the Committee on my side, and I think the key element here, to a large extent, is that I think the article was unfair. I think whoever leaked that, their comments were unacceptable, and particularly to put in a political twist. I know it was not the Minister and it certainly was not myself. I know it was not myself, by the way, because I did not know about the procedures until—I mean, to be quite honest here, I did not even know I was responsible—can I say that?—until after this happened. I had assumed it was Culture, but there is sort of a dual role as members opposite will know in the sense that Government Services administers it.

I think the key thing of resolving it is to basically say on the record that that article was not appropriate, the leaking of the information was not appropriate, and I think to also acknowledge, by the way, on behalf of the Minister of Culture (Ms. McGifford) that the Minister of Culture did take the lead role in getting this matter resolved. My department worked closely with Culture, but, essentially, it was the Minister of Culture that tracked down that information through her department and my department. I think we have a system in place where we can assure members of this House that we will not end up in that same situation in the future.

I regret I have not been involved in some of the discussions the last number of days in the Committee, but I really think in the end we are all, apart from some disagreements in terms of some of the comments that have been made back and forth in this Committee, in agreement on one thing, and that is that the item has been resolved.

I would say unequivocally on the record, just as, I am sure, the Minister of Culture has already, that nobody stole artwork. Anybody who suggested that, whoever suggested that to the newspapers, quite frankly if their name had been attributed to that, I would say they would be most definitely susceptible to a lawsuit for libel. I think that twist in the comment was absolutely incorrect, not just in terms of insinuation, but the fact was that the missing art was actually amongst all members of the Legislature and the building generally. It was not just Conservatives; it was also New Democrats. We have other people in the building who are civil servants, and it was art that had not—and I should not even say missing. It was unaccounted for. It is now accounted for.

So I would urge that we deal with the motion. I really think what has happened to a large extent is that the Minister has acted responsibly in the sense that we have now identified the art. I think that was the responsible thing.

I do not blame the members opposite for raising this concern. They did raise it in my committee as well, but I do not think the focus should be strictly on censuring the Minister. I mean, in my Estimates I was not censured. Members opposite did vote against my salary, much to my surprise.

An Honourable Member: Two for one.

Mr. Ashton: That is right, I was doing the work of two ministers. But it was not focussed in on this particular issue. My suggestion really would be that—I do not believe the Minister has exaggerated this issue for partisan and political purposes, one of the operative elements of this particular motion. I think the original leak did that. It was not the Minister that leaked it, and I did not leak it.

I think to a large extent, we are more than aware. I heard some of the comments of the Member for Tuxedo (Mr. Filmon) in terms of ministerial responsibility in the sense that to a certain extent when things happen, even if you do not do it yourself, you have to be responsible for it. That is what the Minister has done. The Minister did not just say, well, that was a

problem that I inherited. The Minister took action, and I think that is really critical. You have a minister who basically took action and has now identified in co-operation with our department the fact that there is only I believe three or four left unaccounted for. I am confident we probably will be able to track that down as well.

So, for that reason, I am a bit disappointed that the motion is here. I think the more appropriate motion would have been directed at the original story itself, which was a distortion of what happened. I can tell you, if members opposite had put forward a motion stating that, they might have had unanimous support. Quite frankly, there were members on our side, and I can say this on the record, who were quite concerned about the implications in that story, I know, including our leader, the Premier, who was quite concerned about that story.

If the focus had been on the real problem, the real problem was, yes, there were unaccounted art works, but somebody went and gave a spin to the media that suggested it was somehow a partisan issue. It was not. We know that. My comments, I guess, suggest that that might be a better way of dealing with things.

That is why I am quite surprised, quite frankly, because the motion again suggests that the Minister, and I will just read some of the comments: misused her office; the Minister gave information to the media inappropriately implying that many MLAs had stolen this artwork; that the Minister exaggerated this for partisan political purposes. That is not supported by the facts. It is not supported by the facts.

The Minister is the one that when the issue was identified took immediate action to resolve it. I can tell you, the Minister, as I said, I was not even aware I had jurisdiction over it directly, but when the Minister of Culture (Ms. McGifford) raised it with myself as Minister of Government Services, she was the lead Minister. I do not mind saying that. So it is not the Minister of Culture that created this issue, if it is an issue. I do not think it is. I think it is a misstatement. If anything, it is the Minister of Culture that has put this matter to rest by resolving the issue.

As I said, I have not been here for the last several days. I know in debate back and forth sometimes statements are made and escalation takes place. When I look at the motion, I suspect it is reflective of the fact that things have escalated somewhat.

* (16:10)

But I would really suggest to members opposite, that is not the issue here. The issue is not the Minister of Culture having made any of the comments or suggestions in here. The issue is, this never should have happened in the first place, but when it did happen, we responded. I have said this on the record, members have waved it around as to what I said. I said at the time I thought it had been a major, gross misinterpretation of what had happened, the media report and that action had been taken.

I certainly regret, I know the Minister of Culture, I am sure, regrets, any of the insinuations that took place. I certainly think that those comments were absolutely unacceptable and offensive. to suggest that members had somehow, I mean, I read the article, and it made it sound like there had been a hundred-odd paintings driven out the back door.

I can tell you, I am also Minister responsible for government security. I think whoever suggested that at the time does not understand our security system in this building. I think it was an insult to our security staff to suggest that someone would be taking large paintings out of their offices.

I remember one of the ones that was on the missing list, and I do not know how to describe this, but it is in my office right now. That was one of the ones that I identified. I looked at the name and I said, yeah, that is on the list. If you look around the wall here, it is actually taller than these particular ones. It must weigh a heck of a lot. Our government security staff would never allow that painting to be taken out of the building. Quite frankly, I do not think you could physically get it out anyway, and if you did, if you wanted to spot the thief, it would be the person with the hernia, because I tell you, they would not be able to move that kind of art.

So in a way it was an absurdity as a story, and I think it has to be said on the record. I do not blame the *Free Press*. I do not blame the media in the sense that someone is sort of leaking something or suggesting that something is going on, in terms of that. I am not blaming the media in terms of that for reporting it.

But let us get real here. It was a ridiculous, ridiculous story. I do not think anybody in our caucus, and I can say this without hesitation, not one person in our caucus I think thought it was appropriate for anybody to suggest this was somehow a hundred-odd pieces of art and the Conservatives were responsible for it. Because, as I said, we knew that some of that art had been in our offices and was listed as not being accounted for and, in some cases, my understanding is that it was art that had been in offices for years. It was in offices for years and it was not listed as being accounted for. So it had obviously been moved inappropriately a number of years before.

So, in conclusion, I would suggest that we look at, we can debate this motion, I am sure, I think it is important that we get the views out there, but I suggest to members opposite that the problem here is not the Minister of Culture. I do not think the problem is the Minister of Government Services, but we have taken responsibility for this issue collectively. We have taken responsibility by solving the problem. I would suggest if the members opposite want to put forward a motion that indicates clearly on the record, I am sure it would pass unanimously, that the original article was inappropriate. I am sure we would support that, because I know certainly in my discussions with the Minister we are certainly of that view as well.

But that is not what this motion does. This motion blames the Minister, suggests that the Minister somehow leaked this. By the way, it says, it does not talk in any terms of ministerial responsibility. I mentioned that before. We are responsible as ministers for whatever happens in our departments up to a certain point. But, you know, this is suggesting deliberate intent and action by the Minister of Culture.

I would suggest you might just as well add me in it too, if you want to amend it to throw me

in, because I am just as responsible as the Minister of Culture. Throw me in it, but you know, even again, it does not say whereas the ministers have ministerial responsibility for this. Because I accept responsibility. I am a strong believer in that concept. It suggests that the Minister exaggerated this issue. It suggests that the Minister gave information to the news media. It suggests that the Minister misused her office by falsely accusing members of stealing public artwork.

Now, what is that based on? The assumption that the Minister leaked this to the *Free Press*. Now, why this minister? Why not me? I mean, why not any member here? I really believe that when you make an accusation that is this serious, qualify it by saying whereas the Minister of Culture is responsible for what happened or the Minister of Government Services, because, as I say, throw me in. I am a part of it, too.

I think it is inappropriate for a motion to jump from the article right into the final conclusion that somehow the Minister personally was responsible for this article, because that is what it says in this motion. If you read this motion, remember the public reads this, they are going to say that members in this committee, if they vote for this, believe that the Minister is the one that is responsible for what appeared in that article. Well, I know that is not the case.

I know the Minister is a person of integrity. I know she did not leak that. I know I did not leak that. If you want to criticize us through ministerial responsibility for what happened, that I think is acceptable in the parliamentary system. But particularly to censure the Minister for these inappropriate actions—and I have heard this. I have heard people saying, well, the Minister should be sort of apologizing. I mean, apologizing for what? If this is what you are asking the Minister to apologize for, there is nothing to apologize for. She did not do this.

If you are asking for the ministers to acknowledge that what happened was unacceptable, inappropriate and was unfair particularly to Conservative members of the House, absolutely. I have said that on the record in my Committee. I believe that is the case here as well in this Committee. What happened was not appropriate,

period, but you know that is not the doing of this minister as I said. This minister, if anything, should be given some credit for solving the problem once it came up. Because as you know in the end, even under the principal parliamentary responsibility, ministerial responsibility, the key test in my mind is, one, you accept responsibility generally for what happens, which we have collectively done as ministers. But the way you do that, you do not just say that in words; you show it in action.

There are a lot of times that issues are raised. I have had issues raised brought to my attention by members opposite. When members opposite raise issues, as I did when I was in Opposition, the key test is whether you then resolve or even attempt to resolve the problem. You cannot always do that. I appreciate that. In this case the Minister did not just try to resolve the problem, she solved the problem. We now know where all but a handful of objects are located. We have now proven that the original article was wrong, that these items may have been misplaced, may have not been accounted for. But they were most definitely not stolen, okay?

So this is the absurdity of this. The Minister is the one, in co-operation with my department, as well, that has proven that in a way everything in this motion is not correct. If the Minister was the one that leaked it and created this impression, you think the Minister would have gone to all of this great extent of proving that the original statements were misleading and wrong that were in the newspaper story?

I suggest to members opposite this is going a bit beyond what the issue really is here. Let us resolve it. If the Members want to put forward a motion, I think we could probably find a motion that would state that that article was inappropriate and that nobody in the Legislature ever believed, and I certainly can say that that is the case in our caucus, we never believed that the art was stolen by any Conservative member or any member of the Legislature or any staff member. If they want that on the record to clear the air, I think that would be the appropriate way. This does not clear the air. It just muddies it up. It turns it into even more of a political issue than it really should be. So that is why I would urge

members not to support this motion. I would suggest to a large extent, too, I believe it has been debated for a number of days. *[interjection]* Three, four, five days.

I can say this from experience having been in opposition for a few years, sometimes you also make your point and you move on. I think the members have made their point. I actually thought they were making their point far better than when I came and read this motion. I thought the point of the members was that they were unfairly maligned in the article, and comments that were in the article were misleading and inappropriate. Quite frankly, that is the bottom line here. I think that what they have done by this, they have just muddied it up. We can spend another four or five days in committee discussing this, but surely there must be other items of public business for a matter that has been resolved.

As much as we can revisit what happened in May and the rest, this minister has resolved the problem. We now know where 99.99 percent of the art is. We can even amend this, I suppose, and put that in, but that is not the point here. Four or five days on this, I think the point has been made. We accept what the real point is here, and I would suggest let us vote on this motion and move on.

* (16:20)

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Seine River): Mr. Chair, I just want to put some comments on the record relative to some of the statements made by the Minister of Government Services. The initial issue was that we asked for release of the press release. About two days later, the Minister indicated that indeed there was no press release, and we were satisfied with that response.

However, the Minister also indicated there was perhaps a memo because the articles—all four of them by the way. There were four different news articles, not one indicated that it was "a government memo." On several occasions the Minister was asked to table the memo or release the memo. In fact, her own words on June 15 in Hansard were: "When we began proceedings today," which was last Thursday, "I did say that my department looked

through some of our documents and found a document that contained some phrasing that was similar to something that occurred in the Doug Nairne article." I am quoting the Minister from Hansard. "Actually I want to read that Doug Nairne article into the record this afternoon, and I would table copies for the members."

To this date, we have never seen that memo. Secondly—*[interjection]* Pardon me?

An Honourable Member: Maybe there was not one.

Mrs. Dacquay: Obviously, the Member did not read what I just read, and you can check Hansard. I am not going to reread it. It is very emphatic, very emphatic: "I did say that my department looked through some of our documents and found a document that contained some phrasing that was similar to something that occurred in the Doug Nairne article."

I just also want to indicate that had there been a little bit more co-operation on behalf of the Minister and not so much name-calling, this issue would never have come to this extent. I, as critic, would never have let it come to that extent, but we have tried continually, as my colleagues have—because everybody was very concerned about this issue. Also in the articles that have been referenced the Minister is quoted. The Minister is referred to exclusively. Not the Minister of Government Services, the Minister, Culture Minister Diane McGifford said only four pieces of art are now missing. That was the final article. We have tracked down almost everything. Previous articles also quoted the Minister and another source. McGifford said there were originally 400 pieces of art missing when the issue was brought to her attention in November.

I mean I applaud the Minister for taking the initiative and the efforts to find the art. Obviously, some people pay more attention to memos than others. I just want to put on the record that I was in the Speaker's office. I knew which items had been tagged, and all of those articles remained in the office when I cleaned out my office and moved on, because I understood those were the rules.

Also, there is a lot of other misinformation that has been put on the record relative to what she said, what he said. The Minister continued to imply that the memo that Don Leitch sent was sent to all ministers and occupants of those offices. Today the memo was tabled, and it was sent to deputy ministers. That is the first mention that has been made that indeed it was sent to deputy ministers who indeed may not have spoken to the outgoing ministers. So there has been a lot of, I think, accusation and innuendo put on the record that has caused this issue to become the issue it is today.

It concerns me because, when I started the line of questioning, I basically was just asking how this had happened and why. *[interjection]* You are right. The Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ashton) is right. There were a number of people offended by this article, and it does leave a poor image in the minds of the public. There was some direct finger pointing at the members who are current opposition members and formerly government members.

I think the most important point is that when we discussed it openly in our particular caucus after the first article hit the press, we had an open and free discussion, and our leader at that point in time was very adamant that we all check and look to see if any of us had missing artwork, provincial artwork, that was moved via staff or whatever other means from one office to another, and members on our side of the House, I am told, I did not witness it and I was not part of the conversation, assisted in that process and did report and notified the Department that art was returned to the appropriate authorities and/or that the location of same was then documented.

I think one of the real reasons that the politics has become probably more of an issue than the actual issue is because the Minister did admit, and so one would interpret that was indeed her initiative, that she initiated the audit, and that, once again, is on the record in Hansard. As the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ashton) had said, he thought the matter had been resolved, but I guess until we get actual confirmation that there was a memo either from the Minister's office, from the government Communications office, or indeed the Minister's

office, we will still be under the same understanding that this is what it was perceived to be. It is unfortunate, but all we have been trying to do is get the facts.

Also, I personally resent the fact that the Minister has put on record that I only asked six questions. There are at least five pages, and I thought that was every critic's right. I was asking about who held certain positions, why there was a change in their salaries. That is a normal line of questioning, and yet, on the record yesterday, I believe, in some of her comments, she indicated that that was inappropriate. My understanding of the Estimates process is that it gives the Opposition members the opportunity to question anything within the lines of budget.

This questioning did not start until such time as I was told that the capital line I asked for the change in the figures was indeed the acquisition of art. That amount was dedicated for the acquisition of art. That is the point of time at which the questioning started on the newspaper articles, the leaked memos and other issue and also that a number of my colleagues were then ministers at the time, and some of the rooms identified were their former offices. Justifiably, they wanted to speak to the issue as well.

I believe it was yesterday, also, the Minister indicated—I will not use the unparliamentary language she used towards members of this House but expressed concern that they were the only ones that asked questions on this issue. I mean, I did not interpret the issue or even the article as an insult because I knew I was not directly implicated or potentially implicated in the missing art issue, but there were a number of members on the Opposition side of the House who did feel strongly about it, and that is their right and their prerogative to come in and ask questions and make comments relative to the allegations.

With relation to the actual motion, the reason the motion was brought in, as I indicated earlier, was that it was sort of our last resort. We were not getting answers. We were getting very unsatisfactory answers, evasive answers and, in numerous instances, no answers. Additionally, the Minister continued to resort to name-calling. As a direct result of that, we wanted to put

closure to this issue, and that was the reason for the motion of censure.

I think, with that, Mr. Chair, some of my colleagues and other members may want to put further comments on the record.

* (16:30)

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Chairperson, I am pleased to be able to put some comments on the record and defend our Minister of Culture. I think that she is doing a very good job as minister so far. She is very well suited to her portfolio. I think she has a good understanding of cultural issues. I think sometimes, when people are appointed to Cabinet, some people blossom and some people wither on the vine. Of course, nobody on our side is withering on the vine, but some are blossoming, and this Minister is one. I commend her for that. *[interjection]* Or aging like a fine wine, as one of my colleagues says.

I would also like to put on the record what happened in my particular office, because this story came out before the person doing the inventory came to my office. Because there was a series of small paintings, I think there were, probably a total of maybe 15, maybe 20 pieces of art in my office that I inherited, and none of which were inventoried, I talked to the person. I am wondering if we have an art curator for the Province of Manitoba. I do not know what the title of this person is. but, in any case, I said that I did not want to keep any of the art. I believe it had all been there since 1988. It was probably there from the time that my office was the office of the minister of culture, the former member for St. John's, Judy Wasylycia-Leis. Interestingly, the office had never been painted since some time before 1988, but I understand the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ashton) has a schedule for painting offices, and mine will eventually be painted.

There was a request by me that two pieces of art from the NDP caucus room that were no longer wanted in the caucus room be transported to my office, and that request was agreed to. Members will know that there is a tag on all the art that indicates that it is owned by the Province of Manitoba with a number, I believe. On the

two pieces of art by a Ukrainian artist, it says artist unknown or author unknown, and I do not think there is even a title for the paintings. The reason is that the signature is in Ukrainian.

The first time I had someone in my office who could read and write Ukrainian, they immediately identified the title of the art and the artist. Next time that person comes back, I will have to get them to write it down and pass it on to the appropriate person so that the artist can be acknowledged, which would only be appropriate. It happened to be in Ukrainian writing, and I guess that posed a problem in the past.

So I guess the art in my office was one of the 104 pieces that were unaccounted for. I think the Minister's language is quite moderate. You know, the Opposition has been accusing people of using language like "stolen art," but if one consults the Minister's remarks in *Hansard*, looking at page 2576 on June 13, the Minister says: "This year, when this government assumed office, there was an inventory and the first go-round of the inventory revealed I think that there were 104 pieces of art unaccounted for," and I have been in the Estimates room quite a bit in the last week. I have not been here for every minute, and I cannot vouch for everything that the Minister has said on the record, but I have not heard her use the words "stolen artwork," and I think the words "unaccounted for" are quite neutral.

The Minister goes on to say, reading on page 2577: "It transpired that members on both sides of the House had moved offices and had apparently taken art with them without reporting to the government art bank that they had removed this art and had transported it to their new headquarters. It also turned out that certain pieces of art were put away in cupboards and a variety of places."

In fact, I recall from last week that one piece was in a box. The former Minister of Urban Affairs found it and did the right thing and turned it over. It was quite inadvertent. We all packed up our stuff in boxes. I believe there were 57 people that moved offices. When I moved I had 36 boxes. I am down to about 12, and as far as I know there is no art in any of them. It is all files.

But I think it is interesting that the Minister says "on both sides of the House" because when a story like this hits the press, I can understand the official opposition's sensitivity to this, but it really damages the reputation of all members, because frequently people do not make a distinction between government and opposition. I certainly experienced this when I was in opposition for nine years. People frequently referred to me as being part of the Government, and I always said, no, I am not part of the Government; I am part of the official opposition. Out in the community there, while this story may have identified one party, I think it probably hurt the reputation of everyone here. I think that is unfortunate, but I think it is significant that the Minister said that both sides of the House had moved offices and had apparently taken art with them, which is quite different from the story that we are being given, and quite different from the motion.

The motion, in all of the WHEREASes and in the last sentence, refers to the Minister. Just to reiterate what the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ashton) was saying, I think it is impossible for a Minister to apologize for something that she did not know about. It seems to me, from listening to the remarks of the Minister, that she did not know about the leaked memo. So I think it is difficult to apologize for something that one was not involved in. The Minister may choose to do something else. I do not know.

I am pleased that the tenor of the debate today is quite different from last week. I think the tone was set by the Member for Tuxedo (Mr. Filmon), in his words to the motion, and the Member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay). I think the level of the rhetoric has come down quite a bit today. Hopefully, that means that we can resolve this soon, either by voting on the motion and going on to another line in the Estimates, or if the members want to they can keep it going as long as they want, but probably we need to resolve this and move on to other items in the Minister's Estimates

Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose): I will follow on the comments that we just heard. There are certain things that happen in this building from time to time and things that are said that simply

are of the nature that they cannot go unchallenged. While I have not participated in this debate, I have been part of the committee sitting here from time to time, and I have been increasingly concerned about the position that the Minister felt she was in, whereby she felt she had no responsibility to the members of the Opposition in terms of the situation we have been discussing.

I would only point out that it is not just members of the Opposition who have been diminished. When I think about it, the Member for Tuxedo actually used these same words, but I am going to repeat them, and that is that we have diminished the stature of all elected MLAs through this debate.

If you want to have seen an apoplectic group, it was when we first saw the first article that came out. Whether the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), the Minister of Highways, correctly categorized it, he probably came close when he said that it was probably inappropriate in the way the information was put in the paper. I have also been in these halls long enough to know that it could well have been an overly enthusiastic person seeing an opportunity for a political haymaker to have given this just a gentle twist as the information was given to someone in the media. Again, whether it is any advantage to us to blame the media or not, it does not take much imagination to figure out how this article would have been published in the form that it was.

* (16:40)

If the Minister of Culture (Ms. McGifford) thinks that it is an overreaction, then I suppose she might not appreciate the fact that members on this side of the House do not much enjoy receiving letters and phone calls and shots in public about, so have you returned the Government art yet? I mean, when you do something that is dumb in the first place, that is bad enough, but when you have not done it or seem to have done something that was stupid—and in this case quite illegal—it does come down to relationship that we all develop in this House.

We take seriously our responsibilities, and from time to time we all, I think, believe that either side takes cheap shots. It happens in

Question Period, it happens in other situations, but this diminishes all MLAs in terms of what the public perception is of our responsibility and our level of responsibility. If the Minister needs a further edification, for most of the years that I was in the ministerial office, all of the paintings in the office were my own except for the last period of time there was a group of Tillenius drawings in the Natural Resources office. That is something that most people probably from the outside would not think.

And it does not matter about my personal situation. I would just suggest that if we want to get on with the day-to-day business of dealing with these Estimates, I think the Member for Tuxedo (Mr. Filmon), I think the Government Whip, the Minister of Highways (Mr. Ashton) put it appropriately. My colleague, I think, has come a long way in saying that we would not have gone to a motion of censure if there had been some meeting of the minds on this issue before, which is simply to say if there was unintentional damage done then somebody needs to take responsibility for it.

The Minister of Highways has taken his share of responsibility, and I suggest that the Minister of Culture, in demonstrating the wisdom that she from time to time can display, that this is an opportunity when we can get on with business and not be dealing with what can become a very personal issue under these circumstances.

I must admit that when I left this committee at its last sitting, some of the epithets that were being thrown back and forth between members, including myself, I was unwilling to let this committee leave this topic lie for any particular length of time, but having slept on it overnight I think now is the time to move on with the discussion. I will be interested to hear what comments the Minister may want to put on the record.

Mr. Chairperson: Is the committee ready for the question?

Point of Order

Mr. Cummings: I am not a procedural expert. I look to the Minister of Highways (Mr. Ashton),

if he wants to provide advice, or the Government House Leader (Mr. Mackintosh), but we are willing to waive the vote for a couple of minutes and give the Minister some opportunity to respond, if she chooses to.

Mr. Chairperson: There is no point of order.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: Does the Minister wish to speak?

Ms. McGifford: I would repeat what I have said several times ago and have always maintained throughout the debate, and that is it was an unfortunate article written in the *Free Press* and it remains an unfortunate article. It is regrettable that that article was written.

Mr. Chairperson: Is the Committee ready for the question?

Mrs. Dacquay: I would at this point in time withdraw the motion of censure and would hope that we could get on with the Estimates in Culture, Heritage and that we would have the co-operation of the Minister in terms of requests for information and tabling of same.

Mr. Chairperson: Is there unanimous consent for committee to withdraw the motion? *[Agreed]*

It was previously agreed to not pass lines 2. Culture, Heritage and Recreation Programs (b) Grants to Cultural Organizations, and 2.(c) Manitoba Arts Council (1) Grant Assistance. It was further agreed that once completion of consideration of line 2.(k) Manitoba Millennium Office (2) Other Expenditures is complete, the committee would skip ahead and consideration resolution 14.6 Capital Grants and then pass all lines and that resolution.

Is it still the will of the committee?

Mrs. Dacquay: Yes, Mr. Chair. Procedurally, I think we have to deal with line 2.(k)(2). We have not passed that line.

Mr. Chairperson: We will now proceed to line 2. Culture, Heritage and Recreation Programs, as agreed upon, (e) Arts Branch (2) Other Expen-

ditures \$139,600—pass; (3) Grant Assistance \$4,198,400. Shall the item pass?

Mrs. Dacquay: I have some questions on these lines, Mr. Chair. Could the Minister explain under the Community Arts Council's operating, the slight increase? I am not sure if that is traditionally the same amount or if that has some discretion in terms of applications that are submitted or how the granting occurs.

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, I understand, first of all, there are two new Arts Councils, but also there is increased municipal monies dedicated to Arts Councils. According to the funding formula established through our department, we provide matching dollars with the municipal council. So that is the explanation for that particular line.

Mrs. Dacquay: I thank the Minister for that response. Next, could the Minister please provide me with an explanation, under the provincial Community Arts operating line there is an increase year over year? I am wondering if that is the same. Are those matching dollar grants as well?

Ms. McGifford: There are two reasons for the increase in that budget line. First of all it is partly because of the formula, but also it is because of increased dollars for the Manitoba Crafts Council. That is the explanation.

Mrs. Dacquay: Mr. Chair, am I right in understanding that the grant assistance broken down here is broken down on the basis of granting for programs as well as grants for operating?

Ms. McGifford: Yes. That is correct, Mr. Chair.

Mrs. Dacquay: Under Project Support, could the Minister please explain to me what that line is and what the allocation is for?

* (16:50)

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, the Project Support grants provide support for arts and cultural industries related initiatives which complement the department's initiatives. They are relating to arts and cultural industries development. This line includes rural and northern, Francophone and Aboriginal skills development and training,

cost-shared cultural ententes and exchanges, anniversaries, commemorative and other kinds of special events which the Department may from time to time be asked to support. That is the explanation.

There is a new grant funding in this line of \$10,500 for the support of the Manitoba Writers' Guild literary awards, which is included in the 2000-2001 budget. This is support actually for two literary awards and also support for the administration of those awards. The awards are the Margaret Laurence Award for fiction and the Alexander Kennedy Isbister Award for non-fiction. So I hope that accounts for the Member's questions.

Mrs. Dacquay: Does the Minister have a breakdown in terms of the monetary amount for the awards and then the administrative costs related to that?

Ms. McGifford: Yes, they are 3.5 for each of the awards and 3.5 for the administration of the awards, which also will in turn support the whole Manitoba Brave New Words, the event itself.

Mrs. Dacquay: Two lines down, under the Film and Sound Support line, is that amount representative of the tax incentives that are awarded to the sound companies, or is that program initiatives?

Ms. McGifford: It is the latter, Mr. Chair. The \$2,204,700 goes to Manitoba Film and Sound. Manitoba Film and Sound are in partnership with the Manitoba Motion Pictures Industry Association, the Manitoba Audio Recording Industry Association. Well, I should not say partnership. These are industry associations. The National Screen Institute, some funding goes to them. Some money is given out in grants through the Manitoba Film and Sound Development Corporation.

Mrs. Dacquay: The tax incentives that I referred to then, are they in the Department of Finance?

Ms. McGifford: Yes. That is correct. That is under the Department of Finance.

Mrs. Dacquay: I am not sure that this is the most appropriate line to ask this next question, but I will go ahead and somebody can tell me if they prefer I ask it later on. I just wanted to know if the Minister has an update on the status of the movie that has been on again, off again, "Ogopogo," it is entitled.

Ms. McGifford: Well, it is a very timely question, because this morning I had a meeting with the chair of the Manitoba Film and Sound Development Corporation and also the vice-chair of the Manitoba Film and Sound Development Corporation. They assured me that it is on again and most likely shooting to begin in spring 2001.

Mrs. Dacquay: I thank the Minister for that update, and that is indeed good news for all Manitobans. I am hopeful that we will have other opportunities in the very near future. It certainly bodes well for our province and all Manitobans. In particular, Winnipeg and Manitoba are gaining a very reputable recognition that has been very well deserved, and I think we now have the industry at the point where we probably are able to compete with some of the other major cities in Canada and that indeed is very encouraging.

Is the Minister aware of any other potential films being located in Winnipeg and Manitoba in the very near future, during her ongoing discussions?

Ms. McGifford: I think it was about a week ago that a number of producers toured the province of Manitoba and five of them or six of them—I cannot remember the exact number, but I do remember attending an evening and speaking to them—all the producers were very excited about the sites in Manitoba that they had visited, and three producers are particularly interested in filming here. My understanding is that two of them were quite taken with the baseball stadium and were interested in using that as a site for a production or at least one site for their production. I am sure it would not be exclusively shot there.

As well, I believe that we had some very good news today in that there was a news release from Crocus who announced that they will be

funding a company and that will be—thank you, I was just checking with staff. Apparently Crocus intends to fund a new Manitoba film production company, that it intends to do approximately \$60-million worth of business in the next three years. So I can see the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) is very happy to hear that.

Mrs. Dacquay: Is it a local firm or is it an out-of-province firm?

Ms. McGifford: It is a new firm, and it will be a local firm.

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

Mr. Chairperson: Line 14.2. Culture, Heritage and Recreation Programs (e) Arts Branch (3) Grant Assistance \$4,198,400—pass.

Next we have 14.2.(f) Public Library Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$798,000. Shall the line pass?

Mrs. Dacquay: Sorry, my questions are under Other Expenditures. Mr. Chair, I am prepared to pass that line.

Mr. Chairperson: 14.2.(f) Public Library Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$798,000—pass.

Mrs. Dacquay: Under Other Expenditures, the Communications line.

Mr. Chairperson: I will read it first. 14.2.(f) Public Library Services (2) Other Expenditures \$728,900. Shall the line pass?

Mrs. Dacquay: I have some questions under this section. Could I please have an explanation under the line identified as Communications, why there is such a substantive decrease year over year?

Ms. McGifford: I think the Member will notice that there is a decrease in Communications and an increase in Other Operating. The explanation is that desktop was moved from Communications to Other Operating which explains the decrease in one line and then the consequent increase in a second line.

* (17:00)

Mrs. Dacquay: I just have some general questions on the Public Library Services. This is an area that is quite near and dear to my heart, although I have not had a lot of experience with other provincial libraries other than the City of Winnipeg Library. I had the pleasure of serving on the board for three years.

Additionally, I served on the national library board from Ottawa for almost five years. So I recognize that one of the main concerns always is the lack of, or perceived lack of, funding and the inherent costs in offering the services to the public and the age-old argument as to whether there should be a fee attached to utilization of libraries to increase the monies available for the operation of the libraries and the acquisition of new materials.

I know most recently there have been even greater costs attributable primarily to automation. I am wondering if there are any current initiatives with relation to providing assistance for increasing the amount of automation and updating some of the provincial libraries and to what degree, I guess.

Ms. McGifford: I can address two initiatives. I understand that the Community Services Council has, in fact, automated all libraries in Manitoba, with the exception of two libraries and two small branches.

I also want to point to one of the initiatives of which my department is particularly proud. That is the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which recently gave 46 Manitoba public library branches a grant totalling \$1.1 million. The point of this was to expand public access, computing and Internet access in public libraries. The grant, as the Member might remember, was for computer hardware, software, technical support, connectivity and training.

As I indicated, it was delivered to 46 libraries that serve low-income populations. I thought that was particularly important because some families can, of course, afford books for their children and some families simply cannot. I know even those families that can afford books and can afford computers and computer software

also might use the library. So we are very pleased with that.

Also, I understand that Microsoft Canada will donate software towards this project, software with a retail value of \$312,228, and this will go to all the libraries receiving grants from Gates.

I also understand that there has been money from a CAP project, which is funded through Industry Canada, CAP being short for the Community Access Project, and there has been funding of \$112,000 for rural libraries.

Mrs. Dacquay: I thank the Minister. Indeed, that is very encouraging. To what extent has the province-wide network been developed? I know it was in process, if memory serves me correctly, over the last few years. Can the Minister provide me with an update on the status of that initiative?

Ms. McGifford: I just want to check that we are talking about the same thing. So I understand the Member opposite is asking me about the Manitoba public library card, what would be a proposed universal card in the Province of Manitoba so that one card would do throughout the province. Thank you for the question.

I understand that our department is certainly committed to providing library services to all its citizens. We are consulting with other government departments and the Manitoba library community on strategies for the design and the development of what will become the Manitoba library or province-wide library network, which would make the collective holdings of all of Manitoba available to all Manitobans so that, regardless of where an individual resided, that individual would have access to library books throughout the province.

Just to complete the answer, so that all rural libraries—and in this department, we talk about all libraries outside Winnipeg as rural libraries, although they may be in the city of Brandon or in the city of Thompson, so that all those libraries would be connected with the Winnipeg Public Library system with which I understand the Member is familiar.

Mrs. Dacquay: I am sorry, just for clarification, am I to understand from the Minister's response

that the program is not quite completed but it is ongoing?

Ms. McGifford: Yes, I understand from staff that the first part of the project is complete in that libraries currently have access to books throughout the province and have access to the union catalogue which is located in Brandon—all electronic, pardon me, of course. I heard about it in Brandon when I was visiting there. So Manitobans can borrow books from each other's libraries.

Mrs. Dacquay: That system is now up and running?

Ms. McGifford: Yes, it is now up and running. The system is now running so that Manitobans can borrow books from other libraries.

Mrs. Dacquay: Through the Minister, has it proven that there is increased utilization of the catalogue resources and a lot of interchange from one rural jurisdiction to another?

Ms. McGifford: I understand that circulation of books has increased dramatically, as has borrowing among the different libraries. I do not have specific figures for the Member at this time.

Mrs. Dacquay: I thank the Minister for that response, and that indeed also is encouraging. It was one of the issues that I worked so hard with a volunteer board to ensure that we got wider circulation through the City of Winnipeg library, and particularly when there was always the danger of the reduction and the proposals in trying to save costs to reduce the operating hours of libraries. I am really pleased to hear that indeed the program has proven its merits, and I thank the Minister for that response.

I am prepared to pass that line.

* (17:10)

Mr. Chairperson: 14.2. Culture, Heritage and Recreation Programs (f) Public Library Services (2) Other Expenditures \$728,900—pass; (3) Grant Assistance \$4,390,000. Shall the line pass?

Mrs. Dacquay: Can I just get clarification of the line that the Chair just referenced. Is that Grant Assistance?

Mr. Chairperson: Yes, it is Grant Assistance.

Mrs. Dacquay: Under Grant Assistance, can the Minister please advise is this amount pretty much consistent from one year to another year?

Ms. McGifford: Yes, the Grant Assistance line includes grants to the Winnipeg Public Library as well as to rural libraries throughout the province and to six library organizations. For example, the Manitoba Library Association would be one of them. Yes, that is quite consistent.

Mrs. Dacquay: I thank the Minister. I was not sure which line was the appropriate line that awarded the grants to the respective associations and libraries. Can the Minister please tell me what the current amount is that is granted to the City of Winnipeg Public Library?

Ms. McGifford: To be very specific, it is \$1,910,118 or 11 percent of the approved operating budget of the library. Now that is the maximum.

Mrs. Dacquay: Can the Minister tell me, indeed, is that the amount that would be awarded for this fiscal year \$1.9? I recognize that is the maximum, or have the operating costs for the City of Winnipeg library changed?

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, the amount that our department approves is \$1,910,100 for this year, but that is 11 percent of the operating budget. If the City of Winnipeg's operating budget declines, then our 11 percent would likewise decline. I am assuming the Member understands.

Mrs. Dacquay: Yes, I understand that. I guess I added at the end, and perhaps the Minister did not hear me: Is there any anticipated reduction in the City of Winnipeg's operating costs? At one point it had been on the continual decline, and because I have been removed from that board and that financial system through the City of Winnipeg for a few years now, just wondering sort of what the trend is.

Ms. McGifford: Yes, I can tell the Member that last year, that is 1999-2000, the grant was about \$100,000 less or \$1,805,800, and in 1998-1999, it was \$1,844,300. It fluctuates, I am told,

slightly from year to year, and last year it was slightly lower.

Mrs. Dacquay: I would like to thank the Minister for that clarification, and I am prepared to pass that line now, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: Line (f)(3) Grant Assistance \$4,390,000—pass.

Next, we have (g) Historic Resources (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,190,900.

Mrs. Dacquay: I have some questions here under Salaries, Managerial. I have to confess that I am not extremely well informed on this particular branch or I understand the operations of same. I assume that this department of the Arts Branch operates comparable to the other Arts Branch in that there is a staff allotment. There are operating costs, and then there are grants that are made available to the various heritage agencies and museums and other associations.

Ms. McGifford: Yes, I think that the Member has summed up the way the Historic Resources branch operates their own staff. Staff provide consultations quite often, as well, the Department also provides grant assistance. I think that the Member can see the Grant Assistance lines, and perhaps she will have questions about them.

Perhaps, I can also take this opportunity to introduce staff member, Donna Dul, who is in a managerial position at the Historic Resources branch; director is her title.

Mrs. Dacquay: There is a slight decrease under the Salaries line, Professional/Technical. Was there a change in the staffing, because it looks like the same number of staff are in that department?

Ms. McGifford: Yes, the amount, that is about \$6,000 less, is due to the fact that in 2000-2001 there were two less working days than there were in the previous year.

Mr. Chairperson: Line (g) Historic Resources (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,190,900—pass. (2) Other Expenditures \$382,800.

Mrs. Dacquay: Is the explanation the same for the change in the line identified as Capital and Other Operating. In other words, was there a move in the other departments? It has been identified as a change in the computer, I guess, capital related to computer—desktop. That is the word I am looking for, desktop.

Ms. McGifford: Yes, the Member for Seine River is quite right. That is the explanation.

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

Mr. Chairperson: Line (g) Historic Resources (2) Other Expenditures \$382,800—pass; (3) Grant Assistance \$918,100.

Mrs. Dacquay: Mr. Chair, could the Minister identify some, if not all, of the museums that receive grants through this program? or is it based on an application process?

Ms. McGifford: The Member is referring to the community museums' grants, and my understanding is that there are 110 community museums. I do not know whether the Member wants me to read the 110 into the record, but I could if she wished.

Mrs. Dacquay: That is not necessary that you read all 110 into the record, but just so that I am better informed. I think I know what some of them or probably the most readily identifiable ones are. I also have another question regarding the museum grants. Is there a formula, and what constitutes the formula? Is it based on the size or location or number of employees?

* (17:20)

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, I am informed by staff that the museums are broken into two categories. There is Level 1. The Level 1 museums are 1350 in terms of grants. There are 36 of them. I will just provide a couple of examples for the Member, and perhaps that will meet her needs. For example, the Clack Family Heritage Museum foundation, the Franklin Museum, the Lundar Museum society, Manitoba glassworks historic site, Miami Railway Station Museum association. There is about four

examples. I could do more, but if the Member wants more, she could ask me.

Secondly, the Level 2 museums, there are 74 museums. They receive a maximum of 3150, but that is the maximum. Just to provide a few examples there: Carberry Plains Museum, Fort Garry Historical Society, Manitoba Automobile Museum, Miniota Municipal Museum, Ukrainian Museum and Village Society, White-mouth Municipal Museum society, so 74 of those museums.

I know the Member asked a question about how we determine the level of funding. The level of assistance, the Level 1 grants are calculated as 90 percent of funds raised locally, up to a maximum of 1350. Level 2 grants are calculated as the same 90 percent formula, up to 45 percent of normal operating expenses. The maximum is 3150 for the level. That there is a formula involved is the answer to the Member's question.

Mrs. Dacquay: The Minister, when she read, I thought that these, the way the line was ordered, were physical museums, but I think I am led to believe that there are some associations that are funded in there as well. Is that correct?

Ms. McGifford: Apparently there are some historical societies involved, as the Member points out, but the historical societies need to run museums to qualify for support under this program.

Mrs. Dacquay: I thank the Minister for that clarification.

Ms. McGifford: I wanted to amend what I said. The historical societies would need to run museums or else provide care for collections. They may not necessarily have a physical facility, but they are the custodians of a collection. For that they receive money.

Mrs. Dacquay: I thank the Minister for that explanation. I was not aware of that, but when I recognized some of the names, I thought, that is not a physical museum. At least if it is, I want to know where it is, because it is not one I am familiar with.

Under the next line, Provincial Heritage Agencies, once again, these, I assume, are matching grants. Are they based on what the individual associations raise? Is that primarily the actual association, as opposed to the physical museum or building, under this classification of provincial heritage agencies?

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, the Department provides grants to nine provincial heritage organizations. They apply annually. They submit their plans and budgets every year. The funding levels are determined during the departmental Estimates process. These organizations are advised by a ministerial letter early in the fiscal year. Generally these organizations have a provincial impact, a historical relationship with the Department, or they have been contracted by the department to deliver a service or a program.

There are nine of them. Perhaps the Member would like me to read the names into the record. The Association for Manitoba Archives, the Association for Manitoba Museums, Heritage Winnipeg, Jewish Heritage Centre, Manitoba Archaeological Society, Manitoba Genealogical Society, Manitoba Historical Society, Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature, formerly, anyway, let me just leave it at that. Please excuse my terrible French, La Société Historique de St. Boniface.

Mrs. Dacquay: Do they all get an equal amount of grant applied, or does it vary in terms of the association?

Ms. McGifford: The level of funding is negotiated annually. No, they do not get equal amounts at all. It does not necessarily change from year to year, but, no, they do not receive equal grants because their responsibilities and the work that they undertake is not necessarily the same, nor is it necessarily equal.

Mrs. Dacquay: The Minister indicated that they are negotiated annually. Do they actually fill out an application, and then discussion ensues after the application has been completed? Could she tell me, on what basis, or what factors are included in the negotiation for the amount?

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, I understand that these organizations submit an annual plan, which

is reviewed by the staff, and that, historically, there has been very little change from year to year. In a sense, it functions as an operating grant. The individual organizations, with this in mind, can do the planning and work that they need to do to protect the integrity of their particular association.

Mrs. Dacquay: Am I right in assuming that under Community Museums Grants, provincial heritage agencies and special theme museums, that there is one line of funding to the respective museums? or can one museum apply for funding under each of the three grant assistance programs identified?

Ms. McGifford: I understand you are either a Level 1 or a Level 2 museum, or you are a provincial heritage agency, or you are a special theme museum. It is not really an exception, but I did include the Manitoba Museum of Nature—Manitoba Museum, as I prefer to call it—here. This is for Conservation Services only. The Member might remember that there is another line of funding earlier that included the Manitoba Museum.

Mrs. Dacquay: Could the Minister identify some of the special theme museums? Is this the line that the Dugald Costume Museum, as an example, would receive funding under?

* (17:30)

Ms. McGifford: Yes, Mr. Chair, we provide operating grants to six special theme museums. These museums include: the Western Canada Aviation Museum, the Manitoba Agricultural Museum, the Mennonite Heritage Village, the Dugald Costume Museum, as the Member rightly assumed, the Commonwealth Air Training Plan Museum, the New Iceland Heritage Museum, and that is it.

Mrs. Dacquay: Is the funding for these special theme museums based on two levels of funding formulae?

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, I understand the museums receive generally a maximum of \$55,000, and these particular museums have the potential to be significantly enhanced through Heritage. What am I saying? I am saying that

they are related to tourism initiatives. The Department has evolved the idea of having a core of theme museums around the province—that includes the ones, obviously, that I read—that would be museums unto themselves, and have value in and of themselves, but also be important in attracting tourists to that particular museum and, consequently, to that part of the world, that part of Manitoba.

Mrs. Dacquay: The Minister alluded—I think her explanation was to enhance these museums and promote them as destination tourist sites, but I was of the impression that those facilities could also acquire funding through Manitoba Tourism.

Ms. McGifford: I understand that is quite right, but the funding that the Member is referring to is funding that is acquired for specific and special projects, not for the ongoing operating costs of the museum. Of course, it is extremely important, as I am sure the Member knows, for the museums to be able to count on ongoing operating funding.

I did want to point out that the Manitoba Agricultural Museum, which is one of the theme museums, and it is located in Austin, Manitoba, is a special case in that its funding is higher than the \$55,000 maximum that I indicated. It is a special case because it came to us from agriculture. Historically, the funding has been higher. This is an important museum to the province because it is a museum that is devoted to the agricultural theme, and, of course, it has been so important in the history of our province. So I did want to explain to the Member that the Agricultural Museum does receive more funding than the others.

Mrs. Dacquay: Are these operating grants under this section pretty consistent year over year?

Ms. McGifford: Yes, they are.

Mrs. Dacquay: I am prepared to pass the grants line.

Mr. Chairperson: Line 14.2. Culture, Heritage and Recreation Programs (g) Historic Resources (3) Grant Assistance \$918,100—pass.

14.2.(h) Recreation and Wellness Promotion (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$483,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$236,700. Shall the line pass?

Mrs. Dacquay: Once again, I apologize, but I am not that well versed in terms of this section. Under the Other Expenditures and operating, are those costs that are costs related to the programming for the Recreation and Wellness Promotion Branch?

Ms. McGifford: I understand that the Other Expenditures listed here are related to the operating costs of the branch and the travel expenses associated with the branch.

Mrs. Dacquay: I have no further questions under that section. I want to move to the Grant Assistance.

Mr. Chairperson: Line 14.2.(h)(2) Other Expenditures \$236,700—pass; (3) Grant Assistance \$671,900. Shall the line pass?

Mrs. Dacquay: I have questions under this section, Mr. Chair. The line entitled Recreational Opportunities Program, are those grants that are awarded to community-based programs? Is the funding done by an initiative of the communities program through an application process, or is this an ongoing assistance for operating costs?

Ms. McGifford: Just to provide the Member with some answers to her questions, I understand that participation in the program is based on the submission of a detailed proposal. It is prepared by partnering municipal authorities, and there is some definite content included in each proposal which I could run through if the Member so desired: a copy of the by-law signed and sealed by each participating municipal authority establishing their involvement in the commission; the terms of reference for the operation of the commission including financial contributions by each partner; a projected annual budget and operational plan; an agreement to provide audited financial departments. I understand that there is no intake deadline. Applications are anticipated through ongoing consultation with recreation delivery system partners, including staff of each regional office.

Just to give the Member a little bit more information, there are 126 municipal corporations participating in 44 rural district commissions, and 37 school divisions are also among the partnering organizations in these 14 recreational districts so that several districts, as I am sure the Member understands, or several, pardon me, municipal corporations joined together to form a district and then conduct their recreation programs in that district.

Mrs. Dacquay: I thank the Minister for that response. But this funding is directed towards the actual program. Is that a correct assumption?

Ms. McGifford: Yes, I understand that the money pays the salaries of the directors or commissions in each of those 44 recreation districts that we mentioned.

* (17:40)

Mrs. Dacquay: Do the applicants for the programs, is it a program that involves both recreation and wellness or do some qualify for recreation benefits and some on the wellness component?

Ms. McGifford: These programs involve both recreation and wellness.

Mrs. Dacquay: Is this the appropriation for the recreation and wellness celebration day that the Minister holds annually? In fact, I think it was just this past month.

Ms. McGifford: I think the Member is referring to the Summer Active and the Winter Active programs. They are, I understand, funded in the Other Expenditures category.

Mrs. Dacquay: Could I just get clarification? I do not see it identified unless it is under Other Operating under Other Expenditures.

Ms. McGifford: It would depend which portion of the program. For example, the advertisement that is in the newspaper would be funded under Communications whereas the remainder of the program, that day program or ongoing program—actually I think it lasted a week or three weeks this winter—would be funded through Other Operating.

Mrs. Dacquay: Under the Recreation Operating Grants, are those grants awarded to the same 126 municipal and 37 school districts as the same groups that are funded under the Recreational Opportunities Program line?

Ms. McGifford: The answer is not necessarily the same. I could give the Member some idea of the organizations that are funded through the grants if she would like.

I keep jumping ahead of the Chair, and I do apologize.

For example, Recreation Connections is funded, the Manitoba Camping Association, the Manitoba Naturalists' Society, the Canadian Red Cross Society, Winnipeg Boys and Girls Clubs, Manitoba Camping Association, Sunshine Fund, Canadian Red Cross Water Safety, Volunteer Centre of Winnipeg, Westman Sun Fund and Manitoba Fitness Council.

I mentioned the recreation connection, the rec districts before, and these are for organizations not for districts.

Mrs. Dacquay: I thank the Minister for that clarification. I do not know how much information the Minister can provide me or whether there is more than one group that is called by the same name. She made reference to the Sunshine Fund. The program that I understand as the Sunshine Fund I thought was only City-initiated and City-financed. It is the program that provides access for underprivileged children to athletic programs within—well, the only one I am familiar with is the City of Winnipeg, but I was not aware that it was also funded by provincial funding.

Ms. McGifford: The Member is quite right. The word "sunshine" does occur in—no, well, anyway, variations on sun. There is a Sunshine Fund which is a Winnipeg fund, and the Member has rightly identified the activities of the Sunshine Fund. The other organization I mentioned was the Westman Sun Fund which does similar work except that fund is housed in Brandon.

Mrs. Dacquay: Can I ask on this line then: Is the Minister aware approximately how much funding is given to the Sunshine Fund?

Ms. McGifford: Yes, I am. For the past three years—I do not think it is given to the fund, the fund distributes it, and the amount of money has been \$35,000.

Mrs. Dacquay: Is that an annual grant that is applied to the Sunshine Fund, or allocated?

Ms. McGifford: Yes, it is an annual grant. I might add that the Westman Sun Fund is \$5,000 annually.

Mrs. Dacquay: Is the difference in the level of funding based on the number of participants?

Ms. McGifford: Yes, that is correct. It is based on the number of participants in the program.

Mrs. Dacquay: Also on this, one of the other organizations identified that I have been involved with is the Winnipeg Boys and Girls Club. Once again that is a city initiative and I do not know why but I do not recall that the province also provided some funding. Is that more recent? Was it at one point in time only funded by the City of Winnipeg? I guess my other question related to that is what level of funding are they able to access through this appropriation?

Ms. McGifford: After consulting with staff, I am advised that the provincial government has been providing funds to the Winnipeg Boys and Girls Clubs for at least 10 years. In 1998-99 and '99-2000 and again this year we will be providing \$19,100 to the Winnipeg Boys and Girls Clubs.

Mrs. Dacquay: I would like to thank the Minister. I noticed that the amount of funding allocated to these respective organizations varies, and I wonder if the Minister could give me some indication of what formula or what base principles are used for the awarding of these grants.

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, there is not a formula. These funds are provided on a case-by-case basis, depending on the work that the agency does and depending obviously on the needs that the agency has, so it is a case-by-case basis.

Mrs. Dacquay: I hope I am not overlooking—I left, incredibly, all my notes that I made in my other office so I am doing this on a recall basis. I hope I am not missing any important questions that I wanted to ask on these sections. I am wondering if the Minister, should I bring my other documentation tomorrow—I recognize the staff for this section may not—is there an individual staff component that would interfere if I proceeded to pass this line and if I find that I have not asked the question, would it be problematic for the Minister if I brought those questions forward tomorrow?

Ms. McGifford: No, Mr. Chair, that would not be a problem.

* (17:50)

Mr. Chairperson: Line 14.2. Culture, Heritage and Recreation Programs (h) Recreation and Wellness Promotion (3) Grant Assistance \$671,900—pass.

Line 14.2.(j) Regional Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$943,300. Shall the line pass?

Mrs. Dacquay: Can I just get clarification from the Minister under the Professional/Technical? I see the numbers of employees have not changed. I assume the increase is attributable to classifications and merit increases.

Ms. McGifford: Again, Mr. Chair, the Member is right. The cost adjustment here is due to merit increases, and that is the explanation for the increase.

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

Mr. Chairperson: 14.2.(j) Regional Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$943,300—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$329,400. Shall the item pass?

Mrs. Dacquay: Under this section there is a slight increase year over year under the section Other Operating, and I am asking if the Minister could provide some clarification, please.

Ms. McGifford: Once again, Mr. Chair, the answer to that is an increase in desktop management charges from the provincial data network.

Mr. Chairperson: 14.2.(j)(2) Other Expenditures \$329,400—pass; (3) Grant Assistance \$35,100. Shall the line pass?

Mrs. Dacquay: Could I please have an explanation as to which organizations get the grant funding?

Ms. McGifford: There are two grants here. One is a grant for Frontier Games, and the other is a grant for Northern Manitoba Recreation Association, sometimes known as NORMRA.

Mrs. Dacquay: Mr. Chair, I thank the Minister for that explanation, and I am prepared to pass that line.

Mr. Chairperson: Item 14.2.(j)(3) Grant Assistance \$35,100—pass.

14.2.(k) Manitoba Millennium Office (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits. Shall the line pass?

Mrs. Dacquay: I recognize under this section that this government did not see fit to continue with the Millennium Office and the millennium projects as previously outlined, but I thought there was some funding being provided for one, if not two, millennium projects that were going to be ongoing. I would like clarification as to where I might find those amounts.

Ms. McGifford: Just to answer the Member's question, some funding was forwarded to festivals. For example, there was a festival held at The Forks and in the environs of The Forks on New Year's Eve. There was some money set aside for a celebration at the Pan Am Games. There were two or three festivals or initiatives in the fall. One of them was a candlelight parade. But, of course, I think what the Member is most interested in is our signature project, which is the \$2.125 million for the Trans-Canada Trail, which will be 900 kilometres long through the province of Manitoba, and we certainly find that extremely exciting.

As to the budgetary questions that the Member is raising, that money was paid out last year.

Mrs. Dacquay: Yes, Mr. Chair, but was there not an allocation of funding for the Trans-Canada Trail that is ongoing because as I understand it, the project has not been completed?

Ms. McGifford: Yes, Mr. Chair, the Manitoba Recreational Trail Association is the custodian of that funding, and will be dispersing those funds over the course of three years, as the trail develops, for trail markers, for interpretative materials, trail signs, project management and trail development for the Trans-Canada Trail.

As well, a small portion of the entire funding has been set aside for non-Trans-Canada Trail trails; that is spurs. For example, if the Member has seen the route of the Trans-Canada Trail, it comes into Manitoba at around Falcon Lake, West Hawk Lake, and comes almost directly west to Winnipeg and proceeds down the Red River to Emerson and then begins to cut westward across country. After a bit, it goes up almost at a 45-degree angle across the province and leaves the province at around Russell.

So from the description that I provided, I think the Member can see that there are great areas of Manitoba whose communities would not have access to the Trans-Canada Trail, realizing the inequities of Thompson and The Pas, for example, being so cut off from the trail. I am just giving examples. There are many other communities that are not contiguous with this trail. But given this picture, we decided to put aside a sum of money for trail development, and these projects could ultimately connect to the Trans-Canada Trail as spur trails, but they could also be independent local and regional trails.

But the answer to the Member's first question is the Manitoba Recreational Trail Association is the custodian of those funds. I have never seen such a happy group of people as those folks were the day that they visited and we were able to tell that they had been granted \$2.125 million. It was a very happy day for them.

Mrs. Dacquay: Mr. Chair, when the Minister referenced that there is the potential to tie in some current non-existent trails to hook up with the overall proposal of the Trans-Canada Trail, is the assumption that any funding required for that will be taken from the previously allocated \$2.125 million?

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, yes, it would be taken from the previous \$2.125 million, but \$400,000 of that sum has been set aside for this purpose so that there is a set amount of money, a particular pot, for the development of these trails.

I should point out that any monies accessed through this trail development need to be matched by the communities. In fact, I believe that is true of all sections of the trail. It is quite an incredible volunteer project, and I believe it can be in kind, so that it is not just coughing up the money but providing the labour, for example, or perhaps, in some circumstances, materials, et cetera.

Mrs. Dacquay: Can the Minister provide me with an update as to the status of the development of those trails?

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

LABOUR

* (14:50)

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

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

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): I was asking a question yesterday as the bells rang, so I will just finish off the question. I believe we are in Occupational Health Branch, Resolution 00-JE-

06 from the NDP Brandon convention, and it states:

WHEREAS supervisors and management personnel lack education on OH and S regulations; and

WHEREAS they should be required to display knowledge of OH and S regulations now.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED demonstrated knowledge pertaining to the OH and S regulations must be proven by a standard approved by the Workers Compensation Board before a person may supervise workers.

That is from the IWA Canada local unions. Is the Minister planning legislation that would require this kind of knowledge of occupational health and safety? Is this going to be a plan for the Government?

Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister of Labour): Madam Chair, Section 4 of the Act requires that employers know the risks that are inherent in their workplace and that they provide training to their employees to ameliorate those risks.

Mr. Schuler: On page 37 under the line Managerial, there is quite an increase. Could the Minister explain why such a strong increase?

Ms. Barrett: Dr. Redekop is the managerial position here. The MMA, Manitoba Medical Association, negotiated with the former government an increase for the physicians within the government employee physicians. There was an increase, and I believe this was some retroactivity involved here, and so this is reflected in the increase in that line.

Mr. Schuler: I would like to move into Mines Inspection now.

Ms. Barrett: I would like to introduce Mr. Kesari Reddy, who is involved with special projects in mining.

Mr. Schuler: In the Annual Report, there is a mention of four regional offices. What is the breakdown of staff at these offices?

Ms. Barrett: Thompson has one; Flin Flon has two; Snow Lake has one; and Winnipeg has two.

Mr. Schuler: Can the Minister provide some detail on the labour management consensus building committee?

Ms. Barrett: This group is a subcommittee of the Advisory Council on Workplace Safety and Health. Over the last at least 15 years or so, they have been a balance between management and workers in the mining industry. They take a look at this current situation and then make determinations and recommendations after consultation with each other about changes to the mining regulations that should take place.

Mr. Schuler: Who are the members of this committee?

Ms. Barrett: We do not have those specific names at this point, but we will get them for the Member.

Mr. Schuler: How often do they meet?

Ms. Barrett: Quarterly.

Mr. Schuler: Under Expected Results, tripartite committees are mentioned. What types of codes and regulations are these committees involved in developing?

Ms. Barrett: The codes of practice are not regulations. They are codes of practice. So what these tripartite committees, what they do is they take a look at the best codes of practice, the standards, in other jurisdictions and see where Manitoba's codes of practice may need to be upgraded. Then they would make recommendations that they be upgraded.

Regulations would include things like methods of hoisting, getting men hoisted up and down the mineshaft, the signalling that is done in mines which is done by bells. Again, those are the kinds of things that over time and with new technology and new kinds of mines that are developed, new mineshafts, et cetera, you need to have groups that can take a look at those regulations as well as the codes of practice.

Mr. Schuler: How many committees are there?

Ms. Barrett: Actually, there is a typographical error in this. It should be tripartite committee, singular not plural. It is made up of representatives from health and safety committees in every mine in the province who get together quarterly to discuss codes of practice and any regulatory changes that they would like to recommend.

Mr. Schuler: Who are the members of this committee?

Ms. Barrett: This is the same committee that we spoke of earlier, the names of which I will get for the Member.

Mr. Schuler: The labour-management consensus building committee and the tripartite committee are the same thing?

* (15:00)

Ms. Barrett: Yes. One is the Activity Identification which is what you want to do, kind of the activity that is going to help you reach your objective. The second is under the Expected Results which is how you actually go about implementing the Activity Identification. So they are two parts of the same entity: one is the identification of what you want to do, and the other more detailed Expected Results one is the identification of who is going to actually do it.

Mr. Schuler: Would any of the recommendations from this committee go to the labour/management review committee?

Ms. Barrett: No, this is not labour relations, so it would not go to the labour management review committee. The reporting mechanism for this process is through the Advisory Council on Workplace Safety and Health, and that council then reports to the Minister. The Minister will then look at the recommendations and decide—

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

The Committee recessed at 3:02 p.m.

The Committee resumed at 3:52 p.m.

Madam Chairperson: Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. The floor is now open for questions.

Ms. Barrett: I would like to introduce Dave Dyson, the Executive Director of the Employment Standards Division.

Mr. Schuler: On May 1, 1999, the consolidated Employment Standards code was proclaimed. What sort of effect has this had on this particular division?

Ms. Barrett: The basic changes have led to heightening of administrative efficiency. There are administrative fees in place now which has led to a decrease in frivolous applications to the Labour Board, and the collection process has been enhanced so that workers who are owed wages are more likely to get those wages more quickly.

Mr. Schuler: New Brunswick has recently introduced legislation to scrap the Minimum Wage Board. It is called Bill 8, an act to amend The Employment Standards Act. Does the Minister have any plans on doing the same or something similar in Manitoba?

Ms. Barrett: No.

Mr. Schuler: In 1970 the Schreyer government introduced an amendment to The Employment Standards Act reducing the workweek from 44 hours to 40 hours. Since that time the workweek in Manitoba has remained at 40 hours. I am sure the Minister is aware that the workweek in France was recently shortened by Lionel Jospin and the socialists from 40 to 35 hours. The Netherlands has gone down to 36 hours a week. In Spain their incentive is to voluntarily reduce the workweek.

I was wondering if the Minister has at all consulted with her department. Is it something that her party has looked at in reducing the workweek?

Ms. Barrett: We have no plans to reduce the workweek at this time.

Mr. Schuler: A resolution introduced to this House by the Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed), Resolution 47, and it reads:

"WHEREAS during the New Democratic Party Annual General Meeting Resolution 97-L10J-14 overwhelmingly supported legislation requiring a 32-hour work week with no loss in pay and the minimum annual vacation be extended to three weeks from the present two; and

"WHEREAS there seems to be no recognition on the part of the NDP that this would instantly increase labour costs by approximately 25 percent for every business in Manitoba; and

"WHEREAS this proposal has been suggested by the NDP membership as a means of reducing unemployment despite Manitoba boasting an unemployment rate of 5.6%, the second lowest rate in the country, and facing an increasing shortage of skilled labour; and

"WHEREAS this policy has been deemed 'utterly unrealistic' by the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce and the NDP has failed to provide any idea of the number of new jobs the four-day work week would create, much less an estimate of how many jobs would be lost by such a measure; and

"WHEREAS the Thompson Citizen said in reference to the proposal, "the 32-hour work week would sink most Manitoba business firms right out of business . . . "

"THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Provincial Government to consider providing factual information on the merits of the 32-hour work week proposal; and

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Assembly urge the Provincial Government to abandon this policy that appears bent on decreasing the competitiveness of Manitoba's strong business sector and ensure their relocation to neighbouring jurisdictions."

Again to the Minister, considering that this motion was actually carried overwhelmingly by

her party convention, is this something that they are at all considering to do here in Manitoba?

Ms. Barrett: No.

Mr. Schuler: Reducing the workweek is also known as employment redistribution. Does the Minister feel this is a way to address some of the concerns she and her department may have about Manitoba's labour force or the economy?

Ms. Barrett: As I stated in my answers to the previous two questions, we are not looking at a shortened workweek in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Schuler: Does the Minister feel that a reduced workweek would in fact have a negative impact on the provincial economy?

Ms. Barrett: As I stated in my earlier comments, we are not anticipating. We are not looking at dealing with this issue at all, so therefore we have done no studying or no evaluation of other jurisdictions in this regard and have no intention of doing so.

Mr. Schuler: According to the Department's Research Branch Web site, and this is the minimum wage under Manitoba Labour—and I must say to the Minister it is very well done; it is updated on a regular basis. From what I can tell from what I have in front of me, Manitoba and Saskatchewan are tied for seventh place among the 13 different provinces and territories. I would suggest from that to the Minister that actually Manitoba is fairly competitive. Since the Minister has decided to review the minimum wage annually, will the Minister make use of the comparisons that have been provided by her department?

Ms. Barrett: Yes.

Mr. Schuler: March 13, a letter was sent to the Minister in which it dealt with Resolution 00-JE-42, and that is the minimum wage increase, and I read: THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Provincial Government follow through on their commitment to review the minimum wage levels on an annual basis. Thompson NDP.

I also ask the Minister on another one, 00-JE-36: WHEREAS the minimum wage—I think they mean in Manitoba—is far below the levels of the 1970s and is too low in relation to the poverty line in relation to the average wages in Manitoba. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the minimum wage be raised immediately to \$7 per hour and be increased annually thereafter, at least the increase in the average industrial wage until it is equal to 60 percent of the average industrial wage in Manitoba.

That was put forward by the Brandon East and the Brandon West NDP. To the Minister: Is that something that she is at all considering?

Ms. Barrett: As we have stated prior to the election and since the election and during the election, we will be reviewing on an annual basis the minimum wage in Manitoba and will be asking the Minimum Wage Board to consider a number of factors. I will be asking the Minimum Wage Board to look at issues and areas of concern for themselves that they determine.

* (16:00)

Mr. Schuler: Clearly, Manitobans were left with the impression that there was going to be an increase on a more regular basis, and I think even the Minister's party, I think it is fair to say, is pushing for a substantial increase, the increase that is called for, 60 percent of the average industrial wage in Manitoba. Could the Minister tell this committee what would that approximately bring it to?

Ms. Barrett: No, because the Minimum Wage Board has not been called yet. We have asked for and have stated that we will be reviewing the minimum wage on an annual basis, and that is what we will do. When the Minimum Wage Board is called and when we have discussed our annual review, then we will make that information known at that time.

Mr. Schuler: Several other jurisdictions have differential minimum wages. Ontario has different wages for students and liquor servers; Québec, for those people receiving tips; inexperienced workers in Nova Scotia and so forth. Would any such differential minimum wages

figure into the plans of the review of the minimum wage?

Ms. Barrett: The Minimum Wage Board, when it is called, will have several issues before it. They have not been determined at this time.

Mr. Schuler: Is it something that the Minister has actually discussed with the Department? Is it something that they have even considered perhaps not at this time, but is it something that they might be looking at?

Ms. Barrett: As I have stated on numerous occasions in these Estimates, I have met with a number of groups over the last eight and a half months, and I have received representation on those issues among other issues dealing with the minimum wage, the timing of the review, the timing of implementation of minimum wages, the issues that the Member raises.

Other issues have been raised in general discussions with myself and other members of the Department, and they will all be taken into account when determining what areas to ask the Minimum Wage Board to make recommendations on.

Mr. Schuler: From 1945 until 1988, Manitoba had a youth minimum wage. Are there any plans to bring it back?

Ms. Barrett: The youth minimum wage was removed because it was considered to be unconstitutional, so I would expect that there would not be a call or serious consideration given to reinstating a youth minimum wage given the non-constitutionality of the determination of the previous youth minimum wage.

Mr. Schuler: If the Government was going to raise the minimum wage, would a different minimum wage for youth cushion the impact, or would there be any impact at all? I know the Minister has said that it was removed because of a constitutional challenge, but if something like that were to be gone into, would that help cushion the impact of a continual spiralling minimum wage?

Ms. Barrett: The Member obviously listened to the answer that I gave previously when I said

that we are not considering the reinstatement of a youth minimum wage because of the constitutionality, so I do not understand why the Member is asking me the same question, unless it is because it has been prepared for him and he is just going down the list of the questions that have been prepared for him without really considering whether he needs to ask those questions or not.

Mr. Schuler: How many Manitobans currently work for the minimum wage?

Ms. Barrett: Using the data from the labour force survey estimates for the 12 months immediately following the latest minimum wage change, which would be April 1999 to March 2000, with the minimum wage at \$6 per hour, the total number of minimum wage and near minimum wage earners in Manitoba was 43 500, or 9.7 percent of paid workforce. The minimum wage earners themselves who earned \$6 per hour or less were 28 700 persons, or 6.4 percent of the total number of employees.

Mr. Schuler: Are these individuals mainly employed in part-time positions?

Ms. Barrett: Forty-three percent worked full time and 57 percent worked part time.

Mr. Schuler: In regard to the raising of the minimum wage, has the Minister had an opportunity to meet with the small-business groups? There are a lot of small operations in Manitoba who employ, I would suggest to the Minister, a lot of staff. Has she spoken to these groups in regard to her proclaimed yearly minimum wage review?

Ms. Barrett: I have met on this issue and a number of other issues with the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce, the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce. I am meeting with representatives of the food service industry next week. I have also met with various labour organizations and social activist organizations on the other side of the issue. I have met with people who reflect a pretty broad range of views on this issue.

Mr. Schuler: In all the groups that you have met on labour and on business side, do they agree that a yearly review is the way to go to deal with this particular issue of the minimum wage?

Ms. Barrett: I believe there is pretty much consensus on a regular review. I am not sure if an annual review would have achieved that kind of consensus, but certainly there is a recognition on the part of all stakeholders that a regular review is a good idea both for business and for employees, as I have stated earlier in these Estimates proceedings.

Mr. Schuler: Is the Minister still committed to a yearly review?

Ms. Barrett: Yes.

Mr. Schuler: I do not know what kind of business background the Minister might have, but is she aware of the impact that that has on small business?

Ms. Barrett: I have been in contact with a large number of organizations and individuals, as I have spoken with the Member about. I think that I have a recognition of what various groups and individuals feel on this issue from all sides of the issue.

Mr. David Faurichou (Portage la Prairie): I would like to ask the Minister, in regard to the hiring of more staff for her Department in the field, specifically the tasks or areas that she feels are in need of additional staff and in need of additional inspections.

* (16:10)

Ms. Barrett: Well, for the Member, we have passed the item in the Estimates book dealing with Workplace Safety and Health. That was the area where we are putting in eight new Workplace Safety and Health officers. I would suggest that he peruse *Hansard* for the discussion that took place yesterday, I believe, or last week sometime, on these new positions. We are not anticipating any major changes in the complement, certainly not in the numbers of employees in the Department of Labour at this time.

Mr. Faurichou: So, within *Hansard*, the Minister detailed the areas of deprivation as far as inspection in that regard that she felt wanting?

Ms. Barrett: Yes.

Mr. Faurichou: I will peruse *Hansard* in that regard. I am just concerned in regard to the situation that was essentially under review with the time change in government involving farms that have, in fact, taken it upon their own initiative to value-add certain products that they are of agricultural production and wondering whether her department is seeking to extend the Department's inspection to those particular situations.

Ms. Barrett: I would suggest that the Member peruse *Hansard*. It is unfortunate he was not able to be here with us when we were discussing this issue. I suggest that he peruse *Hansard*, and if there are any other questions that he has after having read *Hansard*, he can ask me individually and I will be glad to get information for him.

But we are now discussing the Employment Standards section of the Department of Labour Estimates. As we agreed several days ago, we would go through section by section and deal with those issues. So I would like to get back, if possible, to the discussion at hand. I will answer any questions that the Member would like to give me after he has read *Hansard* on Workplace Safety and Health.

Mr. Faurichou: Then a very specific issue in regard to the operation of forklifts. If you are talking employment standards and qualifications and abilities to conduct one's duties of employment, I would like to be very specific. Is she intent upon extending the requirement for persons to operate front-end loaders and forklifts on farms as part of her extension of required employment standards?

Ms. Barrett: That issue has nothing to do with Employment Standards. It is a Workplace Safety and Health issue. I will discuss that with the Member after he has read *Hansard*. I will endeavour to get information from him on that issue, but I would like to get back to the Employment Standards section of the departmental Estimates as we had agreed.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Madam Chair, just a couple of questions in regard to Employment Standards. There has been some discussion, I guess, on unemployment standards as it relates to on-farm work. I am wondering if you can give us any indication as to whether or not you are proposing to make changes in that area?

Ms. Barrett: As I have spoken earlier in this area, too, we recognize that the nature of the agricultural community has changed, the nature of farming has changed. What is defined as agriculture is changing, and we will be reviewing employment standards, workplace safety and health, all areas of labour as it relates to those issues on a regular basis.

I am in contact with the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) on these issues, and we will be working together on looking at the possibility of changes. I have not looked at it yet. I do not know if there are any areas. If there were, I do not know exactly which ones they would be. But we are always looking at employment standards to make sure that it reflects as accurately as possible the current situation in the province with regard to any kind of work site, work organization or work category.

Mr. Maguire: Madam Chair, exactly. I concur with the Minister that certainly the situation in agriculture is changing. I think you could include the environmental side in there, as well as the agricultural and the employment standards. The Minister has a new Livestock Stewardship act that she is looking at, and I am glad to see the public meetings that are being held in that whole process.

Could you indicate to us that if there was going to be any changes made in this area, that there would be public hearings on it prior to those changes being made?

Ms. Barrett: Dave Dyson, who is the Director of the Employment Standards Branch, is on the Livestock Stewardship committee and will be participating in the hearings that the stewardship proposal or paper will be undergoing. Then from there, we will determine what, if any, issues have been raised or concerns have been raised

and how we will deal with it. But we want to ensure that we have as broad a consultation as possible, particularly in new areas, so that we have as great an understanding as possible of all the issues and ramifications of any potential changes.

Mr. Maguire: Thank you, Madam Minister. The indication then—and I believe that Mr. Tyrchniewicz had a lot of background in the agricultural industry. I am pleased to see that he is chairing the committee that Mr. Dyson or others will sit on, work on, I should say, as in regard to the standards that we are looking at in the industry given the ones that are already in place to see if there is requirement for change.

The Minister has indicated that if there are changes they would be coming forward. I guess I was not referring to the kind of stewardship act that we know is going to hold public hearings. She has inferred that there would be another process if there was any employment standards made in that whole area.

I wonder if you could confer that there would be public meetings held in regard to changes in employment standards in agriculture, not just in the livestock industry period.

Ms. Barrett: I think that as I stated earlier, and again this is all potential, it is hypothetical, so I want to preface my remarks by that comment. Assuming that there are concerns raised out the stewardship process, the public hearing process that is being undertaken now, we would want to get as much input about specific suggestions that were raised out of this process, any ideas that we as government might have about, well, let us look at this particular area or about this, and we would consult in that regard because these would be, I would think, potentially major changes that could have an impact. We would want to ensure that we would recognize as much as possible the impact, and by doing that, then the changes, if any, that you make or the decisions that you make, whether it is to change or not to change, those decisions are then based on as much information as possible.

Now I am not going to say we will have 25 meetings across the province or that kind of thing, but, yes, it would be incumbent upon us,

in order to determine if there were such outcomes of this first process, that we would consult as broadly as we felt we needed to to ensure we had the information at hand and any impact that changes would have.

I know I am not being as yes or no as the Member might like, but I do not want to prejudge the scope or the areas that might be raised in this process or other processes that were underway, but I do want to give the Member some sense of security that we will be consulting if it turns out that there is a role for Employment Standards in this process.

* (16:20)

Mr. Maguire: That would be imperative, I think, in regard to the changes that might be required in the province. Could you concur that the changes, if there were any changes to The Employment Standards Act, particularly as it pertains to agriculture, would not come forward until after the review of the livestock stewardship act?

Ms. Barrett: I think I can make that statement, that assurance to the Member.

Mr. Maguire: I guess I look at the situation with regard to changes in The Employment Standards Act, and if there were going to be any there. I am not just looking at agriculture now, but in regard to the whole province of Manitoba, just for my own information, what kind of basis would you look at making changes in that area? I guess I am looking at it from a point of view of: Are there a certain number of inquiries or complaints that you get on an annual basis or a monthly basis or, I guess, how many complaints would you get on a monthly basis in your whole department?

Ms. Barrett: We will be reviewing the Employment Standards legislation as we will be reviewing all of the legislation in this department. We will take a look at a whole number of elements. We do not keep specific statistics on inquiries.

I know there are a number of inquiries that come into the branch on various issues, but we would be looking at kind of the general areas

that the people are concerned about, have questions about, then looking at, again, consultation like out of this process, the livestock process.

Also, as Employment Standards officers go through their jobs, they come up with issues that may need a look at with regard to legislation: Well, this is not really working the way we think it should or there is a loophole here or there are some changes that we need to make.

We use the public, we use the more narrow consultation process, narrow in the sense that it is, for example, in this one it is focussed on an agricultural kind of area, livestock area, other kinds of issues that come to our attention to do that, plus the staff that work with the legislation on a daily basis.

There are a number of ways that we use to get information as to flags, if you will, what areas might need adjusting and what areas might not.

Mr. Maguire: Can you just give me an example of some of those criteria that you would use as flags?

Ms. Barrett: People call the Employment Standards Branch for a number of reasons. Basically they are asking for information. A lot of times they are asking for information. Sometimes they might be issuing a complaint. When they ask for information, it is: What is the minimum wage? What are my rights? What are my responsibilities? Why am I not getting paid? And on and on and on, general information or specific to their own situation.

In some instances they are surprised that they are not covered, that Employment Standards does not cover every situation, every contingency. An example in the agricultural community of a bit of an anomaly maybe, maybe not, but this is, two people are hauling grain to an elevator. One is a farm hand who works for a farmer. He is not covered. The other person is his brother-in-law. He works for a grain hauling company, trucking company, hauling a similar load of grain to the same elevator over the same roads. One is covered by Employment

Standards; one is not. [*interjection*] Two trucks, yes, two loads.

I am not saying that that is an anomaly that—it is an anomaly, but whether that is something that needs to be looked at or not, that is kind of the area we would look at. Well, yes, on the surface it may be a problem but when you dig down it really is not, or, yes, it really is a problem. That is the kind of issue not only in the agricultural community but in a number of areas. We have a changing workforce, we have a lot of new Canadians coming in, we have concerns around employment standards in that area. Are they covered? It is a changing type of work, a changing workforce.

The legislation has to be alive as well. That is kind of what we, if we are doing the job right, are monitoring that creature, that entity that is the legislation and saying, hmm, okay, let us do something here or not. Those are the kinds of things that we would be looking at.

Mr. Maguire: I think it is important that we look at and define, perhaps redefine, as you said. Agriculture is changing very much. Just because a person is driving a semi on a farm, it is their own, it is their farm truck, they are hauling their own grain, obviously they have to hire a person with a class 1 licence with air to do that in those areas, and yet that person is still employed by a farm per se hauling their own grain. Certainly as long as they are not hauling grain for commercial value, then we believe the same employment standards that are in place today should exist for those employees.

Can the Minister give me any indication then of the amount of complaints that her department will get on labour issues on a monthly basis?

Ms. Barrett: The Employment Standards Branch fields 150 000 calls per year. Of that, 3500 are lodging a formal complaint. But that 3500 is not broken down by industry. So we would not be able to give you how many farm workers. You do not know whether it is a complaint or just an inquiry: Am I covered? No, I am not. Fine, thank you very much. That is an inquiry, not necessarily a complaint.

A complaint is more likely to be: I did not get paid and I want to carry it on, or, I am complaining because I am not covered. It is very hard to tell, but it is a very small percentage of the calls that come in that are complaints. Then those either are dealt with right away or they go on in to be assigned to an Employment Standards officer who then carries on through the process if that person is actually covered by Employment Standards.

* (16:30)

Mr. Maguire: So it would be very hard then, Madam Minister, to determine how many of those inquiries or complaints are related to agriculture specifically. Or does the Department break that kind of information down?

Ms. Barrett: While there are no statistics kept, there is sort of a guesstimate. Again I want to reiterate that this is not scientific, certainly not rocket science, but the 1998 estimation was about 500 calls a month and two or three letters per month. This would be calls, queries, and concerns, et cetera, the whole range of issues around agricultural issues. But that is only a guesstimate.

Mr. Maguire: So that would be quite normal if you were looking at the number of new, developing industries in the province. I will use the examples of Maple Leaf and Schneider developing and potential employees phoning in, looking at whether it is seed plants or pork industry or alfalfa forage industries. It would include the whole gamut of industries in agriculture that would come up to 500 inquiries. Very few of those might be complaints, but there would be legitimate concerns about the kinds of working conditions they should be in or the kind of employment standards they would be working under.

Ms. Barrett: Yes, as I have stated, there are no hard and fast statistics on this area, and the Member is quite right. We have recognized that the diversification has been quite remarkable in the past few years. This is an area where we are going to take a look at it, and that is why Labour is part of the Livestock Initiative, because there is a recognition that work is involved, however you define it. Whether you define it as farm

work that is not covered, whether you define it as work that is covered or should be covered or not, there is a labour safety element, employment standards element. We want to make sure that people who are working, whether they are part of family farm or part of a major agri business, like Isobord or some other business, have healthy safe workplaces.

As I mentioned in earlier discussions, some of the statistics that we do have of fatalities in the agriculture sector, they are disturbing to me because of who they are. The fatalities in particular are heavily weighted to children and the injuries heavily weighted to children and older males who are working alone often. They are working with machinery and they get caught, or the tractor rolls over them, or something like that happens, and young children who in the spring and fall, in particular, their families have no recourse but to take them out into the fields. I think those are areas where we really do need to look as a society and as a community about what we need to put into place to ensure that those accidents ideally do not happen at all. Now, whether that is changes to Workplace Safety and Health regulations or Employment Standards or just community recognition of these things or more flexible forms of voluntary child care, which has been an issue that was raised a few years ago, those are some examples of things that I think we all want to work together on ensuring are reduced.

Mr. Maguire: Just a few more question, Madam Minister, just to concur with that or to get some more information on that, I think, what you are saying is that it would be very difficult to put those standards in for families of a family-operated business, because that is their own personal decision in regard to their farming opportunities or what they may have to do to make a living in that particular instance. So, therefore, most of the enquiries you would get, I would assume of the 500 that you are looking on a monthly basis, would be from people other than their dealing with employees that the family farm business would have. Can you give me an indication then of how many of those calls, out of that 500 a month, would come from farm workers, who are presently not, if you will, unionized or working for independent farmers, I guess, today?

Ms. Barrett: We would not have any idea, because we do not ask who they work for. The Employment Standards does not ask who they work for other than for clarification about not who they work for but the context within which they are working, so it depends on the complexity of the question. Because we do not automatically take a great deal of information that may be extraneous to their initial request, we would not have those statistics.

Mr. Maguire: Madam Chair, I guess there are a couple of things that concern me. I know in Agriculture today, The Employment Standards Act does not cover farm workers, as such, in that whole area. I know from having dealt in this industry for the past 30 years, and with many of my cohorts that are out there today, that the issue of farm labour—I mean, there may still be some workers on farms at the minimum wage in Manitoba, but a great many of them are working at over that minimum wage.

I would estimate, if we were to bring in situations where the employment standards were changed such that, say, employees on farming operations were to have to adhere to, say, a unionized process on on-farm labour from an independent farm operation, that in fact they may have to take a cut in the salary that they are offered today in order to still make up the same kind of salary at the end of the month. The overtime that they would work would be, I would assume, worked on some overtime-prorated basis.

What concerns me, why I bring that up, I guess, as regards some of the resolutions that were brought forward at the NDP meeting that was held in Brandon last fall, an annual meeting from Brandon East and Brandon West, whereby there was a resolution talking about the inclusion of agricultural workers in legislation, the WHEREAS of it was that pig farms and other agricultural industries are now not covered by Employment Standards legislation and The Labour Relations Act. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that these acts be amended to cover all such industries in Manitoba.

I guess, from that, I would ask: Is it the intention of this government to unionize the on-

farm hog barns for the labour in those facilities in the rural areas?

* (16:40)

Ms. Barrett: I think the Member is confusing several things here. The Employment Standards legislation itself does not deal with unionized workers or nonunionized workers. The Employment Standards legislation deals with basic minimum requirements that must be met, payment of wages so that workers who are covered by the legislation are guaranteed that they will be paid wages regularly, that if an employer does not pay the wages or if an employee does not work and then claims wages, those kinds of issues can be dealt with. Minimum holidays, minimum vacation, things like this. These are the elements that are in the Employment Standards legislation. It has nothing to do with unionized workers.

As a matter of fact, this legislation recognizes that most of the workers in a province, certainly in Manitoba, are not unionized. So that is why employment standards are there, to protect both the employers and employees. Because many of the problems that come before Employment Standards are problems that are raised by employers, too.

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Whatever issues we deal with, Employment Standards has virtually nothing to do with unions. The Labour Relations Act deals with the collective bargaining process between a union and its employees, but Employment Standards provides a minimum of standards that must be met in a fair working environment, both for employers and employees. The issue of who is covered is the issue that I think you are addressing, and the issue that was addressed in those resolutions.

One of the reasons we are participating in the livestock review is because we recognize that the nature of agriculture has changed; the nature of farming and of what constitutes farming has changed. So we are keeping an absolutely open mind about this whole issue, trying to get as

much information as we can as quickly as we can so that we can make some determinations.

It is interesting, I did find it very interesting to note that, if you are a worker for Kackenhoff Nurseries in Winnipeg, you are considered a farm worker. So you are not covered by Employment Standards legislation. At the other end of the scale is the absolute family farm where it is Mom and Pop and maybe Grandma and Grandpa and the kids, and that kind of thing. Those two, in my mind, are the extremes in this whole agriculture issue.

I may be wrong in my interpretation, but there is a whole other area there of people who are not covered and who, in virtually every other province, including Saskatchewan, which has a high farming community, far more coverage of people who work in the agricultural sector. So we are looking at do we need to make some changes or do we not. I mean, I think it is incumbent upon any government, especially when you are coming in new as a new government after a change in government—things have gone on for a while. Well, it is my responsibility to familiarize myself with the legislation, the impacts of the current legislation, and what is going on in the area that is impacted by this legislation, and do we need to look at any changes.

That is the whole process that I am undertaking with virtually every piece of legislation, some faster than others. So that is why we wanted to be part of this whole livestock process because we expect to get a lot of information out of this process that we perhaps did not know before. And it may end up that we will make virtually no changes or recommendations or take out for consultation very little. It might mean that there are issues that are raised. I do not want to prejudge anything. I want to let the process unfold as it will. So that is basically where I am coming from as far as this legislation is concerned. But back to your first question. Employment standards legislation has nothing whatsoever to do with unionization or pro-unionization or anything. The Labour Relations Act, however, is completely focused on the process of negotiations between a labour union and the employees and the management. So

those two pieces of legislation are quite dissimilar.

Mr. Maguire: I would just like to wrap up by asking the Minister another question. I have to say that it still concerns not just the employers in the country but the employees that are presently there that might have to look at revamping the way the present agreements are with many of their employers to reduce the sort of standard wage for the first few eight hours of the day that they might work in some circumstances because, in many circumstances out there today, the employees work a ten- or twelve-hour day in harvest, in seeding and particularly in the grain sector. Many of them work much longer days than that, as the Chair will recognize from some of the past work that he has been involved in as well. Fishing and farming kind of go hand in hand in some instances. But it behooves us to raise this in this Committee because of an agricultural worker's resolution that came forward at the annual meeting last year, if I could just read it to the Minister.

WHEREAS there exists today a classification of workers known as agricultural workers who do not fall under the jurisdiction of The Employment Standards Act; and

WHEREAS agricultural workers are not entitled to mandatory Workers Compensation and minimum wage, and whereas Occupational Health and Safety has no jurisdiction in the workplace of these individuals; and

WHEREAS workers in intensive agriculture are classified as ag workers

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that it be recognized that we are entering into the new millennium and that the hired hand is essentially a thing of the past; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that no workers in today's society should be outside the jurisdiction of The Employment Standards Act; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the category of agricultural worker be eliminated so that every individual in the workforce today be entitled to minimum wage and Workers Com-

pensation and that Occupational Health and Safety officials have access to every workplace in the province.

I have many problems with that. The problem that I have with it is why are you looking at—I mean, you indicated in the first question I asked today that you are aware of the changes that are taking place in agriculture. Many of those have been forced on us by taking away the Crow benefit of the federal government in 1995, the transportation subsidy that moved raw materials out of Canada for export, which many have always felt with it went the jobs.

When you say that the hired hand is essentially a thing of the past, that not only concerns me as an employer, but I know from discussions with employees, not just in my own operation but others, that it is a startling situation for them as well. It leaves them to say that: Is it this government's intention to unionize us all or to put us into that kind of a situation? I do not think they have any problem, and the employers do not, with having a labour standards process put in place in regard to the kinds of work that is out there today, but to say that you are going to remove agricultural workers from the present legislation and change the way they are treated by The Employment Standards Act gives many of them great concern. I wonder if you could indicate to us then how you plan on doing that.

Ms. Barrett: Well, this was a resolution at convention. This is not government. The resolution at convention is not the same thing as government policy. As I have stated earlier in my discussions with you this afternoon, we recognize the changing face of agriculture, the changing face of our workforce throughout the province. Do not even think about the concept of unions in this context. This is Employment Standards. It has nothing to do with unions. If workers in a hog barn or if workers at Isobord want to join a union, that is completely within their rights. That comes under The Labour Relations Act.

The Employment Standards Act covers basic employment standards for both employers and employees and those areas that are covered by the legislation. This legislation has an enormous amount of flexibility built into it

already, and one example is people who work for lodges and outfitters in northern Manitoba in particular. They have some similarities in working hours and working conditions to the agricultural community in the fact that it is not—well, I will not say it is not 12 months of the year. No, no, that would be wrong, because I know it is.

An Honourable Member: Do not go there.

* (16:50)

Ms. Barrett: Exactly. The seeding to harvest is a busier time. The same thing with the lodges and outfitters. They have a season that they work with. They are able through The Employment Standards legislation, which is a very flexible piece of legislation. It is far more flexible than, say, The Labour Relations Act. The Employment Standards legislation allows for the recognition of a variety of different kinds of employment scenarios.

It is not as tight as other pieces of legislation are. What I am saying now is that we are looking at as part of the Livestock Initiative, as part of the consultation process that will be undertaken, in Employment Standards with the upgrading of, looking at the Employment Standards legislation regularly as we do. We have to ask the questions first. Are there any areas in this new configuration where it makes sense for Employment Standards to be part of the process, or is the current situation status quo fine? If there are some areas where it would make sense that Employment Standards be involved, how do we work it so that those concerns that you have raised about the ability to maintain a small business, which is what these are, with a very small margin—my God, the last thing we want to do is to drive the family farm out of existence. Our whole purpose is to strengthen the family farm, to strengthen the rural communities, to strengthen those things that have been hindered by some of the issues that you have raised here earlier. We do not want to do anything that is going to jeopardize that, but we do want, and I feel it is my responsibility, to take a look at the legislation that I am responsible for and see if it has any relevance in this new changing rural economy. That is what we are looking at.

We are not looking at unionization. We are not looking at draconian changes that would mean that people would lose their livelihoods, farms would go under—that is absolutely not what we are looking at.

Mr. Maguire: Just to wrap up, Mr. Chair, then. The resolution that was brought forward by your constituency, the Interlake NDP, the one that I just read into the record, is not referring then, and you are not—thank you Madam Minister, for saying—you have indicated that it is not your intention to bring in legislation that would unionize on-farm workers in regard to hog barns or those kinds of facilities.

Ms. Barrett: Even if it were my intention to do that, I could not do that, because there is no legislation that requires unionization. No, absolutely not. We are not looking at—as I said earlier, if employees in any organization choose to think about joining a union, fine. That is what The Labour Relations Act is about. If employees choose to join a union, what is the relationship? That is where that piece of legislation falls into place. We have no intention; we could not, even if we had an intention, could not force unionization on anybody that does not want it.

Mr. Maguire: My question then is that it is not your intention to bring in new legislation that could require that.

Ms. Barrett: It is not my intention and, even if it were my intention, if I had gone completely off the rails, I could not do it anyway. Because it would be ruled, probably, unconstitutional, or something, to put in legislation saying someone has to join a union. So there is no intention.

Mr. Faurchou: Mr. Chairman, I want to take a quote from the Minister's response to me earlier on today that she should read *Hansard*. In response to the Minister of Agriculture's (Ms. Wowchuk) response to questioning that referred to employment in the current day hog barns that have been established recently, and are currently continuing to be established in the province; that she has yet to find anyone that is employed within those barns that is not completely happy with their working conditions and the job opportunities that are supplied by this now industry. If she reads *Hansard* she will have the

answer, and she will not have to do all of the cumbersome and extensive survey work that she was alluding to just a moment ago.

Now I would like to refer back to my original question that I posed to the Minister and ask that she answer it. Being that under Employment Standards, and I will quote from her particular book, here: Activities identified under this section determine sectors and industries that are at high risk of non-compliance with legislation in consultation with industry stakeholders, the Branch will develop suitable tools to address the problem and raise the level of compliance.

I will then restate my question in regard to fork-lift operation. Is it the intent of the Government to place upon the agricultural community the standards that her department has in legislation regarding fork lift operations?

Ms. Barrett: The Employment Standards Branch does not regulate occupational groups. It regulates individual employees' rights and responsibilities and employers' rights and responsibilities in regard to employment standards such as payment of wages, vacations, statutory holidays. It has nothing whatsoever to do with forklift. That is Workplace Safety and Health. Whether the forklift is within a hog barn or—not that it would be—on a field or in a manufacturing sector in Winnipeg, that is Workplace Safety and Health legislation. It is not Employment Standards legislation.

Mr. Faurshou: Further down the page there: that provides educational programming involving officers attending at workplaces, educational institutions and other target group workshops to provide for—it is again saying that this, under Employment Standards, if there is a change in legislation that affects a particular workforce that is not going to be in compliance with that legislation, that under the Employment Standards section of this department they will afford to those individuals to head off, lay off those individuals, because they are no longer technically skilled enough by the Government's definition to continue their employment in that fact. So this is a section that discusses those particular changes and responsibilities to that.

Ms. Barrett: I beg to differ and say yet again to the Member, this Employment Standards legislation does not deal with mechanical situations. It does not deal with health and safety situations. It deals with payment of wages, statutory holidays, minimum rights of those sorts for workers and minimum responsibilities of employers.

It does not deal with, No. 1, any of those issues that the Member—he can reframe the question all he wants. The answer is still the same. This is Workplace Safety and Health. The second thing is the agricultural sector is not covered by Employment Standards. So even if those questions were under Employment Standards, which they are not, the current legislation would exclude any definition of that.

If he wants to ask me questions about payment of wages, statutory holidays, overtime, that is fine. If he wants to ask about forklifts or any other mechanical or occupational health and safety issues, he has missed the boat as far as the Estimates process is concerned.

Madam Chairperson in the Chair

He can read the *Hansard* about what we talked about. I would be glad to discuss with him after the Estimates process any of those specific questions.

Mr. Faurshou: Well, I am really baffled in regard to the actual language to which it says Employment Standards. The actual objectives of the Department under Employment Standards is to assist the workforce adjustment in developing retraining, redevelopment of strategies to help workers whose jobs may disappear or change. It is a whole nine yards when it comes to changing in technologies, in the various avenues of employment. It is not just wages. If she were to read her specific designation here, it is not just wages. It is everything to do with employment. Employment involves more than just wages and holidays. It employs qualifications.

* (17:00)

Further to that, seeing that the Minister is not wanting to do this at this point in time, we will refrain to when it comes then to her salary

and then all sections will be up for discussion. I will also make note, at this point in time, that I intend to ask questions regarding her responsibility for Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation when that section arrives.

Ms. Barrett: To the Member for Portage, in answer, the workforce adjustment issues that the Member is referring to is when a plant or a community downsizes, for example, Pinawa. Employment Standards people would go in there. Worker adjustment people would go in there and help the community, in the case of Pinawa, to figure out what it is that they can do with the enormous downsizing that has taken place in that community.

Dominion Bridge closing down, Labatt's closing down, Molson's closing down, Employment Standards people do go in there, and they do workforce adjustment. They help and assist workers in that situation. There is no training at all involved in this. Under the Employment Standards legislation, there is nothing as far as dealing with training or any of those kinds of things. If it is a particular thing, it might be another piece of legislation but not this piece of legislation.

When Minister's Salary comes up, the Member can ask all the questions he wants under that, but I will not even have the Deputy Minister present for those discussions. So I will not have even the Deputy's skill and background. *[interjection]* The reason I did not answer it now, sir, is that it is not the division. I do not have staff here who can answer the question.

The critic should have alerted you to the fact that if you had questions in that area you come in when that area is under discussion. You can ask all the questions you want, sir, under my salary for MPI. We had a report tabled and discussions held, at which the Member was present, to discuss the Manitoba Public Insurance Annual Report. There is no way that I will have any staff here to deal with those issues under the Department of Labour. That is a totally separate part from this Estimates process.

Point of Order

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Madam Chair, I just want to raise sort of the rules that

have been agreed to by this Committee, that they have agreed to only deal, as I recall, with matters when the staff are here. I hope that the two members of the Opposition that are here will agree to that and we can get beyond this sort of stalemate that we have been at a number of times when I have been present at this committee. I hope that now there is an agreement to sort of move on and deal with the matters in the order that they are being raised as the staff are here to support the Minister and answer questions and deal with matters in a specific area in the Estimates book. I hope that members opposite will not be asking questions based on other departments or Crown corporations that are not being considered by this committee at this time.

Madam Chairperson: On the point of order of the Member for Radisson, we made a ruling yesterday on a very similar point of order in terms of relevance, and it was ruled a point of order.

I would like to remind all honourable members that their remarks should be kept relevant to the matter before the Committee. I will read, for the benefit of the Committee, our Rule 73(2): "Speeches in a Committee of the Whole House must be strictly relevant to the item or clause under discussion."

In the consideration of the current department, an overall discussion has been agreed to, allowing for some latitude in the scope of questions and answers. However, within the context of this agreement, I would like to ask members to endeavour to keep their contributions relevant to the current department under consideration. I respectfully ask for your co-operation in this matter.

* * *

Mr. Schuler: What sort of impact does raising the minimum wage have on employment numbers in the province of Manitoba? Maybe the Minister should be paying attention to the Committee.

Ms. Barrett: I would just in response—and I was listening to the question. I was actually getting information about the answer. We have actually, since the minimum wage was raised from \$5.40

to \$6 an hour, gone from third and fourth lowest unemployment rate to second and, in some cases, first unemployment rate, lowest unemployment rate in the country. I would just leave that information for the Member to make a determination as to the impact for himself.

Mr. Schuler: Does the Minister believe that every time she will raise the minimum wage it will bring the unemployment rate down in Manitoba?

Ms. Barrett: No.

Mr. Schuler: That is very reassuring. What is the average industrial wage in Manitoba and how is it calculated?

Ms. Barrett: Manitoba's average weekly earnings measured by the industrial aggregate averaged \$543.87 in 1999, up half a percent from 1998. This increase was the eighth highest among the provinces. It was a very modest increase among the provinces. Manitoba's average weekly earnings were 89 percent of the Canadian average in 1999, and these figures are arrived at by Statistics Canada.

Mr. Schuler: In one of the resolutions that was brought forward by the Minister's own party at a convention, the poverty line is referenced. What statistic does her department use as the poverty line?

Ms. Barrett: We do not reference the poverty line or use any of the poverty lines that are currently in discussion in our department at all. We are a regulatory department.

Mr. Schuler: In a Charter of Workers' Rights proposed by the federal NDP, there is a mention of tying the minimum wage to average wage levels. The charter does not mention which average wage level in particular or just the general average wage that is being referenced. Is it the plan of this government to do away with the Minimum Wage Board, which is being done in New Brunswick, and simply peg it to some other statistic like the average industrial wage?

Ms. Barrett: I do wish the Member would at least review the questions that have been prepared for him prior to his asking them and try and recollect that, earlier this afternoon, not all that long ago, he asked virtually the same question to which I responded: We have no intention of giving up the Minimum Wage Board.

Mr. Schuler: And to the Minister, I am quite pleased that I do come to these meetings prepared. Unlike the Minister, I do not have a full contingent of staff to carry me through the day. That is why I come with a rather prepared set of questions that are done off hours, Minister. I would like to continue and that is: What would you consider being an appropriate minimum wage at this point in time?

Ms. Barrett: The reason that we made the election commitment and are following through on the election commitment to an annual review of the minimum wage is to address exactly that issue. That is why we are going to use the vehicle of the Minimum Wage Board, which has been in place for probably decades in the province of Manitoba and has been used not as regularly as we would have liked even by the former government, and that is the vehicle that we will use to determine what is an appropriate minimum wage in the province of Manitoba. The Minimum Wage Board will give us that recommendation, and we will use that recommendation in making a final determination.

Mr. Schuler: The Minister quite a while ago, when we were discussing the different boards, admitted that there can be up to three recommendations that the Minimum Wage Board could be giving. So in the instance of the Minimum Wage Board, which recommendation would she follow through on?

Ms. Barrett: Well, as I stated in my earlier remarks about the Minimum Wage Board, there is a chairperson; there are representatives from employees and representatives from employers. It is more often than not the situation that there is not consensus on every element of the report of the Minimum Wage Board. So we would take a look at the recommendations of all three parties, see how much divergence there is, how

much convergence there is, and make our determination based on the entirety of the report.

Mr. Schuler: In last year's Estimates, the Member for Transcona referred to \$16 being an appropriate minimum wage level. Is this still the opinion of this minister and her government?

Ms. Barrett: I would like to see the *Hansard* where the Member for Transcona said the minimum wage should be \$16 an hour. That is not the position of the Government. That would be almost a threefold increase from the current minimum wage.

As the Member will remember, I have stated on numerous occasions, as has the Leader and the platform, that we want a regular review of the minimum wage so that the adjustments are modest enough to enable employers to deal with them in their budgeting, regular enough so that employers and employees know that changes are coming, and sufficient balancing off the nature of the requirements for employers not to have huge increases every four years—which is what happened under the former government—or comparatively huge increases, but regular reviews so that employers have knowledge of what is going to be happening. Employees have a sense that the Minimum Wage Board and the Government are looking at the current situation and will reflect as fairly as possible in their determination of what a minimum wage would be.

Mr. Schuler: Actually, the \$16 was lifted right out of *Hansard*. The Minister could just click on and she can find that for herself. In fact, the Member for Interlake stated that he would not mind a \$12 minimum wage. I would suggest to the Minister that there are many in her caucus who feel that between \$12 and \$16 is not out of line.

My question to the Minister is: How competitive is our minimum wage in comparison to our neighbours south of the border, like North Dakota or Minnesota?

Ms. Barrett: The federal rate in the United States, which covers approximately 90 percent of the U.S. labour force, is currently \$5.15 US, which translates into \$7.50 Canadian, and that

would put it no. 1, even above the Yukon which is currently at \$7.20 an hour.

Mr. Schuler: During the election, your party made comments about increasing unpaid family leave. Minister, how many days are currently allowed for this? What do you plan on changing in regard to unpaid family leave?

Ms. Barrett: There are many areas of labour legislation that we are looking at reviewing. As I have stated on numerous occasions in the past, when legislation is tabled in the House, then those questions will be answered, but it would be inappropriate of me, not only inappropriate, but against the rules of the Legislature. I do not know about the Member for Springfield, but I have every intention of abiding by the rules of the Legislature, which prohibit me from dealing with specifics of legislation that has not yet been tabled.

Mr. Schuler: With respect to First Nations reserves, labour standards are the same and enforced the same as off reserve, or is it a different enforcement mechanism?

Ms. Barrett: On reserve, the jurisdiction would be federal.

Mr. Schuler: Another resolution passed by the Minister's party at its convention was to provide benefits to part-time employees on a prorated basis. Is this going to be a plan of her government?

Ms. Barrett: As I stated in an earlier response, when legislation dealing with labour issues is tabled, then we can have good, animated debate in the House. Until that time, I am not prepared to speak to any specific element of any potential piece of legislation.

Mr. Schuler: British Columbia recently adjusted their Employment Standards legislation to allow for greater flexibility in the high-tech industry, exempting them from certain provisions such as overtime and hours of work. Does the Minister's government plan to bring in any changes of this sort?

Ms. Barrett: As I spoke of when I was answering questions for the Member for Arthur-

Virden (Mr. Maguire), the current employment standards legislation allows for a great deal of flexibility in dealing with particular situations, either in a particular place of employment or a particular occupational group such as lodges and outfitters, as the example I made. So there is a fair bit of flexibility in the current legislation. Again, as to the specific nature of the Member's question, that is I am unable to answer that at this time because of the rules of the Legislature.

Mr. Schuler: Is the Minister or her department planning to change the amount of holiday time or vacation pay that employers are required to give their employees?

Ms. Barrett: I am unable, because of the rules of the Legislature, to discuss potential items of legislation prior to their tabling.

Mr. Schuler: I would like to move on to the next subsection, Worker Advisor Office.

Can the Minister explain in a little bit more detail than provided in the Estimates book exactly how the Worker Advisor Office carries out its mandate? If the Minister looks at page 42, it is fairly weak.

* (17:20)

Ms. Barrett: Yes, the worker advisors in this area are funded, as the Workplace Safety and Health Division is, by the Workers Compensation Board. They act as advocates for workers who feel that they have been unfairly dealt with by any of the elements of The Workers Compensation Act. The worker advisors can carry through, as the Expected Results section shows, 300 to 400 claims in any year under active investigation and again 250 claims resolved through early intervention and 450 claims through the appeal system. There is quite an elaborate appeal system under the Workers Compensation Board and this worker advisor acts on behalf of a worker who, as I said, feels unfairly treated or have not been given all the benefits to which they are entitled or a whole range of issues. So the worker advisor can either just provide information for some people, which is all that is needed, all the way through to going with them to the Appeal Commission as their advocate.

Mr. Schuler: Under Expected Results, public education seminars are mentioned. Can the Minister explain to whom these seminars are provided and what type of information is provided?

Ms. Barrett: Yes, I can read into the record the public education seminars that were held in the past year, and there are nine of them. So the Expected Results of twelve are an estimate. But, last year, public education seminars were provided to the United Steelworkers of America in Snow Lake; The Winnipeg Labour Council and the Boys and Girls Club; the United Way of Winnipeg, and this is an ongoing request, so it is pretty much an annual event; the Manitoba Labour Education Centre; Louisiana-Pacific employees; MGEU employees in Portage la Prairie; Canadian Union of Postal Workers, which also has an ongoing request into worker advisor; the Movement of Filipino Workers and Industrial Career Development Centre, which is also an ongoing request that is filled annually.

So those are the public education requests that were filled last year, and we anticipate the same or a slight increase this year.

Mr. Schuler: Can the Minister explain exactly what types of files the advisors are able to access, and as noted under the Objectives, of the 700 cases expected to be resolved this upcoming year, what is the success ratio of the office?

Ms. Barrett: As the Member will note, in the Expected Results, 250 claims will be, hopefully, resolved through early intervention, which means that is a success in the sense that it does not have to go further through the process. As the Member is well aware, timing is critical in Workers Compensation issues where people are injured and need to know as quickly as possible what their status is going to be. Then there are numbers of cases that go one step or two steps or three steps beyond, and they can be resolved at any stage. Sometimes the workers decide that they have gone as far as they can. They will accept what WCB has given them. Other times, they want to carry on through to the appeal commission and this is where we have the hard statistics.

So, for 1999, claimants who were helped by a worker advisor, there were 38 of them in 1999. Of those, 13 were totally accepted—the worker was totally accepted—which is a little over a third; 6 had partial acceptance which is about 16 percent; and then 19 worker appeals were denied completely which is 50 percent. So it is about half and half, partial or total acceptance of the workers' position and half rejection of the workers' position. Now that is only the very end, the Appeal Commission, but again, the process all the way through is more difficult to come up with hard and fast statistics because how do you define success or failure. But that is the result at the Appeal Commission level.

Mr. Schuler: One of the questions I had asked is: Could the Minister explain exactly what types of files the advisors are able to access?

Ms. Barrett: Sorry, I forgot that part of the question. If the claimant signs a release form—Workers Compensation Board is very, very adamant about the need for release forms to be signed, and they are very good at that. I mean, that is a very positive part of this whole process—then the worker advisor has access to the entire claimant's file including all medical records, every record, but only if the claimant signs the authorization.

Mr. Schuler: What type of training would worker advisors have in order to do their job most effectively?

Ms. Barrett: Yes, this is actually quite an interesting division in the Department of Labour because it is one of the places, if not the most varied, as far as background is concerned. As you can imagine, an advocate or an advisor has a large range of skills that are required. People that are worker advisors come from backgrounds as varied as medical background; there are social workers; there are some lawyers involved. People have come through the union ranks where they have been workers themselves and/or they have been involved in the unions and have wanted to work with the worker advisor in that area. I think the person who is now working in Brandon comes from an advocacy background from a non-profit organization. So it is a range of backgrounds and skills that they bring to the job.

Mr. Schuler: On page 43, I take it, there is very little change that is taking place insofar as employees are concerned. You have got one less FTE, but basically, I take it, there is very little change in this.

Ms. Barrett: Yes, that is the situation.

* (17:30)

Mr. Schuler: I would like to move on to the Office of the Fire Commissioner.

Ms. Barrett: Thank you. I would like to introduce Chuck Sanderson, who is the Deputy Fire Commissioner.

Mr. Schuler: Thank you. Can the Minister explain in the Annual Report, page 15, how this plan for the municipal fire service is working and what exactly is involved? And that is Section 4.2: "To redefine and redirect the role of the Emergency Service Officers and Technical Service Officers into prevention activities," and then it goes on: "Third, To this end the office has developed—

Ms. Barrett: The staff of the Office of the Fire Commissioner is working with each municipality to design an action plan for each municipality that is based on the five steps of developing a public education program, developing a fire prevention program, developing an incident management system, developing standard operating guidelines and developing a training plan. The reason why it is critical that the OFC does this individually with each municipality is that each municipality has different characteristics. Some of them are large. Some of them are smaller. Some of them have a lot of communities that are close together, and some of them have small towns and rural areas and they look very different one from another, and they also have a variety of trained or non-trained personnel. Each of these areas is in a different stage of development for each of the various municipalities, so the staff goes in and works with the municipalities. First of all, I would think that they go in and say what is the current status in each of these five areas, where do you need to work on, and mutually agree on these things, and how can we help you achieve the goals that we all have in mind.

Mr. Schuler: The advisory board, how often does it meet, and where does the advice it may have go?

Ms. Barrett: It meets quarterly, and the advice goes from the Committee to the Deputy and then from the Deputy to the Minister.

Mr. Schuler: On June 12, 2000, I brought an issue forward to the Minister, and she said it would be best brought under the Office of the Fire Commissioner. I do not know if Mr. Sanderson has had a chance to look at *Hansard*. The issue deals with the Esso and I believe it is a storage facility located on Henderson Highway, however, in the rural municipality of East St. Paul. The City of Winnipeg has withdrawn its first response protection. I understand they had some kind of agreement where there was a flat rate that was paid to the City. Strangely enough, the City made money off of this one, but nobody knows how the City operates, and I believe it was a very poor decision on behalf of the City.

The concern that certainly I have is that it is a fairly large facility, it does contain quite a bit of material, it is close to a river, it is close to quite a bit of housing, and it is close to an awful lot of power lines. Something that I did not even mention the last time is that you do have a lot of tanker trucks that pull onto Henderson Highway, which is, at that point in time, a four-lane highway. I believe the speed limit, at that point in time, is 70 km/h. To get into the city, they have to cross the northbound lanes to get into the southbound lane, and then they head into the city. Should there be an accident or should there be a fire that starts at the site—and again I think we have made it very clear that it is not saying that we do not have a wonderful volunteer fire department out in East St. Paul, but that is a fairly substantial operation that is run there. What has been arranged? What arrangements are currently in place in dealing with, what we hope would never happen, a fire occurring around that facility?

Ms. Barrett: Yes, the City, Esso, and East St. Paul are currently talking together about the levels of training that is currently available in East St. Paul and what needs to be done to ensure that that is adequate. The City is also

prepared to enter into a fee-for-service arrangement with East St. Paul.

They are negotiating, they are talking. In the meantime, if something happened, and I think that is the Member's, in the short term, before an arrangement is made with the City, East St. Paul is a Member of a mutual aid district, which would be called in should there be a fire or an incident. The Office of the Fire Commissioner could also respond. If it escalated, then the Office of the Fire Commissioner would respond.

My sense is that even though the City is not technically involved anymore, if it was a critical situation, the City would come in and work out the arrangements later, the details later. They would not just let it happen. Currently the mutual aid district, followed by the Office of the Fire Commissioner, would be involved.

* (17:40)

As well, the Department, because it is a dangerous goods route, the Department of Highways and Government Services would be involved if an accident happened on the highway. If the river were involved, that would be the Department of Environment. They would come in, they would not be probably first responders, but they would be involved if that accident happened on the highway and/or closer to the river. That is the current situation.

Mr. Schuler: Could the Minister's department tell us what exactly is stored onsite?

Ms. Barrett: The ultimate responsibility for that information would rest with the Municipality of East St. Paul. Since the City of Winnipeg, up until recently, was involved in dealing with any occurrence, the fire prevention branch of the City of Winnipeg would probably have that information, as well the volunteer fire department. The fire department would have that information or should have that information because they need to know what it is they are going into. If they were going into a fire or an incident in that location, they would need to have that. The Office of the Fire Commissioner itself would not have that information, but the city fire prevention branch, the Municipality of

East St. Paul, and the fire department of East St. Paul, would have that information.

Mr. Schuler: Even though the Office of the Fire Commissioner would also respond, the Minister sort of said would also respond, would they not be concerned about what might be stored there and want to know ahead of time?

Ms. Barrett: Because the offices of our Commissioner is not the first responder in this case, what would happen in a situation if the Office of the Fire Commissioner were called in, and that might not happen actually if the City were involved, if the Municipality were involved, if the mutual aid district were involved. The Office of the Fire Commissioner may not come in. But if the call went out to the OFC, the first question that would be asked is: where is it? The second question that would be asked is: what is involved, what are the materials that are involved? Then the OFC would plan to bring in the equipment and the personnel to deal with that situation. The first responders would have that information. Should the OFC be required to come in, then they would get that information as the call went out to them.

Mr. Schuler: So as far as the Minister's department knows, is there toxic waste stored there? Would they would have knowledge of that?

Ms. Barrett: Yes, the Office of the Fire Commissioner would not know, but the department of the environment would know if there were hazardous materials or toxic chemicals or any kind of hazard like that.

Mr. Schuler: So the department of environment would know what is stored there.

Ms. Barrett: Yes.

Mr. Schuler: The Minister probably would not know. Across the street is a gas station. Again, the concern is here that you have a lot of, I take it, fuel stored there. I take it is gasoline. You have a gas station across the street and, as I have mentioned, homes and such. To get your volunteer fire department there to assess the situation, and then to call in your mutual aid society, then to get all of them there, and then to

realize that perhaps the fire has got to the point that then you need heavier equipment, then you have to put a call out to the City of Winnipeg Fire Department.

Minister, does that give you a lot of comfort in regards to this particular storage facility?

Ms. Barrett: It would depend on the situation. In any fire department that I am aware of, the process is you start with a one-alarm, unless you know that it is a two-, three-, or four-alarm fire because of the degree of involvement when the call comes in. Normally, you might not know the degree of involvement. It could be internal. You just may see smoke coming. So you would not assume it is a four-alarm fire or what the situation was until you got on-site and investigated. That is why it is critical to have the first responders there as quickly as possible, and for them to have communication with the other groups that are involved, to know whether they need to expand the situation or not. I cannot even venture to give scenarios, but that is the way fire departments operate. They operate on the information that they are given at the first call, and then they get on the site as quickly as possible, make an assessment on-site, and then ask for backup as needed.

Mr. Schuler: Perhaps the Minister could correct me on this, but I understand if there is a call from a hospital or from a school, is that left at a one-alarm call or do they right away up that to a two-alarm call? I am not sure about schools, but I understand with hospitals they do not right away start with one little fire truck running out there. I understand it is more substantial. Could the Minister just clarify that.

Ms. Barrett: Probably not clarify it, but the different jurisdictions have different procedures. Now, I would suggest that perhaps the fire prevention branch of the City and the East St. Paul Municipality, who would have the information as to what is contained at that depot, would have or should have a plan and should have figured out, or a suggestion could be made that you would say, aha, because of all the elements that you have identified in this situation, you do not make an assumption that it is a one-alarm at the beginning, if this particular

area is involved, that you automatically start it at a two-alarm or whatever.

But that would be a decision that would be made at the local level, that the East St. Paul municipality would make in conjunction with the fire department. The City may have already, when they were taking responsibility for that location, made some such determination. So, good point, I do not know the answer; we do not know the answer, but those are things that I would look at. If you know that you have a potentially hazardous situation, maybe you would just automatically assume that and start from a higher level.

*(17:50)

Mr. Schuler: As I mentioned to the Minister that I did not spend some time—there are a considerable amount of storage facility containers there. Once you would get a facility like that burning, I understand that there are ruptures that would take place simply because of the heat. Now I know there is a berm around the whole site, but the berm will only last for so long. Basically, you have ditches where fuel could run into the ditches. There is a creek nearby, and then it obviously would head towards the river.

The concern I have is that part of it, but more than that is the housing around there, and for the sake of the housing—I am sure the Minister is aware that that area has some significant growth taking place—is this not something that the Minister or the Fire Commissioner's office would want to have a look at? I do not know if there are very many storage facility sites outside of the city of Winnipeg. In fact, I think this might be one of the only ones certainly within the capital region where there is that quantity of fuel being stored. It basically is a suburban area. That is what is developing out there.

Again, Minister, if you would get a fire going on that site, by the time you get your volunteer fire department out, and certainly they act as quickly as they can, within reason, and then they would ascertain that perhaps it has gone too far and then they pull in the mutual aid society and on and on, you could have a fairly,

fairly substantial problem out there before you would get the kind of equipment that it would take to subdue that kind of a fire where, if that was the initial response coming out, the City of Winnipeg equipment, you could probably contain it a lot quicker.

Is this not something that the Minister would see as considering? It seems to be an isolated case, and I stand to be corrected on that, but I understand it is probably one of the few, if not the only storage facility site, outside of the Perimeter Highway.

Ms. Barrett: I think, if we go back to the five points that we were talking about earlier, the five-step action plan that the Office of the Fire Commissioner has developed, this is specifically the kind of situation that the OFC would go in and talk to the municipality about, talk to the fire department about, particularly developing an incident management system.

So if you have got a situation with a potential for a number of scenarios happening, then that is what the fire department and the municipality would do. If this is the system working properly, the OFC would go in and help them to say, okay, here are five scenarios. What is our response? How do we handle it? What do we do? What do we do with the houses? The reeve has the authority to evacuate immediately. I mean, you want to not have it get to that point. So this is exactly what would happen is that you would plan this and you would say, okay, we have a unique situation in the Capital Region. Let us assume that is the case in the situation. Let us talk to the City about, in this particular situation, scenarios three, four and five involving this depot. We would be able to call the City, and the City would come out.

Those are the kinds of things that we are suggesting in this plan be developed, and I do not know if that has happened with East St. Paul. But this is the kind of situation where a plan ahead of time—it is like a family is supposed to look at what are your evacuation routes. What do you do? Plan it, and rehearse it. It is the same kind of thing on a municipal level.

Mr. Schuler: Could the Minister commit that this is something that would be looked into that

they would—again, Minister, the concern being that often nobody quite knows what the other one has sort of done, and no real action plan is put together. Again, the question—which the Minister really answered—has the Department spoken to East St. Paul in regard to developing an incident management system? Who triggers off the second, third, fourth, fifth call, whatever that might be? When was the last time the facility was inspected? What is exactly on-site?

Again, and with all due respect to the individuals who do provide service in East St. Paul, they are doing a great job. I, however, remember when Paddon's Florists had a fire, and they had grave difficulty controlling it. I do not know if it was a water supply problem. I think it happened to be deep in winter. Minister, I can tell you they had great difficulty controlling a fire in a greenhouse.

Can you imagine if that fuel storage facility was ever to have something go at it or a tanker? In fact, in the newspaper about a week or two ago, a tanker truck tipped over heading out to the U.S. and burnt. That is a substantial fire that starts off very quickly. If you do not have equipment out there fast, and the kinds of chemicals whether it is foam or whatever that is sprayed on to retard the fire, Minister, my concern is that perhaps there is not an incident management system.

Is that something that her department could be prepared to get involved in soon?

Ms. Barrett: Yes, this is a situation where the planning process is a municipal responsibility. The Office of the Fire Commissioner cannot force a plan to be undertaken. The normal situation is that the Fire Chief is the—this is not a horizontal management structure here. It is very hierarchical, and the Fire Chief has the authority. He is the one who goes in there and says this is a one-, two-, three-alarm fire. He is the one who makes the call to the next level. He is the one who is in charge. So he is the critical person here.

We can endeavour to find out if there is such a plan in place, but the responsibility lies with the municipality to ensure that a plan is in place, that all the contingencies have been taken care

of. The Office of the Fire Commissioner cannot force that planning to take place.

Mr. Schuler: When was the last time that the facility was actually inspected?

Ms. Barrett: That information would be found from the Fire Prevention branch of the City of Winnipeg again or from the municipality, because the City would have undertaken that inspection.

Mr. Schuler: On June 12, the Minister said we will get that information for the Member. I was wondering if she had directed her department to get that information.

Ms. Barrett: We will get that very shortly.

Mr. Schuler: Again, to the Minister, and we have clearly run out of time today. I do think that this is a fairly serious issue. I believe an ounce of prevention is a pound of cure. If all the proper mechanisms are in place, I think this is something that should not be a concern, and it is just that, again, I—we will continue again tomorrow on this to make sure that everything is in place, and I think that we have run out of time for this evening, right?

Madam Chairperson: The hour being 6 p.m., Committee rise.

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

* (14:40)

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

We are now on page 27 of the Estimates book, Resolution 3.4. Agricultural Development and Marketing (b) Animal Industry (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,763,000.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Mr. Chairman, yesterday before the session ended, we were discussing the livestock industry and the effect the new legislation or the amendment, the

Natural Resources amendment to The Wildlife Act, would have in regard to bison ranching, elk ranching and indeed many other of the exotic species and others that are named in Bill 5, the amendment act to Natural Resources and The Wildlife Amendment Act.

I found it interesting that the Minister indicated that there would be no change as far as agriculture was concerned or the operations of the industries, the bison industry, the elk industry, as far as she was concerned. I am wondering, Mr. Chairman, whether the Minister might want to tell us how she perceives the responsibility to be now and how she perceives the responsibility for those industries to be—and who will, in fact, be responsible and answerable when the amendment is before the House or if the amendment is passed the way it is without amendments.

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food): Mr. Chairman, there are several acts that affect the livestock industry. We have The Livestock Industry Diversification Act, which is the Act that deals with elk. We have The Animal Care Act. There is The Livestock and Livestock Products Act. There is a dairy act. Those are some of the acts that affect the livestock industry in this province. The Member refers to the amendment to The Wildlife Act. All that will impact on is it is enabling legislation that will control penned hunting.

The Member is well aware that this is an issue that we talked about during the election. It is an issue that they talked about during the election that both of us, and I believe the Liberal Party as well, said that we would not have penned hunting in Manitoba. This act, when it is passed, will ensure; as I say, is enabling legislation and will allow regulations to be drafted on penned hunting in Manitoba. Nothing else is affected. All other animals, bison, elk and all other species, will stay under the Act that they are under right now.

Mr. Jack Penner: I find it interesting that the Minister seems to fail to comprehend the impact of the amendment that is being proposed. The naming of the species under the amendment to The Wildlife Act is, first of all, an interesting

move by this government to deal with the penned hunting issue. I agree that all of us in this Chamber, that sat in this Chamber, were concerned about the so-called penned hunting issue. However, there are a number of other acts that the Minister could have utilized to deal with that issue specifically, much more specifically than under The Wildlife Act.

The concern the industry has is that they will now be regulated, and you just need to read The Wildlife Act. Being named under The Wildlife Act, it is clear that the specific responsibility will now be the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin) and simply because they are now a named species protected by The Wildlife Act. That puts totally different connotations on the industry. It puts a tremendous uncertainty in the industry.

I wonder why, whether the Minister might want to do the public hearing process, or whether she might want to encourage her colleague. I would suggest strongly that the Minister of Agriculture should do a series of hearings on this matter, public hearings, across this province and not the minister of natural resources, because we have not yet determined that the industry will in fact be regulated by the resource ministry. The Act is not yet amended, and therefore the species are not yet named under The Wildlife Act.

I would suggest to the Minister of Agriculture she has great opportunity to suggest to her government and her colleagues that this act should be delayed. The implementation of it should be delayed till they had a full public airing on whether, No. 1, they should proceed with this act the way it is drafted and/or whether The Wildlife Act is the area that it should be dealt with in or whether it should be, in fact, one of the acts under Agriculture that should deal with this issue. Then I think you would be on the right track.

Public consultation, I thought, was a great idea until your minister cancelled it. Nobody can understand why you would have cancelled a public hearing process when your government, Madam Minister, has been the greatest proponent of public involvement. Yet, when a real issue comes before you, you back away like

a little crab into its hole. I think that you have your head buried in the sand on this one. I think you are either not being advised by your spinners of the impact of this legislation or, if you are, somebody is not paying attention.

Because I know the industry is very, very concerned about this, very concerned. They have met with myself and a number of our colleagues and raised this issue every time. I suppose I could read part of a presentation that was made by the bison industry to us. It says: The bill also gives the provincial government new powers over the bison industry such as use and management and sale and husbandry, movement, hunting, trapping, killing, chemical immobilization, possession, propagation and the raising of which will then become wildlife, once it is named under the act, bison.

So, Mr. Chairman, I ask the Minister whether she truly has a full appreciation of the concerns that the industry is expressing to her, and I know they met with her, on this matter and whether she is, in fact, encouraging her colleagues in Cabinet to reconsider this issue and delay the implementation or even the further debate on this bill until there has been a full and public consultation.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, as I indicated, I would like to just address a few of the comments. The Member talks about advice from spin doctors and other people who maybe do not understand what is going on. I have to tell the Member that the advice on this bill came from the Legislative Counsel. I have a tremendous amount of respect for the people who draft our laws in this province. When we went to Legislative Counsel and told them my colleague the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin) and I had discussions with them as well indicating that we did not support the concept of penned hunting in this province, which neither of the opposition parties support either, or at least that is what they tell us, told people during the campaign they did not support it, Leg Counsel advised us that the bill that would have to be amended was The Wildlife Act, because that is the only act that deals with hunting. That was the advice that we had from Leg Counsel. Certainly I respect them for the advice that they gave us as to how we could handle this matter.

Mr. Chairman, the Member talks about having consulted with people in the industry. I also have met with the people in the bison industry and in other industries, in the elk industry, and talked about this issue. We have told them that this issue deals only with penned hunting. This is the legislation that we have been advised to amend to deal with that issue. None of the other acts are being repealed. All of the other acts remain in place. There are several acts that deal with livestock in Manitoba. The Livestock Industry Diversification Act is the act that deals with only elk. That is the only species that is under that piece of legislation right now. We have The Animal Care Act. We have The Livestock and Livestock Products Act and The Dairy Act, just as examples of a few. We on the advice of Leg Counsel, this is where we were advised would be the best place to address the issue of penned hunting.

Certainly we are an open government. We are prepared to listen to the public. I can assure the Member that we will continue to do so.

Mr. Jack Penner: Then I want to further this discussion. I have a note here from the Bison Association. It says the Manitoba president Dave Geisbrecht has met twice with the Minister and also with officials from the Department of Conservation to express Manitoba Bison Association's concern over the adverse effect of this bill. I do not think that Mr. Geisbrecht would meet with me and say to me that he had met twice with you and put that in writing. So I think he really has. And he has expressed a grave concern over this bill.

The Manitoba Bison Association is not, they say, opposed to government's wish to stop penned hunting. To date the NDP have told Mr. Geisbrecht that they have no desire to adversely affect the bison industry, and he believes that. Their goal is merely to stop penned hunting. Mr. Geisbrecht has made the point to the Minister though and to the Provincial Government that if they do not plan to exercise the new powers that they are giving themselves—and I quote this from notes from the bison industry—under this bill, then why put them in. That is a question that Mr. Geisbrecht has asked the Minister twice now. If you do not want to exercise the new powers you are giving yourself under this bill, Mr.

Chairman, then why would your government want to implement them? Why would you want to draft legislation and why would you ask this House to pass legislation such as that?

The Minister of Agriculture's response to date has been: Trust us. Well, when I look at what they told the people on health care before the election—that they could fix health care with \$15 million and within three months they would have gotten rid of hallway medicine and would have fixed all the nurses' problems and the doctors' problems in this province—one has to really wonder how we can, in quotation marks, trust them.

I say to you, Mr. Chairman, that the representation that the bison industry has made, I think, reflects the debate and the discussion, and reflects the lack of trust that the agricultural industry has in this government. They simply do not trust them to implement an act and not exercise it. Then why exercise it?

I know the Minister will say it is penned hunting we are addressing. Well, I think if the Minister would truly study her own legislation and if she would look at The Animal Care Act, there was a perfect place to implement or make an amendment to The Animal Care Act to ensure that penned hunting could not have existed the way some people perceive it.

* (14:50)

I personally have some grave concerns about this whole connotation of penned hunting when much of the area that is currently being hunted for deer, white-tail deer, or indeed elk, many of the other wildlife species, is in fact fenced property. It is pasture land, whether it is Crown land that is pastured and fenced—and some people that do not know any better would call them pens to keep cattle in and/or other livestock in—and yet we freely allow licences to be sold to hunt in those areas.

Do we call that penned hunting, Mr. Chairman? In your view as a university professor would your interpretation be penned hunting or would it not? I say to you that many people in urban areas and many even maybe in rural areas that do not know what goes on in

rural Manitoba would probably quantify it by saying: Yes, that is penned hunting. If you shoot a deer in a pasture, it would be deemed penned hunting. Is that what we are trying to eliminate in this bill?

I am sure the Minister will say, no, that is not our intent, but it is certainly unclear as to whether that could in fact be applied here, Mr. Chairman. That is the reason I raise these issues because those issues have been brought to our attention, and it simply mystifies us why the Government would have suspended the public hearings on this very, very important issue.

I want to ask the Minister whether it is her view that the suspension of the public hearings on Bill 5 is in the best interest, first of all, of the general public and whether it is in the best interest of the industry, the agricultural industry as a whole.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, the Member raises some interesting comments about his views on what or what is not penned hunting, and I wonder whether he shared those views with his colleagues when their party was proposing the end of penned hunting in Manitoba.

The Member is talking about hearings, and I would remind him that this piece of legislation is under the Department of Conservation. I would encourage him, when those Estimates are up that he go to the Estimates on Conservation and raise the issues. I know that there will be a very good explanation as to why the meetings were cancelled. I tell the Member not to worry too much. Those meetings will be held. This is an enabling legislation, and there is opportunity to have hearings before the regulations are drafted.

But the Member talked about a wide range of issues, he talked about us not keeping our promises in health care, and I am quite amazed that a member from a government that had absolutely no credibility with the public on health care would now say that we have no credibility. In the seven or eight months that we have been in office we have done more for health care to try to correct some of the mistakes that they have made, Mr. Chairman. But, you know, when you have an administration that

fires 1000 nurses, an administration that will go down in history for being the masters of hallway medicine and an administration that did a lot of other things to health care, they are the people that are not respected as far as health care goes.

I give our Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) a lot of credit for the work that he has done in repairing the damages in health care that the previous government has done. You look at the report that we get national coverage that our government, our Minister of Health, for the work that we have done in repairing and improving the health care system in this province in a short period of time. Now, the Member cannot expect us to turn around all of these things, what it took them 11 years to destroy, for us to put it back in place in nine months. Mr. Chairman, the public does not expect that we can turn things around that quickly, but we are. We are turning the situation around on health care.

With respect to agriculture, the Member would like to paint the picture that the agricultural community does not have the respect of this government. Well, I would tell him that I have met with many producers, I have met with farm organizations. I have visited in many parts of the province, and the agriculture community is supporting us on the steps that we are taking in support of the agriculture industry. I only hope that we will have a turnaround in prices, that we will get some nice weather. Those are the things that we need right now to help our farming community. But the changes that we have made to crop insurance and other changes that we have made, Mr. Chairman, and the phone calls that we have at our office, indicate that indeed the public does support what we are doing in the agriculture community. And with respect to—

Mr. Chairperson: A point of order being raised, the Opposition House Leader.

Point of Order

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader): On a point of order, Mr. Chairperson, I was just in my office here in the Legislature attempting to go through the channels and hear what is going on in the separate committees and the House. I do believe that we as the Legislative

Assembly had established these channels for all members of the Legislative Assembly to hear the proceedings that are on, and the Premier (Mr. Doer) is interrupting it for his news announcement at this time.

So this is being cut out right now, and the Speaker is sitting on a ruling on this matter, Mr. Chairperson, so I would ask you to rule on whether or not the Premier should be cutting off these proceedings here within the Chamber at this time.

Mr. Chairperson: Since the Speaker has not given any ruling in the House, I do not think this Chair has anything to say about it. I am taking it under advisement just like the Speaker did.

Mr. Laurendeau: Mr. Chairperson, I do not think it would be appropriate for this committee to continue its proceedings as long as the First Minister is interrupting them.

I move that we now step aside and adjourn.

Mr. Chairperson: There is a motion? Are you moving it?

Mr. Laurendeau: Yes.

Mr. Chairperson: In writing, please. The Opposition House Leader has moved that this committee now adjourn. What is the will of the committee?

An Honourable Member: It is non-debatable.

* (15:00)

Mr. Chairperson: It is a non-debatable motion.

Voice Vote

Mr. Chairperson: All those in favour of adjourning this committee, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Mr. Chairperson: All those opposed, please signify.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Chairperson: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

Formal Vote

Mr. Laurendeau: Mr. Chairperson, Yeas and Nays.

Mr. Chairperson: Yeas and Nays being called, are there at least two members supporting this motion?

An Honourable Member: There are six of us.

Mr. Chairperson: They have to signify.

An Honourable Member: Mr. Penner.

Mr. Chairperson: Mr. Penner.

An Honourable Member: We want a recorded vote.

Mr. Chairperson: A recorded vote being requested by at least two members, call in the members.

All sections in Chamber for formal vote.

Mr. Chairperson: In the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in the Chamber to consider the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture and Food, the Honourable House Leader of the Official Opposition moved that the Committee do now adjourn.

This motion was defeated on a voice vote, and two members subsequently requested a formal counted vote.

The question, therefore, before this committee is: Shall the Committee now adjourn?

A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 0, Nays 43.

Mr. Chairperson: The motion is accordingly defeated.

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD (Continued)

Mr. Chairperson: We will now resume consideration of the Estimates of the Department

of Agriculture and Food, item 3.4.(b) Animal Industry, on page 27 of the Estimates book. Would the Minister's staff please come into the Chamber now.

We are on item 3.4. Agricultural Development and Marketing (b) Animal Industry (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,763,100.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): On the livestock issue, especially in regard to Bill 5—and I am not going to belabour this point, but I really would hope that the Minister will take the message back to her caucus and her Cabinet and reflect on what the impact to the commercial production of livestock will be in this province if we choose to designate part of our livestock herd as responsible to The Wildlife Act and part of our herd through other acts be deemed domestic.

I think our bison industry has grown very dramatically, and they are growing into a marketplace that is sustainable over the long term, and I believe that they are going to provide opportunities to areas of this province where the livestock industry might have been somewhat difficult. The bison especially is I think able to withstand the elements where other domestic animals might not and therefore is suited in areas where other animals that we are used to raising in confined areas might, in fact, be deemed not competitive, but the bison would be. I think the elk might be another species that might well be utilized in that manner and would encourage people probably to expand the livestock industry and agriculture into areas that were not acceptable in the past.

* (15:50)

So I think there is a real opportunity here, and I would hate to see that we would jeopardize that or put it into question simply because we are dealing with it in a manner that would call the whole industry into question. That is really the concern that the Bison Association has expressed to me personally. They think that if the penned hunting is really what we are after, we would not disassociate ourselves from wanting to get away from the perceived penned hunting; in other words, put animals into small enclosures and point a gun over a fence and shoot them. I mean, we would not support that

sort of a concept, but I think there is an opportunity here as well in this province to provide opportunities for operators who have found it very difficult to operate, and I would hope that the current government respects the investments, respects the tourism opportunities that could be associated with the farm industry.

I would suspect that the Minister would find that we have many farmers who are supplementing their income with tourism initiatives, whether they are bed-and-breakfast operators, whether they have other means of attracting visitors to their farms and encouraging other incomes or deriving other incomes from activities, be they in winter or summer.

A good friend of mine who keeps a significant number of dogs. Dog sledding has become quite an income for him to bring people from the United States and other parts of the world that come in and ride his dog sleds. I think those are all initiatives that have been taken by people that have found it too difficult to make a living off of their "farms," and so they look for outside interests. I think there is a real opportunity here as well to allow for some measures of confined hunting without the definition of penned hunting being applied.

I think that is what the Bison Association told us that is what some of the others, the Elk Association and others, have told us, that there are opportunities and that there are ways to do this that would allow for the utilization of the old bulls that would have virtually no other marketability, and this would allow them to utilize those kinds of things. I think we need to pay some attention to that. That is why I thought, when the Government announced that they would have significant public hearings on this, that all these kinds of things would be able to come out and brought to the attention of the general public. I hope that the Government changes its mind and has hearings on Bill 5 other than the committee hearings. The public hearings that the Minister has announced, I think on the Livestock Stewardship are commendable. I would suggest that she would have more of those hearings, that it would be easier for people to travel to and within travelling distance and I think that it would not have been that difficult for her. But I think those kinds of public

hearings are always desirable, and we encouraged that when we were in government.

I chaired a number of committees that travelled the province whether it was for land or water policy or development or whether it was for value-added policy development and other initiatives that we took. I enjoyed that, and I found the advice that we were getting was immensely valuable. I would hope that the Minister would do this as well.

So, having said that, I would like to ask the Minister: How many staff people are employed by the animal industry? How many people have you employed in your department, for instance, that would be directly responsible to the pork industry? How many people have you got that you could identify as being directly related to the pork industry?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food): Mr. Chairman, the Member talked about the importance of the bison industry and the number of people who are looking to diversify their economy through bison. Certainly I concur with him. I do believe that there are real opportunities in the bison industry. There are several in my area. There are also a couple of First Nations communities who are raising bison, one in Pine Creek, which is near where I live. The Brokenhead Reserve has a very large herd. The Brokenhead Reserve is working with a city in Mexico to sell bison there and not only develop their tourism but also develop tourism in Mexico. The name of the city is Ecatepec. I could not remember that the other day when I was talking about it.

Certainly there are many opportunities. One of the areas that we have to look at and is an important issue is the processing of these animals. As we get different species of livestock into Manitoba, it is an issue that is not there for many of those different species to have the ability to process. Our department is working very closely with people trying to attract someone here to Manitoba that would then construct a multispecies slaughtering facility.

Mr. Cris Aglugub, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

As well, with the elk industry, the Member talks about the importance of the industry. Certainly it has grown, but I have to say that I disagree with the Member on his idea that there could be some limited penned hunting. I know when we got into the discussion of establishing the elk industry in Manitoba that was one of the questions we asked, whether there was going to be any penned hunting. We were told that what the government of the day was looking at was to develop an elk industry for the antler market as well as for the meat, of course breeding stock first, and then the meat industry, but that penned hunting would not be part of that industry. That was clearly what the government of the day had said.

Obviously, the Member has his different views on that if he is saying that he thinks there is some room for penned hunting within this industry. That is not the direction of this government. But certainly we are listening to the public. I do believe in a very open process. I have met with many people in the industry and had discussions about this, as have my colleagues. I know that there will be further discussion with the public.

But specific to the Member's question, the Member asked about how many people were specifically working in the pork industry. There is one person dedicated to pork in the Animal Industry Branch and then there is one in each region of the province. Then there are several people who do this on a part-time basis whose whole job is not dedicated to the pork industry. But if you add all of those people together it would be somewhere in the range of, I would say, about 30 people that are dedicated to the pork industry in Manitoba. Certainly with the importance of that industry and the potential for growth, those are numbers that we will have to watch.

* (16:00)

Mr. Jack Penner: So that is 30 people in all that would be associated with the pork industry in one form or another through them?

Ms. Wowchuk: That would be the equivalent of 30 people.

Mr. Jack Penner: Yes. Thank you for that information.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Aglugub): Order, please. I have to recognize you.

Mr. Jack Penner: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate that. I get ahead of myself sometimes. Have we got similar statistics on how many people would be involved in, for instance, the exotics or the bison industry, in the elk industry? Do you know roughly how many people would serve that industry?

Ms. Wowchuk: In the bison and elk it would be equivalent to six or seven people.

Mr. Jack Penner: That would include bison, the elk industry and the other exotics?

Ms. Wowchuk: It would be equivalent to six or seven in the bison and elk. The other exotic species would be distributed amongst us, but there is no specific number to the other species.

Mr. Jack Penner: How would the others be dealt with by the Department, or would they be dealt with by some other department? Would they be included in Agriculture? There are the emus and the ostriches and the wild boars and many others.

Ms. Wowchuk: Those are picked up by other staff as the issues arise, but there is nobody specifically dedicated to it. When an issue comes up in a particular region, then it would be the responsibility of the livestock specialist or the ag rep to get the information that is required. Certainly, there are people who have the expertise that can be drawn on when a specific issue comes up with some of the other species such as the Member indicates, emu or ostrich or some of the other exotic species.

Mr. Jack Penner: How about the dairy industry? How many people would we have involved in the dairy industry?

Ms. Wowchuk: In the dairy industry there would be equivalent to 24 full-time.

Mr. Jack Penner: Mr. Chairman, what is the total industry income as far as dairying is concerned in the province?

Ms. Wowchuk: The dairy industry is an important part of Manitoba's agriculture economy. In 1998-99, Manitoba's milk production increased by 2.7 million litres over the previous year, so he can see that there is a growth in production. The farm cash receipts were \$153 million and the value of product processed was over \$300 million in Manitoba.

Mr. Jack Penner: Was that the total revenue generation of the dairy industry, \$300 million?

Ms. Wowchuk: The farm cash receipts were \$153 million and the value of the processed product was over \$300 million.

Mr. Jack Penner: So, then in total, we would be approaching half a billion dollars as far as revenues in general from the dairy industry. Is that correct? My assumption is correct?

Ms. Wowchuk: The farm-cashed receipts are part of the cost of the processing so you cannot add the two numbers up. They are separate numbers. The \$153 million is the farm cash receipts. The processors pay that price, then double the value of it to a number close to \$300 million.

Mr. Jack Penner: That is good. I just wanted to know how that accounting went. So it is really a total gross revenue of \$300 million. The \$153 million becomes part of the operational cost to the processing side and the \$153 million then becomes the on-farm revenue.

Ms. Wowchuk: Yes, Mr. Chairman, but that is only the dairy products. It is not the value of the animals. It is the value of the dairy products.

Mr. Jack Penner: That is exactly the numbers I was looking for, what the dairy industry was worth. The animals—I would equate them—they would probably run into the beef side sector. Am I correct in assuming that?

Ms. Wowchuk: The Member is right. Some of those animals would run into the beef side, but there is also another area that we do not have the

numbers on right here. It is in a very important part of the dairy industry and that is the export of dairy genetics, which is becoming a very important part of our trade and one of the issues that Canadians should be very proud of.

We just had met with some people from Egypt—no, Iran, I am sorry—who talked about their dairy herds, their Holstein herds. Those Holstein herds are Canadian breeds and in fact they are now breeding dairy, raising breeding stock of Canadian Holsteins. Also, when we were in Mexico we met with many dairy producers who are interested in our dairy genetics. Since those contacts have been made, there has been a large amount of embryos being sent to Mexico. So that is also a very important part of our dairy industry and one that we should be very proud of, what has built up here in Canada to be a very high-quality, high-production dairy livestock.

* (16:10)

Mr. Jack Penner: Would the Minister tell me what sort of supports are given to the dairy industry? I would like to know from both the beef side, the beef industry as well as the dairy industry. What sorts of supports, if any, government supports for program allocation and that sort of stuff are prevalent, first of all, in the dairy industry? And the second question is to the beef industry: Are similar-type programs available to the beef industry?

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, when we look at this industry, there is no direct support. If you are looking at financial support, there is no direct support to the producers, but certainly there is technology transfer through our Ag extension offices and through the dairy specialists, who will work very closely with the dairy producers and do work with the various technologies.

I know that our dairy specialist works very closely with the industry on embryo transplants and herd health, plays a very important role. That part of it is important. We also support the vet districts, which would not be direct support so much to the dairy industry but would be

support to more of the beef industry. That is an area of support.

We pay 75 percent of the costs for the vet diagnostic labs. As well, we run the dairy lab—the quality and safety standards ensure that we have a high quality of production—as well as develop regulations for the industry.

I would say that our support for the industry is more in support through the staff that is there and bringing new technology and helping people, particularly in the dairy industry, adapt to this new technology to improve the quality of their herds and then working to ensure, through the dairy labs, the quality and the safety of the products.

With the beef industry it would be mostly as well through the extension offices. This year we have put in Beef Prospects, which is a promotion of the beef industry, one that we want to ensure that the beef industry will grow. As we have said, we are looking for growth in all aspects of the livestock industry. We have had a lot of discussion on the pork industry, but we want to see the beef industry grow as well. That is the purpose of that program.

As well, Mr. Chairman, I would share with the Member that we are doing a veterinarian exchange program with Mexico. We will have six or eight veterinarians coming to learn about the technology here and hope that they can transfer some of that technology to improve their herds. Certainly, following up on those visits, you might hope that some of those people might enjoy Canada so much or Manitoba so much that they might decide to make this their home and add to our veterinarians. We are always looking for additional veterinarians that can help us in our livestock and beef industry. I think that that is a good opportunity. Sometimes it is not only about helping your people, it is about sharing information to help other countries improve. That is one of the things that we are doing.

Mr. Jack Penner: Mr. Chairman, a while back we had the annual Manitoba Milk Recording program that was delivered by the department. Is that correct? Then it was privatized. There were annual grants to the industry, I believe. Has that been terminated now, the annual grants to the

Manitoba Milk Recording Corporation? I think there was an annual grant there, right?

Ms. Wowchuk: The Member is right. There was a privatization. After the privatization of that lab, there were some funds for a few years. I believe those funds were cancelled about four years ago. The testing has been consolidated into one lab, and that testing now takes place in Alberta.

Mr. Jack Penner: What provinces are involved in the partnership of the testing lab?

Ms. Wowchuk: The four western provinces.

Mr. Jack Penner: So that is Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia.

Ms. Wowchuk: That is right, Mr. Chairman, four western provinces.

Mr. Jack Penner: Do they do any contract work for other provinces or dairy producers in other provinces?

Ms. Wowchuk: They are a private lab. We have no way of knowing whether they are doing work for other provinces.

* (16:20)

Mr. Jack Penner: Who are the partners? Are they the Industry itself, that would be, the Manitoba dairy producers, the Saskatchewan dairy producers, the Alberta dairy producers and the B.C. dairy producers? How do they operate? How is this partnership formed? How is the Corporation formed?

Ms. Wowchuk: Our involvement is through the Manitoba Milk Producers Association. So it is my assumption that it would be the dairy producers associations from the three other provinces as well as Manitoba.

Mr. Jack Penner: It appears that the Province granted the provincial organization an annual amount of money at the start of the privatization process. When did the merger take place? When did the amalgamation take place between the three or four western provinces? Was that after the annual grant terminated, or was that before the annual grant terminated?

Ms. Wowchuk: The Member is right. The previous administration moved toward privatization of this operation. There were funds that were flowing to the dairy producers. While there were funds flowing, they were prepared to do the testing on their own. But very shortly after the funds from the province ran out, they moved to consolidation and that was lost here in Manitoba, and it was consolidated in Alberta.

Mr. Jack Penner: My information, Mr. Chairman, tells me that the western Canadian dairy herd improvement services administers the milk recording for all of the four western provinces and that there was an annual grant by the Manitoba Government for the fiscal years '90 to '97. Can the Minister tell me what those grants were and what they were applied to?

Ms. Wowchuk: The name of the group that the Member put forward is the same group that I have been talking about, and that is the organization that was formed by the three provinces. There was a grant that was put in place to help them with their testing, and then there was an extension of the grant for another three years which would have made it from '94 to '97, I would assume, but in that period the grant was being phased out, so it was a declining amount. And then in 1997, that was the last year, and it was eliminated after then.

If the Member is looking for the particular amounts of granting in each year, we do not have that information here, but I can take it as notice and bring that information back to him.

Mr. Jack Penner: My information tells me that the year 1989-90 was \$56,200, and then increased gradually \$135,000 next year and to \$135,000 for the following three years; \$121,500 for the '94 year; and \$203,595 and then declined to \$100,000 a year for the '96-97 year. Is that correct?

Ms. Wowchuk: The Member is reading from the previous minister's briefing book. That is now old information, and it is not included in my briefing book.

Mr. Jack Penner: Just wondering whether the Minister was apprised of what the history of this was.

Ms. Wowchuk: That is old history when his government was into the mode of privatization of services. We are into a new millennium and a new government, and we are looking forward and are developing new information.

Mr. Jack Penner: Does that mean then that the Government is intending to disband this partnership in bringing it back in under government supervision—not government supervision. Is she telling me that she wants to bring it back in as a government-funded program initiated by her government and delivered by her government? Is that the case? Is that the new NDP?

Ms. Wowchuk: The Member is reading out of a previous minister's book. I would encourage him to talk about issues that are relevant for today, not to look back at issues back into the 1990s, because that indeed is old history. I know we have much more relevant issues about the livestock industry and the agriculture industry that we should be discussing during this Estimates time.

Mr. Jack Penner: I thank the Minister for that kind retribution. I say only this to the Minister: if you know not whence you came from, how do you know where you are going? In other words, if you do not know your history, Madam Minister, in developing new programs, it has always been my view—and it was the advice that I gave to the farm community—if you do not know where you have been, how do you intend to chart a path that will get you to where you want to go?

I say to you that this Minister should very seriously spend some time, in my view, reviewing where the industry has been, where it has come from, and how far it has come in the last decade. She almost sounded to me as if she let me know that she might not quite have agreed with the privatization that the former government was into. Yet, I say to her, when I talk to the industry, meet with the industry, they are quite positive about the changes that have taken place and the changes that many of them have brought on. Many of them work very hard to get to where they are today, and I think most of us appreciate that. It has always been my view in most areas we would be much better off if there

was no government money involved in the application and the provision of programming.

However, recognizing that that is not always possible, because of interventions made by other countries, sometimes in research and those kinds of areas we need some broad-based initiatives to get us to where we want to go. I think we should never forget to follow the history and learn from that history in planning our future. That is why I asked those questions.

When I read these briefing notes of the former minister, I find them extremely useful. I think there is some very valuable information in these briefing notes. I would really maybe encourage that these kind of briefing notes for the purposes of information be made available to members of government, to her members in government, and opposition members, because it gives you a fairly good overview of what the department is all about and how they deal with the various issues. I think that is extremely useful. I would call that open government.

* (16:30)

The Minister smiles and chuckles, obviously giving me an indication that she does not agree with what I am saying. Quite frankly, there is a lot of value in looking back, even only as far back as eight months ago, because the briefing book I am using was prepared for Estimates for the 1999-2000 year. So it is a very recent publication. It has some history in it. I would suspect that maybe the Minister, if she would have taken and asked for this, she would have got it as well, and she might have apprised herself of the same kind of fact.

Moving on to the quota industry, are we in discussions with the federal government regarding quotas? Is there any intent by government to try and negotiate a different set of rules under which supply management allocates quotas? Maybe I should expand on that a wee bit.

We all know that the population-based quota system always, always gives preferential treatment to Ontario and Québec, the mainly populated areas. I know from articles I read in various magazines that Québec and Ontario will

work very hard to convince the federal government that population-based quotas should be expanded, and that would not serve Manitoba well.

We know that in many areas of supply management—I think the poultry industry is a good example—we have higher-based quotas than what our population would allow if it was population-based quotas. I wonder whether the dairy industry is similar. I am asking this for a reason. I would like to know from the Minister whether she is considering in bringing forward these issues and debating them with her other provincial counterparts when they have federal-provincial meetings.

Ms. Wowchuk: The Member raised a very important question, but before I go to that question I cannot pass up the opportunity to tell the Member that he does not have the only copy of the previous minister's briefing books, and it was one of the first books that I got that I took into this office. I can assure him that I spent a lot of time looking at it. I also spent a lot of time in opposition looking at the livestock industry, so I have taken advantage. I have a lot of confidence in the Department and the information they provide, whether their government was in power or when we were in power. I believe that we have a very competent staff, and they provide the information that all of us need. It is our responsibility to look at that information. I certainly have.

Mr. Chairman, the Member talks about the whole issue of supply management. I want to tell the Member that the allocation issue has not been on the agenda of the ministerial meetings that I have attended so far, but I have to tell the Member that when we were in the safety net discussions with the gang of eight that was moving towards cash receipts versus risk, I certainly pointed out the fact that there is a huge advantage in other provinces where they have the majority of the supply management, and that of course is in Ontario and Québec, and that those things should be taken into consideration, that the value of supply management should be taken into consideration when you are looking at safety nets and the need for more protection for our producers. B.C. has asked that the issue of safety nets be put on the agenda for some

discussion at the next ministers' meeting, and it is a very, very important issue.

One of the areas where it has been the subject of a lot of discussion is with egg quota. We have, here in Manitoba, just appealed the ruling of the CEMA to the national council. We appealed there. The national council ruled in favour of CEMA, but they told them that they had to start looking at ways to address the issue. Certainly, they are going to have to look at population that the Member talks about versus the issue of comparative advantage of production. That is the one area that there has been some discussion on.

Certainly, we have an advantage for production. I think that all people have to consider that we lost the Crow. With the loss of the Crow, there are advantages that have come now with our low grain prices, and we have to be able to give them the opportunity to take advantage of that.

So there has been discussion on the eggs. I know that other supply-managed commodities are going to be coming to the table for discussion and looking at how that quota is going to be distributed, and the whole fact of our costs of production also has to come into those discussions.

Mr. Jack Penner: Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to hear that the Minister is recognizing the importance of cost-based allocations. I think that the ministers from western Canada should take a hard-line serious approach during the next round of ministerial federal-provincial meetings and try and impress upon the other players in the industry, and if it takes more than one meeting, then so be it, but try and impress upon the other provinces that we are no longer going to sit idly by and watch our cost of production base be lowered substantially because of federal government actions and not require a bigger base of production in those areas.

The Minister referenced the poultry industry. I think the poultry industry is a perfect example of how competitive we can be if we need to be and how the industry can expand, the industrial base can expand, for that specific industry.

I would suspect that the dairy industry would be in a very similar type of a position if the cost of production became the base of the quota allocation instead of utilizing cost of production plus a population-based quota system that we have now.

* (16:40)

I know it would be a tough fight and maybe even a losing battle, but I think the point needs to be driven home that producers in western Canada no longer will sit idly by, having been ruthlessly cut loose and put at the mercy of the competitive world when our American friends are constantly topping up the subsidy programs south of us and are not paying very much attention, quite frankly, Madam Minister, to the whole competitive sector. The only competition they see is the Europeans and how they apply their subsidies. I think until the next WTO comes to fruition, I think we will not see many changes.

I am not a great proponent of government-supported subsidies. Do not get me wrong. That is not my position. My position has always been that the competitive side should dictate where the production should be, I am very firm on that, but, recognizing at the same time that our producers cannot produce against government treasuries of the United States and/or Europe.

But, similarly, we in Manitoba cannot compete against the treasuries of Ontario and Quebec. Neither can we compete on the political side against the population voting base. I think the federal government recognizes that voting base and will put all sorts of impediments in our way to make change. Yet change we must. If we do not change, we are going to be stuck in a rut that will be in my view very detrimental to the total agricultural economy.

I do not think that the Minister disagrees with what I am saying, Mr. Chairman. I do not think her staff disagrees, the departments disagree with that position. What I am saying and what I am asking the Minister is: Is she preparing for that battle? Is she prepared to stand firm on that position? And, has she had and will she have discussions with her western provincial counterparts, at least the three Prairie provinces—

I am not sure where B.C. is at on this issue—in regard to that and see whether they can form a coalition that would put forward a strong position at the next ministerial meeting?

Ms. Wowchuk: The Member said a couple of times, did not want us to be sitting idly by. Well, that certainly is not what has been happening because we are into the issue already, as I indicated to the Member, with the whole issue of eggs. We have been supportive and we have written to the national council. We are into that issue already. But, this is a federal-provincial agreement and we have to work through these agreements.

The Member talks about coalitions. Certainly coalitions would be great if we could get them together. If all the provinces that lost because of the Crow could stand together, that would be wonderful. But, we have not had that discussion: I do not know whether Alberta will stand with us on this one or whether they are going to go on their own. We are not sure what B.C. is going to do either. I think that we will get a sense at the Minister's meeting. I do not know whether it is going to get onto the agenda. I know that B.C. has requested. So, it is an issue that is on many peoples' mind, one that I think is a very, very important issue, and we are preparing for it. We are working on the egg issue. The other issues are going to surface as well. The whole issue of the losses to our provinces because of changes made by the federal government should be taken into consideration.

The Member talks about the provincial dollars from Ontario and Québec. We have a hard time competing against federal dollars as well. When you look at the whole issue of safety nets and a decision was made to go toward cash receipts, that meant that not only were there more provincial dollars in other provinces, but a larger share of federal dollars are going to those provinces as well. So it is not only some of the provinces that want those kinds of changes, but when the federal government sides with them, that makes it very difficult as well. This is not an issue that is going to go away. It is one that we are going to have to address, and one that we are going to have to work on. I hope that we can ensure that the producers in Manitoba will have

the opportunity to take advantage of the natural advantage that we have here in Manitoba now because of the changes made by the federal government.

It is not an issue that is going to go away. It is one that we are considering very carefully, one that we are working at very closely with the commodity groups that are in supply management.

Mr. Jack Penner: I am wondering whether the Minister is having any discussions with other groups than the supply management sector on this very issue. I know that there has been interest expressed from other producers that, if they were allowed to get into the industry, whether it is the poultry industry or the dairy industry, they would be very interested in getting in. I wonder what the Minister might or has considered having that debate and discussion with other groups of the industry than just a supply management sector to see what their views might be or their advice might be in this area.

Ms. Wowchuk: I have spoken to people in the whole industry—the producers, the processors, the people on the marketing boards—and talked about all of the issues that are there, about more supply for Manitoba, Manitoba's ability to produce, the need for more product. But, if the Member is asking whether I have talked to people who are wanting to produce dairy products, for example, outside of supply management, no, I have not had contact with those people and have not met with any of those people.

* (16:50)

Mr. Jack Penner: I think the Minister misunderstood. There was no suggestion, I did not make any suggestion, that she speak to people that were interested in producing dairy products outside of the supply management system. What I was asking was: Has she had discussions with other interested parties that might want to get involved in the supply management industries? Whether she has had discussions—for instance, I will give you an example: Has she had discussions with the feed producer sector, whether it is the corn producers

or the barley producers, but the feed grain sector? Has she had any discussions with young farmers, a young farmer group, to see whether there is an interest in them, whether they would be wanting to get involved in the dairy industry or the poultry industry under supply management?

Do not get me wrong. I am not opposed to supply management. I support supply management. I am a strong supporter of supply management because I think many of the products that we produce, we should pay more attention to only producing to supply. I think that would put us in a different note if we did that in many other products, so the Minister probably thinks I am adverse to supply management. I am not. I never have been and do not think I ever will be.

But has she has spoken to other producers to see what kind of advice they would give to redirect the industry from a national perspective? I think it is extremely important that this be taken by this province, that positions be taken by this province, that will lead to the expansion of the supply-managed sectors. I believe we should expand the dairy industry in this province, and we should expand the poultry industry in this province. I believe we could attract the industries, the service industries as well as the processing industry to this province because we are, and will be forever and a day, the lowest cost producer of those products.

I think we should be speaking to consumer groups to try and solicit their support that the quota base be broadened and expanded in this province and that the consumers groups should press the federal government to expand in this province, because we could bring a lower-cost product to the consumer if it was done in this province. We should make that case. We should make it very carefully and very clearly.

I think that message needs to be brought by every industry in this province, including the grain sector, including the specialty crops producers and the whole industry should start talking that way. We should not restrict. I think the pork industry, Mr. Chair, is a good indication of what can happen if you encourage the industry to come our way. Then the expansion drives expansion. If it is done with care, if it is

done with an environmentally friendly manner, then we can expand it to a much greater degree than we are today. I truly believe that we can do this if we do it carefully and if we do it in a united way with all the other producer sectors. I think the Minister would be amazed at how much support she would garner from the agriculture community at large if she took that kind of approach.

I am asking the Minister whether she has had any meaningful discussions with the supply side of the livestock industry. I am talking about the supply side, the feed grain suppliers and those kinds of producers, and whether she is trying to solicit that support from them to take it to the national level.

Ms. Wowchuk: Indeed, I did misunderstand the Member's previous question. Yes, we have had discussions with people in the feed section. We have had discussion with people who want to get into supply management, be dairy producers, poultry producers, egg producers here in Manitoba, because they recognize the benefits.

The problem is, there just is not enough quota. There are many people on waiting lists who want to get into the industry, and I certainly wish that we could have more and use that advantage that we have here in Manitoba. We want to increase ours, but at the same time Ontario wants to increase theirs, Québec wants to increase theirs. It is a very delicate—I do not want to call it a game, but it is—a delicate game here as we divide up this quota.

Mr. Chairman, this is a federal-provincial agreement. It has to be worked out between the provinces, between the federal government on how these allocations go, and we certainly hope that we can increase our allocation here from Manitoba to help our producers. We continue to work on that. I know that it is going to be, given the situation that we have had with the egg production and the fact that CEMA and the National Council are involved in it. It is not an issue that is going to go away, and certainly I will be looking for support from other provinces who lost, as we did, when the Crow benefit was eliminated, but I have not got the comfort level that all of these people are going to stand together with us. It is something that we have to

work through, and I believe that we will start on those discussions when we are at the Ag ministers' meeting next month. Hopefully, we can work through this in a way that will be beneficial to Manitoba, given our low cost of production.

Mr. Jack Penner: I am glad that the Minister has had some discussion with some of the players. I would suggest to her strongly that, if she solicited the support of the Consumers Association and others in the industry that are quite interested in the industry, she might be surprised at how much federal support she might in fact get to make the case in a very strong manner, that our production base needs to be increased because of changes that the feds have made.

It has always been my view, and I have said this to the federal government many times, that once you make the move to change the Crow, you had better be prepared to change all the other allocations as well, and so far they have not recognized that. As a matter of fact, so far Québec and Ontario have been advantaged by the current administration at every negotiation table that I have seen, including the farm support discussions, and I think that is unfortunate. I think the position needs to be made very strongly, and we need not to back off on this. I would encourage and support the Minister in every aspect of that. It is a tough row, yes. It will be a tough negotiation process, but I know there are some tough negotiators in this province, and if she would want to solicit their support or hire them to do that, I think she could do that. It is not necessary that we bring all these people into the Department. We can bring them in from outside and hire them on contract, and they are good at what they do. That is what their training is, and they are good negotiators. So I would encourage the Minister to approach that avenue in that sector.

I would like to spend a bit of time on the environment and some of the environmental issues and regulatory processes that have been utilized for a while and ask the Minister what her views are. I know she has put out the discussion paper on the livestock stewardship program. She and I do not agree on the content and what sort of results that is going to bring, but we will set

that aside for today. We had that debate the other day, and we do not need to get into that again. I really congratulate the Minister for taking the initiative to go to the public, because I think that is the way to solicit the kind of view that you need to develop proper policy. So I am highly supportive of the process.

* (17:00)

I believe that the environment and some of the environmental legislation—and I think the Minister will agree with this. The environmental legislation that we put forward in the past five, six years and some of the regulatory changes that have been made have been, I think, instrumental in changing the industry and how the industry actually produces livestock in general. I know that there are some significant concerns by the industry, as there should be, because when you bring the general public into the discussion, very often the general public does not understand what the true relevance of environmental stewardship really means to the overall population base and the environment and how that is applied. I think, for the Minister's benefit, the people she has chosen to take this whole process out are probably the kind of people that can explain and hear and sift through what they hear and bring to the policy development table the issues that need to be brought.

I want to only say to her that in the whole area of livestock management and the livestock industry from an environmental perspective, pay a lot of attention and heed to what you hear from the farm community itself, because I think there are no better stewards of the environment today than the farm operators that currently operate in our agricultural communities.

That does not say that there are not the odd people that break away from that mould, but I think in general that is the case. I would hope that when she develops new policies on the environment and when she does her communications on the environmental issues, she exercises great care in this regard and truly expounds the virtues of the true environmental stewards that we have out there, and that is the farmer.

I had asked the Minister before when Barry Todd would come to the building, whether we

could divert our attention then to some of these Soils and Crops issues, specifically Irrigation, because one of my colleagues had wanted to ask some questions on this. I would wonder whether that would be possible, to bring Barry Todd to the table. I understand he is here.

Mr. Chairperson: Are we ready to pass this item?

Ms. Wowchuk: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I would ask the Member then if he would be prepared to pass 4.(b) and 4.(c) and then we could move into Soils and Crops, and Irrigation, and bring the appropriate staff into the Chamber.

Mr. Jack Penner: I would be willing to pass part of the livestock lines unless—I can indicate to her that I am done with the dairy side.

Mr. Chairperson: Is the honourable Opposition critic saying he is willing to pass (b)(1) and (2)?

Mr. Jack Penner: Just hang on a second.

Mr. Chairperson: Animal Industry.

Mr. Jack Penner: Just hang on a second, Mr. Chairman. Let us not be too much in a hurry. I want to get back to the hog industry, I want to get back to the sheep industry, and I want to talk a bit about the poultry industry, so I am not done with the livestock discussions.

I am asking whether we could set that discussion aside and accommodate Barry Todd.

Mr. Chairperson: Is there an agreement to set this aside, pass it over, go to somewhere else and then come back?

Ms. Wowchuk: If that is the Member's wish, but I guess I would just ask that he recognize then the staff at the table now is going to have to leave and then come back again. So it would be preferable if we could complete the Animal Industry side of it, if we could complete that, they will not have to come back tomorrow. That would be what I would prefer.

Mr. Jack Penner: Actually I was trying to—

Mr. Chairperson: For the purpose of recording the *Hansard*, please do not speak until I mention

your name otherwise there will be confusion in the *Hansard*.

Mr. Jack Penner: I appreciate your direction. I am quite prepared to continue discussion on the livestock side. I was just trying to accommodate your staffing if Barry Todd is here. If not, if it is your wish, I can tell you that I am quite prepared to move into Soils and Crops by tomorrow, move into that section. We will by the end of the day or early tomorrow, we would finish this livestock sector and then we would be into, we could move to Soils and Crops tomorrow.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, that would be very helpful if we could do the Animal Industry today. That means that Mr. Todd could go back to his meeting, and that would be very helpful if we could finish this. Thank you.

Mr. Jack Penner: I am wondering whether the Minister might concur that we might break for five minutes. [*interjection*] Okay, thanks.

The Committee recessed at 5:07 p.m.

The Committee resumed at 5:14 p.m.

Mr. Chairperson: We are inviting the members of the Minister's staff.

Mr. Jack Penner: Mr. Chairman, can the Minister give me an overview of the swine industry? I appreciate what she said before, that I was quoting historic figures. I am not asking her for historic figures on this. I wonder whether she can give me an overview as to what the current status is of the swine numbers in the province, whether she has them, and then I will continue from there.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, in 1999 there were over 4.7 million hogs in Manitoba. Of those 4.7 million, 2.5 million hogs were slaughtered in Canada, 1.3 million weanlings and 900,000 mature hogs were exported to the United States. Of course, the goal is not to have weanlings leaving the province. The goal is to have those finished in Manitoba and to have more of the slaughtering done in Manitoba then, instead of having them go to the U.S. Those are

the numbers for 1999. Of course, the industry continues to grow and those numbers have increased, but I do not have a number for now. But the estimation is that we are over 5 million, somewhere in the range of 5.2 to 5.3 million hogs raised in Manitoba at this time.

Mr. Jack Penner: Mr. Chairman, 5.3. Is that correct?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chair, I said somewhere between 5.2 and 5.3 would be the range. Given the number that we had at the end of 1999 which was 4.7, the growth that has taken place, let us say 5.2 million now.

Mr. Jack Penner: That is roughly where we had estimated the pork industry would be roughly five years ago. Is that correct? About five years ago we said that by year 2000 the province should be raising about five million hogs.

Ms. Wowchuk: That is right. The numbers are about right on because we anticipate that the production in 2000 will be 5.2, 5.3 million.

Mr. Jack Penner: With the current industry, the slaughtering capacity in this province and the proposed expansion that is taking place, I guess there are three plants that are looking at expanding. Am I right? There is the Schneider operation and the operation at Springhill. There is another one that is talking about expanding theirs as well. Is that correct? Am I correct?

* (17:20)

Ms. Wowchuk: The Member is correct. Maple Leaf has one shift running now. Their goal is to have two shifts. Schneider is proposing to build another facility here in Winnipeg and Springhill has done an expansion.

Mr. Jack Penner: Was there not another smaller industry that was talking about expanding their operation as well? The name escapes me. I thought there had been another smaller industry there.

Ms. Wowchuk: I believe that the Member may be referring to the old Forgan plant. That may be the one. There are six federally inspected plants here in Manitoba. Some of them are quite small,

but we also have many custom kill, smaller processing plants throughout Manitoba. But the major processing plants would be Maple Leaf, Schneider and Springhill.

Mr. Jack Penner: Which are the other federally inspected facilities in the province, Mr. Chairman?

Ms. Wowchuk: One of the other plants that is federally inspected is Winkler Meats. The other name escapes me, and I will bring that information back for the Member.

Mr. Jack Penner: Is Pioneer Meats a federally inspected facility? I wonder, Mr. Chairman, if you could ask the three gentlemen in the background to—because it is hard for the Minister and her staff to hear when you have got conversations going on there.—

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please.

Ms. Wowchuk: Rather than put inaccurate information, I would rather take that question as notice and bring the information back to the House for the Member.

Mr. Jack Penner: There was another matter, in case it slips my mind later, if I can just remind the Minister. I had asked at the start of the Estimates process whether I could be provided with crop insurance rates and data from the other province. It does not need to be done right now. I am just reminding her that I am still looking for that.

Ms. Wowchuk: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I believe that that information is probably ready, and I will bring it to the Member at our next sitting.

Mr. Jack Penner: I wonder, Mr. Chairman, whether the Minister can give me an estimate as to what she thinks the capacity of the industry will be, let us say five years from now, once Schneider is up to speed and once Springhill is running at full capacity and Maple Leaf runs at full capacity. I understand that Maple Leaf could actually run three shifts if they were running at full capacity. What would the kill capacity be in our province at that time, respecting the fact that there might be other smaller processors expanding as well?

Ms. Wowchuk: It is anticipated that the capacity will be between 10 and 10.5 million.

Mr. Jack Penner: Is it the Minister's view that the agricultural community is going to develop to the point where we will actually raise 10 million or better hogs in this province?

Ms. Wowchuk: We anticipate that the kill capacity in Manitoba will be somewhere between 10 and 10.5 million. Where those hogs will be raised, we are not sure. Certainly we are going to have more growth here in Manitoba, and that is part of why we have indicated clearly that we anticipate that there will be growth in the livestock industry, and that is why we were getting the process of the Stewardship Initiative 2000 to have that discussion. But there are also going to be hogs coming in from Saskatchewan. There are hogs coming in from Alberta right now. The Dakotas are interested in Manitoba, and that depends on the disease status of their herds, and I believe that they are disease-free right now, but I am not quite sure of that. North Dakota is pseudorabies free.

The western part of Ontario has expressed an interest in shipping their hogs to Manitoba to the processing facilities here. What is going to be next is going to depend on the producers, whether the producers want to make the investment. We feel quite comfortable that between local production, production in Manitoba, and production in the other provinces and in the States, there will be the ability to meet the needs of the processing plants here in Manitoba. But the exact mix of what is going to be raised here in Manitoba is something that we cannot predict right now. I know that if you look at what is happening right now, there is an interest, people are building, so I anticipate we will have more hogs. I do not expect we will be raising all of the hogs for those facilities here in Manitoba.

Mr. Jack Penner: Is the Minister encouraging significant swine production expansion in this province? Is she sending out that signal to the agricultural community, that we are welcoming the expansion, that we will welcome the expansion of the industry to 10 million hogs?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, the Department continues to work with producers through

MACC, through our livestock specialists, to encourage the growth of the industry here in Manitoba.

Mr. Jack Penner: Mr. Chairman, I find the response interesting because it is different from what we have seen from our previous minister. Our previous minister was very supportive of the expansion of the swine industry and put out some predictions that encouraged the industry to come look at Manitoba because there were great opportunities here.

I think that is really what a minister and a government must do. They must create an atmosphere and an investment climate as well as an indication to the investor that these opportunities are here and that they will be supported by government. I think the previous minister had no hesitation in doing that. As a matter of fact, the previous minister took some significant initiatives that were criticized by the Opposition at the time that he did this, and the previous minister was from time to time criticized by this now Minister for the expansionary mode that he was in, and he had critical questions put his way.

All I am suggesting to the Minister is that if she truly wants the industry to have the confidence of government, then the right signals need to be sent. I am asking the Minister whether she is prepared to send those signals, to cause the expansion over the next half a decade of the pork industry to 10 million hogs.

*(17:30)

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, I think that I have sent a very clear message to the producers, telling them that we know that the livestock industry is going to grow here in Manitoba, that we want it to grow in Manitoba, and our departments will work with them to ensure that this growth happens in a sustainable way.

I have met with Manitoba Pork. I have met with many people involved in the production of hogs in this province. People from the Department were in the Netherlands just recently, encouraging people who have the expertise in the livestock industry to consider Manitoba as a place to invest, a place to come

and work in the industry. I was in Mexico promoting the pork industry, Mr. Chairman.

The Manitoba Pork Advantage which is a joint effort between the pork industry and the Department of Agriculture is meeting tomorrow. So we are continuing working with the industry and through MACC looking at initiatives that we can bring forward that will also help with the investments.

We have sent a very clear signal, and I feel quite confident in the meetings that I have had with the people involved in the industry that they recognize that we want to see the industry grow here in Manitoba. We want the opportunity to have some value added to the grain production, which has been a very difficult area for farmers to be in, and we want the processing jobs here in Manitoba as well.

Mr. Jack Penner: I appreciate that. The Brandon Research Station was a site of swine research and development until, I understand, the federal funding to that station was terminated. I am wondering whether the Minister has had any discussion with her federal counterpart in this regard. It almost appeared to some of us that the federal government was terminating the funding in order to discourage the development and the research development for the swine industry in western Canada, that they might want to send the signal to eastern Canada that they were not going to support further development and/or research ability in western Canada. I am wondering whether the Minister has had any discussions with the federal minister to get that research funding reinstated and/or whether there has been any further discussion amongst some of the other players in the industry to ensure that proper research and research funding can be done, maybe in some other way.

We know that the federal government is not very supportive of western Canada. I doubt whether that will change until we have a federal election and a change in government in Ottawa. Maybe then we can change the direction, but until that occurs, I wonder if that will change. But still I think the Minister needs to send a signal to Ottawa that we are not very supportive of that withdrawal of funding.

Ms. Wowchuk: The Member is accurate when he says that the federal government made a decision not to do swine research at the Brandon research station. That is quite unfortunate, given that we are the province where the swine industry is growing more rapidly than any other province.

Government argued to try to maintain that here in Manitoba, but the federal government decided that they were going to be moving to centres of excellence. They moved the swine research to Alberta. Manitoba got the cereal crops and the breeding disease controls at the University of Winnipeg. But, I have to tell the Member that that research went to Brandon. Given the importance of the swine industry here in Manitoba, there has been some funding through ARDI and through the various industries to do some research on the swine industry at the University of Brandon, Mr. Chairman. It is not the same research that the federal government was doing, but there is a commitment to do some research there. It is really, really unfortunate that we are losing that research.

But I also want to tell the Member, he asks whether we have had discussions. This is one of the issues that we talked about with the federal government when they changed the formula of the safety nets, and the Group of Eight decided to go towards the cash receipts versus the risk formula that we had in place. They were reducing the funds here for Manitoba and leaving us no surplus money.

There is no federal money coming into research now. Our ability to put money into research from the roll over money from our safety nets is going to be eliminated. It is a very serious problem. Research is very important, and it is an issue that we have raised with the federal government indicating that this change in formula restricts our ability to do research here in Manitoba. It is one that we are going to have to have more discussion on and get the federal government to recognize that their funds must be distributed across the country, because there is important research that can be carried on in every province. Given that we are the province where the swine industry is growing very rapidly, we should have funds to do that research. But, it is important that we have funds

to do research in other areas because Manitoba is becoming very diverse in their agriculture production.

* (17:40)

Mr. Jack Penner: Thank you very much for that information. I would encourage that we bring that issue back to the federal government as strongly as we can, that the major expansion in the swine industry has occurred in Manitoba and I think will keep on occurring in Manitoba. If the industry gets the signals from the provincial government, then I think that will occur. I think it is important that we, at every opportunity, communicate to the general public what the federal government has done to us in this regard and how non-supportive they are. I would concur with what the Minister said. It is unfortunate that the federal government has not seen fit to extend and recognize the potential here.

I want to move to and ask the Minister what the sheep population is in the province currently.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, the sheep population, presently we have about 55 000 head of those. There are 25 000 ewes and 1000 rams and the balance would be lambs for, as I say, a total of about 55 000. A very important industry as well and one that I feel has a tremendous opportunity for growth, because getting into the sheep industry sometimes is not as major an investment as it is getting into some of the larger species where the start-up costs are huge compared to the sheep industry. Of course, some of the challenges that the sheep industry faces are that the demand for wool has decreased, and that is one of the value-added. But again there is, around the world, a huge market for sheep, one of the more common species used for meat in many of the Asian countries. I think that there is a potential to increase that production here in Manitoba.

There is the whole issue of marketing that is a concern. There is no doubt that there is work to be done on that, as well as the need for a slaughtering facility. Of course, if you are going to look at foreign markets, you have to ensure that the slaughtering facilities have federal inspection. Again, that requires a little different

facility than the facilities that we have right now. I believe that there is opportunity for that to grow.

In fact, one of the areas that there is growth in is in sheep dairy. There are many people who are allergic to cow's milk and looking for different supplies of milk, so there is a growth in that. The Member is asking about sheep, but in the community of Ethelbert, which is a very small community, there is a farmer who has started a herd where he is selling goat's milk. I look at those smaller animals as being very important to the economy and areas that there is a real opportunity for growth. The sheep dairy in Dauphin is processing their product at the University of Manitoba.

Mr. Jack Penner: The reason that I have a bit of an interest in sheep is because my next door neighbour is a sheep farmer, and I think she used to work for your department at Morris as the Ag rep in Morris. She and her husband, Warren, maybe you know Marj Heinrichs. She is a commendable person. She has demonstrated to many of the women in the area that if you really want to take the initiative, you can develop an industry or a significant income for yourselves right on your own farm. She did it as a lark, more or less. She started with sheep because she needed a lawnmower around her grain bins and stuff like that. So that has expanded now to some herd of about 70 and is going to keep on expanding. She enjoys them and does well. Marj is one of those kind of people that says, I can do this, if anybody can, I can. She has the whole family involved in it now, and it is really a great little business with them. So that is one of the reasons I raise this. I think you are right, Madam Minister, there is tremendous potential in that whole area of livestock production.

Getting back to the sheep, when Dora and I visited New Zealand last year, we found that New Zealand had decreased its sheep herd from 14 million down to 5 million. They were probably going to decrease it even more. We found it very interesting that many of the hills that grazed sheep before were now being planted to trees. Because the wood industry in New Zealand, you could raise a full, a harvestable tree in fifteen years, and a pulp tree, and it is

becoming a very viable industry in New Zealand. So the pulp industry is expanding fairly dramatically. I think you are going to see many of the hills that were burnt off for agricultural reasons years ago are going to turn back into forests again. That was becoming very evident when you drove the country. I think that again will present an opportunity for those of us in here that are looking for diversification. If we encourage the industry I think that can happen.

I am wondering whether the Minister can give me a bit of a view on what her government's position is now on the equine industry, specifically the PMU industry. I noted with interest a few years ago, when she and her colleagues were debating the agricultural issues, that there was some severe criticism extended to the PMU industry and it caused, I think, some grief and heartache. I am wondering whether the Minister's colleagues, now being in government, whether they have changed their minds on the PMU, and whether they see the benefits now of the industry, whether the Minister could give me a bit of an overview as to what she expects of that industry and whether her government supports now the continuation of the PMU industry in this province.

Ms. Wowchuk: I had the opportunity to attend the Horse Summit in April and got to meet many people in the PMU industry. I have also had the opportunity, along with the Premier, to meet with the owners, the managers of the Ayerst industry in Brandon, to talk about the growth of that industry. They shared with us their ideas of where the industry was growing. But I want to tell the Member in fact the industry is growing in Manitoba, and there is a 10% increase in quota for the upcoming year. So I think the people have a lot of confidence in this industry, and it is a growing market. Manitoba has the largest share if you look at the other western provinces. We have about three times as many animals on line, mares on line, as would Saskatchewan or Alberta have or much more than North Dakota which are all areas from where the product is brought into the Brandon plant.

A good number of the PMU producers come from my area of the province. I think when we met with the representatives from Ayerst they were quite surprised that I knew so many of their

producers. But it is a very important part of the economy of Manitoba. It is estimated that value of the product to Manitoba producers in the last year of collection was \$41 million. I know that the people I talked to in my area, that you can just see from the buildings that they have on their farms that they are making a good living. They have certainly done an awful lot to improve the standards of their herds. There have been a lot of renovations that have gone into the barns.

* (17:50)

The other area is, I indicated that I was at the Horse Summit and that was a very interesting sale that they had there where \$125,000 was raised at an auction where they sold 2000 grams of quota. That is just a clear indication of how much confidence those producers have in the industry and what they are willing to pay. But the real issue in that, what I found really important was that the proceeds from that sale went to the Children's Wish Foundation, a very, very good cause.

So, Mr. Chairman, I want to let the Member know that since taking office I have met with representatives of the PMU industry, along with the Premier (Mr. Doer) with Ayerst, and attended their horse summit, which is a biannual event. I know that the people in the industry have a lot of confidence in this government and are prepared to see the industry grow.

Now, if you look at the numbers, there was a decrease in the amount of production for a while. When we talked about that to Ayerst, they said that they were preparing, they had over-anticipated how much product they were going to need, and they have a huge surplus on hand, but now, in the last year, they have used up some of that surplus, and the industry is now growing and, as I said, about a 10% increase in the quota.

Mr. Jack Penner: Mr. Chairman, how the atmosphere changes. I had to chuckle when I listened to the Minister, because when I listened a few years ago on the debate on the PMU industry and how horses were tied up, and all those kinds of things. I had to, at that time, sort of wonder where the then-opposition members were coming from in the debate. Now I hear the Minister very supportive of that industry, and that is encouraging because I think the

environment in the PMU barns, once one has toured some of those barns and seen how well cared for those horses are in those barns, one has to really wonder where some of the opposition comes from.

Similarly, I think, Mr. Chairman, that we need to also have a similar view about the pork industry. I read an article not too long ago in a magazine that severely criticized how we confined sows and how sows were dealt with in the barns and all those kinds of things. Obviously the person that wrote the article had never been in a sow barn, because she would have noted that sows normally, until they come into the gestation period, are normally free-range sows. They are in large, open areas and are allowed to do virtually what they want to do until they are brought into their ferrying crates, and that is largely to protect them as well as the little weanlings from almost sure death if the mother lies down on them. So it is a way of protection more than anything else that is devised.

Similarly, horses, when I saw them all in a PMU barn, the cleanliness there, and the way the horses were fed and kept, and how clean the operation was, it clearly demonstrated to me that there was not a much better atmosphere that could have been created for those horses. I know the Minister wants to make some comments on it. I will let her make those comments.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, the Member said how people change when they go to government. I think that if the Member will look back at what was said, he knows that I was always very supportive of the industry.

If he will think back to that particular incident that he is referring to that was a subject of discussion, it was a letter written by one of my colleagues that was taken completely out of context, and, in fact, Mr. Chairman, we discussed this whole issue with the representatives of Ayerst and shared with them exactly what happened at that meeting.

Mr. Chairman, the Member talks about how animals are treated. I have been in PMU barns. I have been in hog barns. For the most part, animals are treated very well. Because people make their living from these animals, they want to see these animals kept healthy, but we will always have people who will question. We

cannot turn a blind eye to that and say, oh, well, if somebody is questioning how something is done, that is viewed as criticism, and so we should be upset with those people. People have a right to ask questions, and we should always be looking at ways to improve our situation with livestock. But the industry is important.

The Member implies that I have changed my mind, Mr. Chairman. I have always been supportive of the industry. There was a particular issue that in fact the Opposition blew out of proportion. If I remember correctly, Mr. Chairman, they even put out a press release. Pardon me, someone put out a press release, without any name, attributing comments to my colleague from our caucus that we were never able to trace back to where they came from, because they just happened to be faxed out to the media from a printing shop here in Winnipeg. Because there are many printing shops with the same name, it could not be traced down.

But, you know, Mr. Chairman, people have these ways of doing things. We have had discussions with the industry, and I think there is confidence by the producers and with Ayerst with this government.

Mr. Chairperson: 3.4 Agricultural Development and Marketing (b) Animal Industry (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits. Shall this item pass?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Chairperson: No.

The time being 6 p.m., Committee rise. Order, please.

Ms. Wowchuk: I wonder if the Member can indicate then if he is going to continue the questioning on the Animal Industry, and that is the staff that he would like here to start with. Then we will move to the Soils and Crops?

Mr. Jack Penner: Yes, Mr. Chairman, that is precisely the process. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: The hour being 6 p.m., Committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 6 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 20, 2000

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