



First Session - Thirty-Seventh Legislature

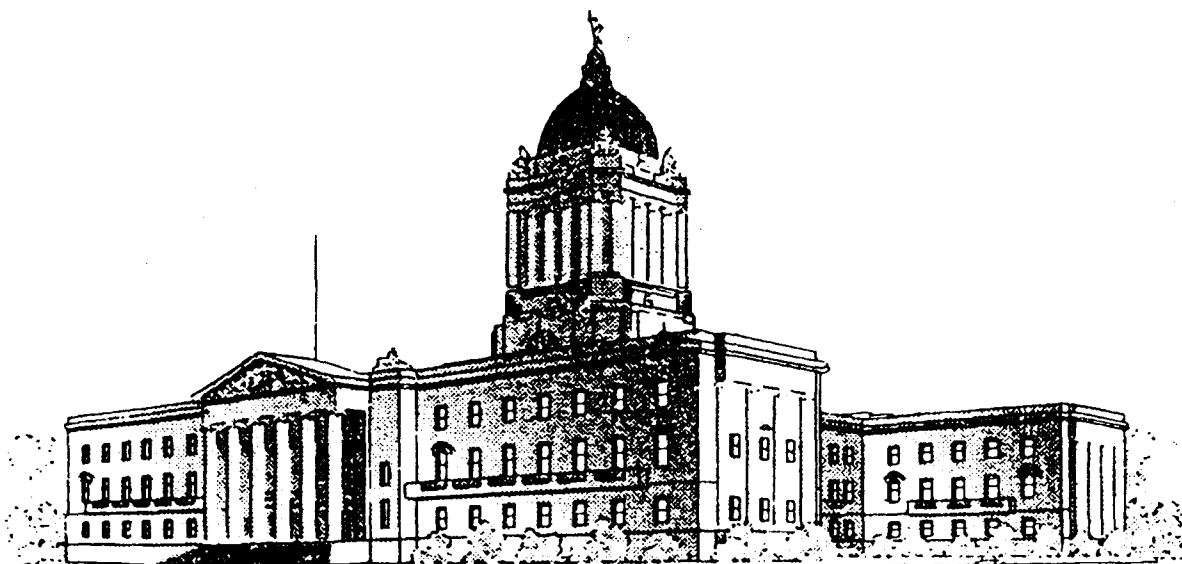
of the

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

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
AGLUGUB, Cris	The Maples	N.D.P.
ALLAN, Nancy	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
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.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary, Hon.	Concordia	N.D.P.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
FILMON, Gary	Tuxedo	P.C.
FRIESEN, Jean, Hon.	Wolseley	N.D.P.
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GILLESHAMMER, Harold	Minnedosa	P.C.
HELWER, Edward	Gimli	P.C.
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LATHLIN, Oscar, Hon.	The Pas	N.D.P.
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	P.C.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
LOEWEN, John	Fort Whyte	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McGIFFORD, Diane, Hon.	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
MIHYCHUK, MaryAnn, Hon.	Minto	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PENNER, Jim	Steinbach	P.C.
PITURA, Frank	Morris	P.C.
PRAZNIK, Darren	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack	Southdale	P.C.
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
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SALE, Tim, Hon.	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Wellington	N.D.P.
SCHELLENBERG, Harry	Rossmere	N.D.P.
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield	P.C.
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	N.D.P.
SMITH, Joy	Fort Garry	P.C.
SMITH, Scott	Brandon West	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Eric	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
WOWCIUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, July 24, 2000

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

**PRESENTING REPORTS BY
STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

**Standing Committee on Public Utilities and
Natural Resources
Fifth Report**

Ms. Linda Asper (Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the Fifth Report of the Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources presents the following as its Fifth Report.

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources presents the following as its Fifth Report.

Your committee met on Wednesday, July 19, 2000, at 6:30 p.m. and Thursday, July 20, 2000, at 6:30 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building to consider bills referred.

Your committee heard representation on bills as follows:

Bill 5—The Wildlife Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la conservation de la faune.

*Peter Kalden – Private Citizen
Ken Overby – Manitoba Bison Association
Mervin Farmer – Private Citizen
Randy McRorie – Private Citizen
Lloyd Lintott – Manitoba Wildlife Federation*

*Graham Wyatt – Private Citizen
Edwin Harms – Manitoba Elk Growers Association
Dunstan Browne – The Avicultural Advancement Council of Canada
Dennis Saydak – Private Citizen
Sheldon Willey – Private Citizen
Dwain Lawless – RM of Rossmore
Garry Tolton – Manitoba Farm Animal Council
Jeannie Sasley – Private Citizen
Tracy Bell – Private Citizen
Mike Crawford – Manitoba Canary And Finch Club
Yvonne Rideout – Keystone Agricultural Producers*

Written Submissions:

Bill 5 – The Wildlife Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la conservation de la faune.

Audrey Stoski – Wilson River Bison

Your committee has considered:

Bill 5 – The Wildlife Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la conservation de la faune

and has agreed to report the same with the following amendment:

MOTION:

THAT the following be added after section 1 of the Bill:

Purpose of Act

1.1 The purpose of this Act is to provide for the regulation of captive hunting of animals without affecting the division of responsibilities within the Government of Manitoba relating to the regulation of animals and activities involving animals.

Ms. Asper: I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Rossmore (Mr. Schellenberg), that the report of the Committee be received.

Motion agreed to.**Standing Committee on Public Accounts
First Report**

Mr. Edward Helwer (Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts): Mr. Speaker, I would like to present the First Report of the Committee on Public Accounts.

Madam Clerk: Your Standing Committee on Public Accounts presents the following as its First Report.

Your committee met on Tuesday, July 21—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Public Accounts presents the following as its First Report.

Your committee met on Friday, July 21, 2000, at 10 a.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building to consider the Public Accounts Volumes 1, 2, 3 and 4 for the years ended March 31, 1997, and 1998 Public Accounts Volumes 1, 2 and 3 for the year ended March 31, 1999; Provincial Auditor's Report on the Operations of the Office of the Provincial Auditor for the years ended March 31, 1997, March 31, 1998 and March 31, 1999; Provincial Auditor's Report on the Audit of the Public Accounts for the years ended March 31, 1997, March 31, 1998 and March 31, 1999; Provincial Auditor's Report on Value for Money Audits, Autumn 1997, Spring 1998, Summer 1999 and for the period ending June 2000; and Provincial Auditor's Report on An Examination of Governance in Manitoba's Crown Corporations, June 1998.

Your committee received all information desired by any member at the meeting from the Minister of Finance and from Mr. Jon Singleton, Provincial Auditor. Information was provided with respect to the receipts, expenditures and other matters pertaining to the business of the Province.

Your committee finds that the receipts and expenditures of the monies have been carefully set forth and all monies properly accounted for.

Your committee has considered the Public Accounts Volumes 1, 2, 3 and 4 for the years ended March 31, 1997, and 1998; Public Accounts Volumes 1, 2 and 3 for the year ended March 31, 1999; Provincial Auditor's Report on the Operations of the Office of the Provincial Auditor for the years ended March 31, 1997, March 31, 1998 and March 31, 1999; Provincial Auditor's Report on the Audit of the Public Accounts for the years ended March 31, 1997, March 31, 1998, and March 31, 1999; and Provincial Auditor's Report on An Examination of Governance in Manitoba's Crown Corporations, June 1998 and has adopted the same as presented.

At that meeting, your committee unanimously adopted the following motion:

THAT the Provincial Auditor's recommendations for change to the procedures and role of the Public Accounts Committee be referred to the Rules Committee and that the Public Accounts Committee recommend that a meeting of the Public Accounts Committee be convened to discuss the Provincial Auditor's recommendations and make comment on them prior to the Rules Committee dealing with the Provincial Auditor recommendations.

Mr. Helwer: I move, seconded by the Member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck), that the report of the Committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**Bill 201—The Electoral Divisions
Amendment Act**

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire), that leave be given to introduce Bill 201, The Electoral Divisions Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les circonscriptions électorales), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Helwer: The main intent of this bill is to change the name of my constituency to better

reflect the make-up of my constituency. The name would be changed from Gimli to Gimli-St. Andrews because the Rural Municipality of St. Andrews is the largest municipality in my constituency and it better reflects the make-up of my constituency. I have been presented with a petition from the residents from the Municipality of St. Andrews plus I have letters of support from all the municipalities and towns in my constituency. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Motion agreed to.

* (13:35)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Labour Relations Act Amendments—Consultations

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): Mr. Speaker, in a letter dated June 21, 2000, the Manitoba Labour Management Review Committee expressed some concerns in regard to some of the proposals that were put for them, and I quote: Management expressed a general caution that there may be a potential risk to the provincial economy if the traditional dispute resolution process under the law based on strike lockout provisions is altered.

My question to the Minister of Labour is why proceed with Bill 44 when she was given this kind of advice already on the 21st of June.

Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, Bill 44, we believe, is a balanced response to good labour relations in the province of Manitoba. It will have the impact of making labour relations stronger in the province of Manitoba, and strong labour relations are a positive thing for the economy, the workers and all of the citizens of Manitoba.

Mr. Schuler: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Labour: Which specific business in Manitoba spoke to the Minister and said to her personally that they need a bill such as Bill 44 before they will invest further in Manitoba?

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, of the proposals that went before the Labour Management Review Committee, seven of the proposals had full or

partial consensus, and those consensus positions are reflected in Bill 44. In 1996, when the Labour Management Review Committee made a report to the Government before Bill 26 was introduced, Bill 26 did not reflect a single matter of consensus that the Labour Management Review Committee brought forward. So I would suggest to the Honourable Member that he do some of his own research before he makes statements in the House.

Mr. Schuler: Mr. Speaker, once again this minister does not answer questions in this House. My question to the same minister is: Which specific business outside of Manitoba personally spoke to the Minister and said we need a bill such as Bill 44 before we will transfer to Manitoba, before we will invest in Manitoba? Which specific business? Would she please give us an answer in this House?

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, Manitoba has the lowest unemployment rate in the country.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Ms. Barrett: The last time in the province of Manitoba there was this low an unemployment figure was in August of 1976, when I would like to remind all honourable members and all Manitobans that it was then an NDP government in the province of Manitoba as well. We have a very strong economy—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. May I take this opportunity to remind all honourable members, *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.

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, we believe that Bill 44 will provide a strengthening of the labour relations system in this province. That is only a positive for businesses to come to Manitoba, to stay in Manitoba. We do not need 635 000 days lost to extended labour disputes the way we had in the 1990s under the former government.

Union Dues Political Contributions

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Mr. Speaker, this government is bent on taking away the democratic rights of workers. In Bill 44, the Minister of Labour has decided to strip workers of their right to vote in a secret ballot. She is also taking away union members' right to choose whether or not they want their union dues to be used for political purposes or donated to charity.

Can the Minister of Labour explain to the hardworking people of Manitoba why she decided to strip them of their democratic rights to have a say in how their union dues are spent?

Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, as I stated in the House several times last week—members could peruse Hansard; they would find the answer to this question, which was asked last week as well—that Bill 4, changes to The Elections Finances Act, will ban union and corporate donations from elections in Manitoba. The change in that section of Bill 44 simply reflects the change that will take place in Manitoba when Bill 4 is passed.

* (13:40)

Mr. Loewen: Mr. Speaker, this minister refuses to answer the question, and she does not understand the facts.

My question to the Minister is: Does she not realize that section 76, the section of this bill she is repealing, also applies to federal elections, to municipal elections and to advertising placed in between an election period? Does she not understand that at all?

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, yet again I would like to state that the Labour Management Review Committee reached unanimous consensus, if I can use the phrase "unanimous consensus." Both management and labour agreed that this section of the current bill was unnecessary.

Mr. Loewen: Mr. Speaker, if this government is so bent on taking away the democratic right of workers, why did she not explain in any of their election material that she had a plan, once they

were in power, that she was going to strip them, strip workers of their rights to choose where their union dues would be spent? Why did she not explain that in her election campaign?

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, again, both the labour side and the management side of the LMRC agreed that, in light of the changes to The Elections Finances Act, this was an unnecessary and redundant feature of The Labour Relations Act. I might also remind honourable members that, the election campaign of 1995, members opposite said they would not sell the Telephone System, and what did they do after that? They sold the Telephone System.

Labour Relations Act Amendments—Economic Impact

Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain): Mr. Speaker, over the weekend the Minister of Labour put forward her defence of Bill 44. The Minister claims her legislation contains three principles. However, the only principles to be found in Bill 44 are the loss of workers' democratic rights, the end of good-faith collective bargaining and an attack on business.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister advise Manitobans how legislation based on fewer rights for workers will expand and strengthen our economy?

Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, in one section only of the legislation that deals with the ability of workers, if almost two-thirds of them, 65 percent, sign cards saying they wish to belong to a union, in that case they would have an automatic certification. We are merely returning to what the former government had in legislation.

I would like to remind honourable members that that 65% threshold is higher than any of the other jurisdictions, of which there are many in the country, that have automatic certification, and we are merely reflecting what has been past practice since 1947 of some form of automatic certification.

Mr. Tweed: Mr. Speaker, will the Minister advise Manitobans how legislation based on the end of good-faith collective bargaining and an

attack on business will expand and strengthen our economy?

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, we believe that Bill 44, which reflects Labour Management Review Committee consensus on portions or all of seven of the questions that went to the Labour Management Review Committee, will strengthen the labour relations climate. We believe that it will strengthen free collective bargaining, and we believe that it will make Manitoba a better place for business and workers to work together.

Mr. Tweed: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell this House which rights of Manitobans this government intends to remove next now that NDP clearly stands for no democratic principles?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

* (13:45)

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House need take absolutely no suggestions or comments from the opposition on democracy. Three cases in point: the Interlake in 1995, the Interlake in 1999, and the fact that only one candidate put his name forward as the Leader of that party. We do not need to take any lessons in democracy from that party.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I would ask the co-operation of all honourable members.

Labour Relations Act Amendments—Economic Impact

Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, clearly the NDP Government is looking in the rearview mirror, and we are back to the Howard Pawley days of doing business here in Manitoba. First, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) makes us the highest taxed jurisdiction in Canada, and now the Minister of Labour (Ms. Barrett) is making Manitoba the least attractive place to do business.

Mr. Speaker, in view of the Labour Management Review Committee identifying Bill 44 as a risk to the provincial economy, why does this NDP Government and this minister continue to force this anti-worker and anti-business legislation?

Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, seven—I will repeat again—seven of the positions of the areas that were asked to be looked at by the Labour Management Review Committee came back from the Labour Management Review Committee with partial or complete consensus. Those consensus positions are reflected in Bill 44, something that did not happen under the former government's bill in 1996.

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that we are looking back. We are returning back to labour legislation that was under not only Mr. Pawley and Mr. Schreyer, but was also under Mr. Campbell, Mr. Roblin, Mr. Lyon and the former government of the current Member for Tuxedo (Mr. Filmon). Almost 50 years of labour relations legislation is being returned, labour relations elements that will provide balance in this province.

Mrs. Smith: Mr. Speaker, why is it this minister continues to talk about partial consensus when clearly the Labour Management Review Committee identified Bill 44 as a risk to the provincial economy? Why does this Labour Minister continue to claim that her Bill 44 would make Manitoba more attractive for business when clearly nobody wants it?

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, the reason I keep referring to the fact that there was partial or complete consensus on seven of the areas is that that shows to us as government, it shows to Manitobans and it should show to the Opposition that there was a recognition on the part of the Labour Management Review Committee, which did a great deal of very good work and provided some very solid recommendations to government, many of which found their place in Bill 44.

That degree of consensus was listened to by this government, unlike the former government, in 1996, when it brought in Bill 26, where the

former government did not listen at all to the Labour Management Review Committee recommendations, where there was some consensus as well.

* (13:50)

Mrs. Smith: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. How many more current and future potential jobs is this Premier prepared to let this Minister of Labour risk in her bid to appease the union bosses and make herself the most likely candidate to replace this present Premier?

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, on all economic indices, Manitoba is doing very well. On many of them, we are well ahead of the national average. We are well ahead of where the former government had us during most of the 1990s, and we are well ahead of the whole country when it comes to the unemployment rate. We feel very proud, very confident in the basics of our economy, and we expect that good economic growth to take place and to be increased in this province under this government over the next years.

Labour Relations Act Amendments—Justification

Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, the Minister's answer to the last question really begs the next question.

If we are doing so well in Manitoba, we have been prospering over the last number of years as we came out of the recession. We have had a climate that has been so attractive to business growth, to job creation, to new investment in our province. Could the Minister just give us some specifics, some facts as to why she would want to change that climate that has led to such prosperity? Manitobans just would like to know what has happened in the last few months to warrant change in labour relations law that has been working so well and created such a good climate in our province.

Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, the Labour Management Review Committee, which is made up of representatives from labour movement and also representatives from the business community, as selected by the

business community, recognized that there was need for change, there was need for recognition as we go forward that we need to have changes in The Labour Relations Act, and they agreed with seven out of the proposals to one degree or completely needed to be put into place.

I would also suggest that the fact that we lost 635 000-plus days, worker days, productive days, to extended strikes and lockouts in the decade of the 1990s says that is a good reason to take a look at labour legislation. Every one of those person days lost to a strike or lockout is a person day of productivity lost to workers, lost to the businesses and lost to the people of Manitoba.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister, given her last comments, then what is the logic of bringing in a provision that orders a binding arbitration but does not apply equally to employers and employees, that provides a veto to one side over the other? If she is so concerned about stopping days lost to strike or lockout, why then would she not make her binding arbitration for settlement after 60 days binding if the employer requested it? Why then would there have to be a vote of the employees to veto it? Why is it not balanced?

Ms. Barrett: I appreciate the change of heart on the road to Damascus that has been evinced by the Member for Lac du Bonnet who is obviously now in support of the provision of alternate dispute resolution in the piece of legislation. I thank him very much for that support.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, the fact that the Minister did not answer the first question, the fact that the Minister totally evades the second question about balance comes to one conclusion. She does not know what she is talking about. My question to the Minister—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): The question, Mr. Speaker, is a supplementary. Speeches are not allowed on supplementary questions, of course. I draw attention to *Beauchesne's* Citations 409, 410. It

is well known. The member was going on and on. He should put a question and put it succinctly. Would you please ask him to put his question without a preamble, a post-amble, a mid-amble?

Mr. Speaker: The Member for Lac du Bonnet, on the same point of order.

* (13:55)

Mr. Praznik: Yes. I would be delighted to be succinct if only this minister would answer the question.

Mr. Speaker: 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 for Lac du Bonnet to please put his question.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Minister then to confirm that the reality behind this legislation is she is simply answering the quest of Mr. Bernie Christophe and a host of other labour leaders in this province who wanted changes in this act to be to their convenience to make their job easier and, quite frankly, to give them more tools to do their job because they really do not want to do it under free collective bargaining.

Will she just confirm that that is where these amendments come from?

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, no, I will not confirm those comments. I am surprised—well, I guess I am not surprised at the Member for raising the question in that context.

We expect the Bill, the results of Bill 44, when it is part of The Labour Relations Act, will strengthen free collective bargaining, will strengthen the economy of Manitoba, will provide for a better labour relations climate in the province of Manitoba.

Sturgeon Creek Fish Stock Die-Off

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Conservation.

There have recently been significant problems along Sturgeon Creek in Winnipeg with a major fish kill and reports of dead and dying suckers, sticklebacks, fathead minnows, and reports that the smell from the water was terrible. I understand that the Minister's department has investigated, and I would ask the Minister to provide details of the cause of the die-off and what action he has taken to investigate and to prevent such die-offs in the future.

Hon. Oscar Lathlin (Minister of Conservation): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Member for his question. In fact, he is right in posing the question in the way that he has. So far, however, with the limited amount of information that I have on this issue—I was informed of it this morning. I heard about it on the radio this morning, and I inquired about it as soon as I got into my office this morning. As we speak now, information is being gathered, after which I will be able to make a more definitive statement.

E. Coli Contamination

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): My supplementary to the Minister: Could the Minister of Conservation also provide details of the source of the E. coli contamination of Sturgeon Creek and what action he has taken to address this serious pollution issue?

Hon. Oscar Lathlin (Minister of Conservation): Mr. Speaker, yes, I understand that the need to determine that issue, that question, is part of our investigation. As soon as I get the information, of course I will advise the Member.

Mr. Gerrard: My second supplementary to the Minister: I ask why the Minister took two weeks to alert the public of the E. coli contamination when citizens, including children, were at risk along the creek and he should have made people aware of this immediately.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

An Honourable Member: That is a stupid question.

* (14:00)

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

Point of Order

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader): I wonder if we might be able to confirm whether the Minister of Health really means that when he says: "That is a stupid question." We are sure that is what we just heard him say from his seat. The Honourable Member for River Heights deserves an answer to this question. This is our Minister of Health who is saying that it is a stupid question when we were talking about E. coli.

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

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I do not think the Member has a point of order, but on the same point, I think leaving the impression somehow that a two-week announcement about E. coli was present in all kinds of waterways leaves the wrong impression. I do not think it is appropriate for the Member to raise a question of that kind with respect to raising the particular expectation in that regard and can clearly find out that information without raising it in that fashion.

Mr. Speaker: Order. On the point of order raised by the Honourable Official Opposition House Leader, I did not hear the comment, so I will have to take the matter under advisement to peruse Hansard and to consult with the procedural authorities, and I will bring a ruling back to the House.

* * *

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Speaker, in response to the Member's question, you know, ever since the incident happened in Walkerton, Ontario, there has been a greater awareness raised in the minds of the general public to the point that today we

receive several calls, several letters come in alerting us of different situations. We follow up on those leads that come in; we go out there and we sample water. On some occasions we have asked people to boil water, and in some cases we have shut down water supplies to make sure that we have taken all the necessary precautions to ensure the safety of the public. So, in this case, we are following the same procedure. We are taking samplings, and as soon as that data becomes available, of course it is my duty to advise the Assembly as to what is happening.

Canada-Manitoba Adjustment Program Funding

Mr. Scott Smith (Brandon West): Mr. Speaker, a number of producers have been asking questions in regard to the status of the Canada-Manitoba Adjustment Program. My question is to the Minister of Agriculture. Could she answer: Are there any more dollars available in the CMAP program, and if so, when could producers expect to see some dollars from this program?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for that question because it is an issue that is on producers' minds. In February we announced the CMAP program with a hundred million dollars that would be paid to producers to help offset their transportation costs. The initial payments started out in April of this year and were set at 6.5 percent of each producer's eligible sales. The application deadline is June 30, and producers have until August 11 to appeal any of their applications. Final payments, we expect, will be made by the end of August with a little over \$22 million still in the fund to be paid out to producers.

Labour Relations Act Amendments-Picket Line Violence

Mr. Harold Gilleshammer (Minnedosa): Mr. Speaker, hidden within Bill 44 is a clause forcing employers to reinstate employees who during a strike committed a violent or criminal act. This has the potential of encouraging picket line violence, all from a government who claim public safety as a priority. I would ask the

Premier (Mr. Doer), who failed to mention this legislation in the Throne Speech, who failed to mention this in his speech to the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce and who failed to mention this at the Century Summit: Can he advise Manitobans how forcing employers to reinstate employees who during strike action participate in illegal acts will enhance public safety?

Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, since 1972 in the province of Manitoba there has been recourse for workers who have been on the picket line, workers or employers, to be reinstated after actions that would perhaps be a misdemeanour. Since 1976 until 1996, with Bill 26, there has been a provision for 20 years that the Labour Board has the authority to review all those issues of reinstatement. We are putting that back, a provision that was in the legislation from 1976 to 1996. We are also not, of course, for a moment suggesting that criminal activities should be condoned, and there is still recourse to the courts if that is deemed necessary. We have the full confidence of the Labour Board in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Premier (Mr. Doer), who did not mention this in the Throne Speech or anywhere else and who seems to be reluctant to talk about this in the House, how does he reconcile the forcing of employers to reinstate employees who commit acts of violence during a strike with their Throne Speech commitment of working with citizens to create safer workplaces?

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, as I answered the previous question, this is putting back in place a provision that was in place from 19—*[interjection]* It is putting back exactly the same language that was in place for 20 years, from 1976 to 1996. Again, I would suggest it is the height of a word that I cannot use for fear of being called unparliamentary. For the members opposite to talk about democracy in this context, 1995 Interlake, 1999 Interlake.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Mr. Speaker, I would again ask the Premier, who did not place this in the Throne Speech when he drafted that, who did not mention this at the Century Summit, who does not mention this in his speeches: Does the

Premier not recognize that amending section 12(2) of The Labour Relations Act does nothing but encourage instances of picket line violence?

Ms. Barrett: That is fearmongering of the worst order and ought not to be a part of this legislative debate and discussion. We are simply putting back into place a provision, word-for-word, that was in The Labour Relations Act from 1976 until 1996. Is the Member suggesting that the Labour Board does not have the ability or the competence to make a decision in this regard? Is the Member suggesting that the criminal courts of Canada are no longer going to be part of it? Is the Member suggesting that the Government of Sterling Lyon and the former government of the Member for Tuxedo (Mr. Filmon), from 1988 to 1996, did not have the right idea? I think not, Mr. Speaker.

Labour Relations Act Amendments—Justification

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (Interim Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Premier to stand up and take some leadership, because I know he is very sensitive. He is getting a lot of calls from people, people who are part of our Manitoba business community that he was not truthful to during the election campaign or since. Many people are calling him and asking him to rethink this wrong-headed decision about the direction that they are going with their labour laws.

I would like to ask the Premier today to justify the legislation that was brought in by his Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) that says that law-abiding citizens will be sent to jail if they do not pick up their mail. On the other hand, he has a Minister of Labour (Ms. Barrett) who is saying we will tolerate violence on the picket lines, and we will force employers to reinstate those individuals into their workplace. How can he justify the two differing opinions by his ministers?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, one is reminded again of the former Minister of Labour's comments in 1996 where he said, as Minister of Labour: We have one of the fairest labour laws in all of Canada.

I think the acting Leader of the Opposition may want to talk to her former Labour Minister, because these laws, on two out of the three occasions of the members opposite talking about matters similar to this being referred to the Labour Board and the 65 percent, those are the issues the Member opposite called. I apologize. That was 1994. The legislation was changed in 1996.

Mr. Speaker, he also went on to say that business in Manitoba is not concerned with The Labour Relations Act. It is concerned about taxes which are going down under this government. They are concerned about the—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

* (14:10)

Point of Order

Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, if the Premier is going to quote me, I hope that he would do so accurately. I would just remind him, in the interests of accuracy, that as Minister of Labour I brought in changes to first contract that took away the unbalanced approach that his Minister of Labour has now introduced, where the trigger mechanism for the settlement gives a veto to employees. In 1992-93, we removed that from labour legislation. His government that we assume he is responsible for is now bringing it back in, and yet he offers no explanation why the inconsistency.

I would hope he would quote everything I have said over the years, not so selectively.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet, he does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Doer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying, in two out of the three areas that have been raised by members opposite today, and I think I accurately quoted that, the former Minister of Labour was basically classifying

these laws that are now being reinstated as, quote: We have among the most fair government laws in labour legislation in all of Canada.

So we have a two-thirds agreement from the former Minister of Labour, and I would acknowledge there is one-third disagreement with the Member in terms of the provision that he has raised in his question.

Mr. Speaker, the second issue is the members opposite, I would want to say that—*[interjection]* All the provisions of the Criminal Code remain in place. One section, which of course makes it against the Criminal Code for any violent behaviour in our society, those clauses and provisions are absolutely there. Thirdly, the one area that the business community that I have met with—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: One of the areas that does have credibility with the business community is the chair of the Labour Board, who has remained in place through two administrations. All of the issues that are being raised in this House are adjudicated, not by the Minister of Labour, but by the chair of the Labour Board, an individual the business community trusts, the labour community trusts, we on this side trust, and I certainly think it is important to note that.

Mr. Speaker, when members opposite raise broken promises, members opposite were the ones, in 1995, who promised not to sell the Manitoba Telephone System and then proceeded to hire brokers to break that promise three months later. We do not practise that lack of ethics in this government.

Amendments—Picket Line Violence

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (Interim Leader of the Official Opposition): Obviously, the phone calls that the Premier is getting from business leaders in this province, and the letters and the comments that are being provided, the articles in the newspapers, must be getting under the Premier's skin when he has to go back and be

critical of our government and not take responsibility for the actions of his government.

He has managed this first session under his mandate miserably. We have seen legislation that has been introduced into this House and has had to have 10 or 11 amendments before it even passes second reading. We have seen the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin) act absolutely in a disastrous fashion when it comes to Bill 5. Time and time again, we have seen this government—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, we have seen extensive mismanagement of the legislative agenda in this House. I would like—

Point of Order

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader): I am hearing chirping from the other side of the House about where is the question, where is the question? Mr. Speaker, we have had a long-standing rule here that allows our leaders to have a little bit of latitude in posing their questions. We have been allowing the First Minister (Mr. Doer) plenty of latitude when he has been answering his questions, when he is not even referring to the question.

If the members across the way would just give our Leader the opportunity, she would pose the question.

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

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Since the matter is now on the floor of the House, I mean, we were wondering if the acting Interim Opposition Leader came in here with a question, wonder when her 40 minutes was up, going on and on, here and there, and there was no question.

We were wondering if you could perhaps give the House some guidance. You know, is there not some rule that requires her, after some reasonable period of time, to put a question?

Because we certainly are prepared to entertain one, if she had one.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Interim Leader of the Official Opposition, with new information, on the same point of order.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, I think if you perused Hansard, you would find that my questioning of the First Minister was no longer than his diatribe talking about the former government, rather than answering the question before.

Certainly, Mr. Speaker, I should have the same latitude to ask my question as the rhetoric that he puts on the record in his answers.

Mr. Speaker: Order. On the point of order raised by the Honourable Official Opposition House Leader, Manitoba practice has been to allow leaders of an official party the latitude, and I will follow that same practice, unless I am given directions by both House leaders.

* * *

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Premier, with these changes in the labour legislation, after someone has been convicted of violence on the picket line and serves their jail term, will this legislation force employers to take that person back?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): In the preamble, and in the 17 or 18 questions that were contained within the kind of statement, there were a number of questions raised. The Member opposite raises the issues of amending some legislation. I actually believe the public hearings and the great value of the Manitoba Legislature is where you do listen to the public.

I am hoping that, instead of our members reading newspapers as government members and not paying any attention to the public when they are speaking out and expressing their views in the legislative committee, or a Speaker cutting back and disallowing anybody to vote on a bill, I am hoping we will listen to Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make it clear that when we go to committee we go there to listen. We go there to improve bills. We go there to reflect the views of Manitobans, whether it is this bill or any other bill. I want to make that very, very clear to the members opposite. When we improve legislation in Manitoba and when we listen to Manitobans and listen to them on their views, that is the way in which this government will practise.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, our First Minister has stated how important the committees are to this Legislature and how important it is that the community be heard. If this Premier really feels that strongly, why does he not wait till fall before we have these legislative bills come to this community, so that the community can be here, when they are not on holidays, so they can actually be heard at the community level?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. May I remind all honourable members that a point of order is a very serious matter, and I would ask the co-operation of all honourable members.

The Honourable Government House Leader, on the same point of order.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Well, Mr. Speaker, I do not think there is a point of order there at all, but I remind members opposite that they were introducing bills last July. I remind members opposite that there are members of the public, there are organizations that represent a variety of interests that are registered to speak and have been speaking on bills, and business is being carried on as usual.

* (14:20)

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the Honourable Official Opposition House Leader, he does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Doer: I believe the members opposite just introduced a bill today, and now they are asking us to hold off all our legislation. They seem to be flipping and flopping.

Mr. Speaker, we are arguably in a compressed period of time. The election was called in August of last year. The results to change the Government were made by the people of Manitoba in September. In October, we came into office. It has backed up normal budgetary functions, and we are doing the best we can to keep our legislative agenda in—I think there were under 50 bills.

I recall, Mr. Speaker, one day the former First Minister, on a Friday, introduced Meech Lake and then on a Monday he withdrew it. We supported him in withdrawing it, given the notwithstanding clause in Québec. That is not a sign that the former First Minister was wrong on Friday. It just made sense for Manitobans to have that.

We will listen to Manitobans at committee. The Minister of Labour (Ms. Barrett) has already answered the specific question dealing with the Labour Board.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Speaker's Ruling

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

During Oral Questions on July 11, 2000, I took under advisement a point of order raised by the Honourable House Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Laurendeau) who sought to know whether the Honourable Member for St. James (Ms. Korzeniowski) had received a copy of the June 2000 Value for Money Audit of the Provincial Auditor prior to the report being tabled in the House. The Honourable Government House Leader (Mr. Mackintosh) also spoke to the same point of order. I took the matter under advisement in order to peruse the procedural authorities.

In reviewing the point of order raised by the Official Opposition House Leader (Mr. Laurendeau), I note that he speculated that members of the Government caucus might have received copies of the report prior to the report being tabled in the House; however, he did not furnish any proof or evidence that such action took place.

I would also like to point out for the House that in a ruling given by Mr. Speaker Rocan on June 13, 1991, he ruled that it was not a matter of privilege for a minister to provide information to members of the Government caucus. In the ruling, Mr. Speaker Rocan quoted from Maingot's *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada* and stated that "a complaint that a Minister of the Crown has made a statement outside the House rather than in the House or that the government provides information only to its supporters in the House may well amount to a grievance against the government, but in the absence of an order of the House forbidding such activity, there is no personal or corporate privilege that has been breached and neither does it constitute a contempt of the House in the privilege sense."

Although this ruling had been given on a matter of privilege raised in the House, I believe that the essential point of the ruling is also applicable to the current point of order raised in that there is a requirement to demonstrate that a particular rule or practice has been breached.

I would therefore rule that the Honourable House Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Laurendeau) did not have a point of order.

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader): With the greatest of respect, Mr. Speaker, I am going to have to challenge your ruling. I know for a fact the Member had a press release in her hand.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, order.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: The ruling of the Chair has been challenged. All those in favour of sustaining the ruling of the Chair, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

Formal Vote

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader): Yeas and Nays, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Call in the members.

The question before the House is shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained.

Division

A RECORDED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

Yeas

Aglugub, Allan, Ashton, Asper, Barrett, Caldwell, Cerilli, Chomiak, Dewar, Doer, Friesen, Jennissen, Korzeniowski, Lathlin, Lemieux, Mackintosh, Maloway, Martindale, McGifford, Mihychuk, Nevakshonoff, Reid, Robinson, Sale, Santos, Schellenberg, Selinger, Smith (Brandon West), Struthers, Wowchuk.

Nays

Cummings, Dacquay, Derkach, Driedger, Dyck, Enns, Faurschou, Gerrard, Gilleshammer, Helwer, Laurendeau, Loewen, Maguire, Mitchelson, Penner (Emerson), Penner (Steinbach), Pitura, Praznik, Reimer, Schuler, Smith (Fort Garry), Tweed.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 30, Nays 22

Mr. Speaker: The ruling of the Chair has been sustained.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Winnipeg Beach

Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski (St. James): It was a glorious day at Winnipeg Beach and for

Winnipeg. Saturday, July 22, 2000, was warm and sunny, as were the smiles on the faces of the multitude there. This was the opening of their new theatre and boardwalk lighting. The pride was evident in the faces of those involved, and beam they should. They have resurrected the spirit of an era passed, of a boardwalk, dance hall, music, lights, and much joy on the summer night, an era I recall with nostalgia, having spent much time there in my childhood. As Robertson Davies, narrator in *The Manticore*, says: I suppose, unless you are very unlucky, anywhere you spend your summers as a child is an arcadia forever.

This new boardwalk and outdoor theatre will provide generations to come with wonderful memories of summer days and nights at Winnipeg Beach. Ian Evans piped in the colour party, RCMP Constable Harris and an entourage including the town's mayor and councillors, and members of the Legislative Assembly.

We walked the boardwalk to the open theatre where Laurie Hoogstraten was the gracious emcee of the event. Councillor Ken Mirus [*phonetic*] presented the attending MLAs with certificates of title to their own planks on the boardwalk. The town generously and thoughtfully reserved a special section of the boardwalk in honour of the 57 newly elected members of the first Legislature of the new millennium.

Congratulations to Mayor Reid Kelner and his councillors; Lincoln Webb of the northern Interlake Development Corporation; all the volunteers behind this millennium project, and all the townspeople; a special tribute to Valerie Moore for organizing the whole thing. Well done.

Neepawa Lily Festival

Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose): I rise today to put a few words on the record about the past week and weekend at the town of Neepawa where they celebrated the Lily Festival. That festival is now in its fourth year and was the brainchild of Eleanor Nicholson and a committee that she organized around the theme of the lilies and the huge production that occurs in our area.

I recently had the honour of assisting in the opening of the Gertrude Williams Park, which is a yard site that was donated for the purposes of a lily park right on Highway 16 as it goes through the town of Neepawa. The festival and town now boast three large lily parks and a number of about 80 or more smaller lily beds around the town and numerous others on private property.

The inspiration flowed from a local entrepreneur by the name of Barrie Strohman, who was a lily breeder who started 20 years ago cultivating lilies as a hobby on his farm south of Neepawa. Barry became president of the international lily association, and his lily gardens became so great that he turned his hobby into one of the most successful lily production and catalogue businesses, now called The Lily Nook.

The Lily Festival and the production of lilies has become the pride of the town and is now synonymous with the name of the town of Neepawa, long having been known as one of Manitoba's more beautiful towns. In fact, having won that award on many occasions, thanks to this festival and the huge committee of volunteers who annually plan the Lily Festival, attracting about 10 000 people on average to the town, I am sure this year will be even better when that number becomes known. With these efforts, I am sure the town will continue to be on the map as one of Manitoba's more beautiful.

Fort Garry School Division

Ms. Nancy Allan (St. Vital): I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Fort Garry School Division on the success of their international student program. I had the pleasure of attending an opening ceremony last week at the Fort Richmond Collegiate and welcomed 41 students to Manitoba from the Kun-ei Girls High School in Osaka, Japan. The students will be visiting Manitoba for a two-week summer ESL program to enhance their English skills and learn more about our Canadian lifestyle. They will be practising their English throughout Manitoba while visiting strawberry farms, a trip to the Legislative Building and a visit to Clear Lake, Manitoba.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the people who have made this

exciting program possible and successful: the home-stay families, the student language facilitators, the Fort Garry School Division student program staff. What a wonderful opportunity this is for students to hone their language skills and learn about our life in Canada. It is the beginning of cultural understanding.

To the students and teachers of the Kun-ei Girls High School, Seiko o mori masu. Good luck.

Springfield Agricultural Fair

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): This past weekend I had the pleasure of participating in the Springfield Agricultural Fair held in Dugald, a tradition that dates back many years in the Springfield RM. It was a beautiful day, and local residents were out in full force to enjoy the weather and the many attractions to be found at the fair.

* (15:40)

There were many activities for all ages, and my son Stefan enjoyed his many turns on the tractor ride. I then had the honour to participate in the celebrity category of the Wellington boot throw. Unfortunately, the Reeve of Springfield, John Holland, defeated both municipal Councillor Bill Paulishyn and myself.

I would like to extend congratulations and thanks to all the volunteers and community groups involved in this year's agricultural fair. From the Oakbank town beautification project, Citizens on Patrol Program, and the Springfield Youth Parliament, agriculture is still a very important player in Springfield's and Manitoba's economies, and we should celebrate it at every opportunity. It is a truly important task that the past be preserved by the present for the future, and the Springfield Ag Fair does just that for the future generations from Dugald, Oakbank, Anola and beyond. I wish the Springfield Agricultural Fair and its hardworking and dedicated organizers all the best in the future, and I would welcome and invite all Manitobans to join me in attending the fair in years to come.

Construction—École Lavallée

Ms. Linda Asper (Riel): Monsieur le président, c'était avec grand plaisir que je me trouvais parmi les parents et les élèves de l'École Lavallée le 13 juillet 2000, pour la première pelletée de terre soulignant la construction d'une école francophone dans le sud de Saint-Vital.

Au nom de notre gouvernement, j'ai offert mes meilleurs vœux. La cérémonie représentait l'accomplissement de nombreuses années d'efforts continus et de travail acharné, ainsi que la réalisation des espoirs et des rêves de la communauté francophone.

La levée de la première pelletée de terre était la naissance d'une magnifique école moderne qui accueillera les élèves francophones de la maternelle à la huitième année du quartier Saint-Vital sud. L'École Lavallée sera la première école entièrement neuve construite pour la Division scolaire franco-manitobaine et elle aura, en plus, une garderie.

Cette école sera un établissement d'enseignement remarquable pour de nombreuses années grâce à son enracinement profond dans la communauté. C'est cette fondation solide qui mènera à la réussite. Le dévouement des parents et de la communauté qui a déjà été démontré pour la construction de cette école permettra à toutes les personnes qui peuvent y contribuer de manière positive d'exercer une influence marquante sur l'éducation des élèves. Après tout, une école est bien plus que l'ensemble des matériaux qui la composent. Une école se bâtit également grâce à l'esprit de coopération qui fait de l'apprentissage une expérience vivante, une aventure stimulante et une entreprise commune.

Des moments mémorables attendent les élèves et leurs parents, ainsi que le personnel de l'École Lavallée. J'aimerais remercier tous ceux et celles qui ont contribué à la réalisation de ce projet. Monsieur le président, merci.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, it was with great pleasure that I participated with the parents and pupils of École Lavallée on July 13, 2000, in the sod-turning

ceremony to mark the construction of a Francophone school in south St. Vital.

I brought greetings on behalf of our government. The ceremony represented the fulfilment of many years of continuous effort and hard work, as well as the realization of the hopes and dreams of the Francophone community.

The turning of the sod marked the birth of a magnificent modern school which will receive the south St. Vital area's Francophone pupils from kindergarten to the eighth grade. École Lavallée will be the first entirely new school built for the Division scolaire franco-manitobaine. It will have a day care as well.

This school will be a remarkable educational institution for many years because it is deeply rooted in the community. It is this solid foundation that will lead to success. The dedication of the parents and of the community, which has already been demonstrated over the construction of this school, will enable all persons who can contribute to it in a positive way to exercise a significant influence on the education of the pupils. After all, a school is much more than the sum of the materials of which it is composed. A school is built also thanks to the spirit of co-operation that makes learning a living experience, a stimulating adventure and a common undertaking.

Memorable moments await the pupils and their parents as well as the staff of École Lavallée. I would like to thank all those who have contributed to the realization of this project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Committee Changes

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gillshammer), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments for July 24, 2000, at 10 a.m., be amended as follows: St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) for Morris (Mr. Pitura). This change was moved in the Committee this morning. I am now moving it in the House to be properly reflected in the House records.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Dyck: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), that the following change be made to Law Amendments for Tuesday, July 25, 2000, at 6:30, be rescinded, and now shall be amended as follows: Springfield (Mr. Schuler) for Morris (Mr. Pitura).

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Dyck: I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Morris (Mr. Pitura), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments for Tuesday, July 25, 2000, at 6:30 p.m., be amended as follows: Springfield (Mr. Schuler) for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau).

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for St. Vital, on a point of order.

Point of Order

Ms. Nancy Allan (St. Vital): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, during my member's statement, I inadvertently referred to Fort Richmond Collegiate and I meant to refer to Fort Garry Collegiate.

An Honourable Member: It is Fort Richmond.

Ms. Allan: Oh, I did have it right.

Mr. Speaker: It is not a point of order, but I thank the Honourable Member for St. Vital for the information.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

*(15:50)

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you call debate on second readings, Bills 7, 14, 16, 31, 45.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 7—The Protection for Persons in Care Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak),

Bill 7, The Protection for Persons in Care Act (Loi sur la protection des personnes recevant des soins), standing in the name of the Honourable Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau).

Is there will of the House to leave the Bill standing in the name of the Honourable Member for St. Norbert?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: It has been denied.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill 7, The Protection for Persons in Care Act. We are supportive of this act with some amendments which will certainly add more balance to the Act.

I personally am a very strong supporter of any effort which will protect people from being abused. This act in many ways duplicates Alberta's act. In fact, the Minister's private member bill, 202, was pretty much identical to Alberta's, but now that he is presenting it as Bill 7, there have been some changes made. There have been some rewordings, but the general theme does remain.

However, Alberta's law is stronger in terms of onus of proof about abuse, and I would like to see more of that incorporated into this particular act. This act requires a report to be made in one instance that I think will require some discussion. If somebody thinks that a person is likely to be abused, and in that particular instance I think we need to have further discussion on it. It certainly begs question and further thought because if we are going to be reporting on or reporting somebody who we think is likely to abuse somebody, what would that be based on? How can somebody act on somebody's personal and subjective opinion? Where are the reasonable and probable grounds in this instant? Where is the evidence and onus of proof?

Certainly, if I thought my neighbour Bob was going to beat up my other neighbour Joe, the police would ask me what I was basing this on, and they would want to know if there was previous history and actions here; otherwise it

would be very hard for them to act. In order for this particular act to be fair and balanced and protect everybody's rights, there also needs to be reasonable and probable grounds in this particular situation as well.

This act does not require criminal record checks of new employees and new volunteers, whereas Alberta's act did. I would like to see some discussion on this and this incorporated into this particular act. Certainly, there are other areas and professions where criminal record checks are expected of employees or volunteers, particularly where there are vulnerable clients involved. For instance, at Child Find Manitoba, all of us there had to have a criminal records check. Teachers do, as well, and many, many community agencies, so I think when it comes to looking at patients, it should be no less of a requirement.

Nowhere in this act does it say that the Minister or investigator must report possible Criminal Code offences to the police, and I believe that there should be an obligation to do this just as is the case with suspicion of child abuse.

In appointing an investigator to investigate the abuse charges, it does not indicate the qualifications needed by the investigator. I think it would be much more prudent to have this defined more clearly in the Act in order to ensure fairness, balance and a proper understanding by the investigator as somebody who understands the nuances of health care for individuals, particularly those with complex physical and other cognitive care implications.

I think the Act needs to be balanced enough to protect also against malicious reporting. Therefore there should be a fine for doing so, and the fine should be no less than that dealt to somebody who knows of abuse and does not report it. This is one part of this particular act where there does not appear to be equal balance and fairness on both sides. So definitely that needs to be discussed in more depth.

It is important that there are enough checks and balances in place in any act, and I think that our amendments will propose that. I do not believe that the Minister of Health (Mr.

Chomiak) has intended that he be seen as judge and jury, so the perception of fairness has to prevail, and I think that that will beg some discussion in committee.

The question must also be asked, Mr. Speaker, what kind of public access to information would this process have and what are the implications of that public access in protecting the privacy rights of the patient and the individuals involved during the investigation and after the fact due to files or records that are retained. Whether it is retained within a health care facility or within a regulatory body or within the Department of Health or within a regional health authority, I think the whole issue of privacy and protection of patients' privacy needs further discussion.

So, Mr. Speaker, we certainly look forward to discussion of this bill and these particular amendments that we would like to bring forward, which we believe will strengthen this bill and certainly address the issue of strengthening situations for patients, so that they are not found to be in a situation where they can be or are abused.

We are prepared, Mr. Speaker, to move this bill forward to committee stage.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise very briefly to indicate my general support for this bill and look forward to some careful consideration at the Committee level to make sure we have got things optimum in terms of the way things are worded.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 7, The Protection for Persons in Care Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 14—The Provincial Railways Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: To resume debate on the amendment to Bill 14, The Provincial Railways Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les chemins de fer provinciaux), be not now read a second time but that it be read a second time this day six months hence.

The Honourable Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) has 27 minutes remaining. Is it the will of the House to leave it remain standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Lakeside?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: Leave has been denied.

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of amendment to Bill 14, The Provincial Railways Amendment Act, be not now read a second time but that it be read a second time this day six months hence. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

An Honourable Member: On division, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: On division.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: To resume debate on the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Highways (Mr. Ashton), Bill 14, The Provincial Railways Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les chemins de fer provinciaux).

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 14, The Provincial Railways Amendment Act. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

An Honourable Member: On division.

Mr. Speaker: On division.

* (16:00)

Bill 16—The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act (2)

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Ms. Friesen), Bill 16, The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act (2) (Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur la Ville de Winnipeg), standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay).

Is it the will of the House to leave the Bill standing in the name of the Member for Seine River?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: Leave has been denied.

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to put a few words on the record regarding Bill 16, The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act (2). It is important to note that this is a continuation of work that was undertaken by the previous government, as was the amendment act that we passed in this House previously.

Mr. Speaker, as with many bills that have come before the House this session, this, while well-intentioned, certainly has a number of flaws in the drafting of the Bill and certainly not only representatives from the City but also members on this side of the House will be drawing those flaws to the attention of the Government while at committee. You know, to take the Premier (Mr. Doer) at face value today with his words in this House that indeed their government is willing to listen to the people of Manitoba and willing to come to committee with an open mind and adjust legislation where necessary—mind you, I do have to admit that that has not been my experience so far in my brief tenure in this House. In particular, I sat through a rather lengthy committee meeting regarding Bill 20, the farm machinery act, in which you know, the three main parties involved in the Act, the manufacturers, the agriculture, the agrarian community itself—

An Honourable Member: Agrarians? The third party.

Mr. Loewen: For the benefit of some members, that would be equal to the agricultural community in this province, but at the Committee we had a number of representations, all valid, all making the point to the Minister that this legislation was very flawed. And did the Minister listen? Of course, the answer is no. The Minister just bulldozed ahead with a piece of flawed legislation. So I guess that is why I stand before this House today being a little cynical on what

the Premier said in this House today, and time will tell.

Certainly with regard to this act, and again, just to refer to the previous act which was pushed through this House with the co-operation of this side of the House and with great urgency on behalf of the Government regarding the registration of orders, it is with some sadness I note today that, although we did offer the courtesy of passing that legislation with great haste through this House, to date there have been no orders registered. So once again we have a situation where the Government really did not have a clear understanding of what they were trying to accomplish, in fact what would be the outcome.

So I hope that is not the same with this act. What I would like to do now, Mr. Speaker, is just draw the attention of the Government to a couple of flaws in the Bill and certainly section 441.1, which talks about the appeal process for somebody who has been served a demolition order, and once again, as the members opposite should be aware, these landowners sometimes are difficult to find. They know that their property is in disrepair and it is hard for the city to track them down, but it is also very onerous when they are found when they come back for an appeal. The only method for the City to deal with the appeal is through a committee as defined in The City of Winnipeg Act, which is a standing policy committee. That is the onerous task that is being put upon the City Council and the standing policy committee with this legislation.

It seems to me if the true intention of this bill is to allow the City some leeway in the handling of its affairs that certainly this House, this Legislature should have the confidence in the City to let them form their own appeal committee. I mean, these are elected officials. They take the job seriously. The committee that deals with property and real estate, the property committee of the City, is a very, very busy committee.

Members of the House question the make-up of that committee, but once again, that is up to the City voters, municipal voters to decide. In any event, it is onerous on the committee, and I

am sure the representatives at committee from the City of Winnipeg will raise that point as well. Certainly, this government could extend them the opportunity to define their own committee when it comes to hearing appeals. It does not seem like a too unreasonable request.

I think another important issue that this bill tries to address is serving orders that actually do not apply to demolition orders. Again, just the wording in 467(1.2) is a little loose and could stand some adjustment, and again this will be brought out at committee. We are waiting, hopeful that the members of the Committee on the Government side will have the good sense to either bring in an amendment or to change the nature of this wording.

Certainly, in terms of locating people to serve these orders, I appreciate the fact that a reasonable effort has to be made, but again that will be up to the courts at some point to decide what a reasonable effort is. I do believe that it would not be unfair if, after attempting to serve a member through mail, through registered mail, through fax and through other normal channels, none of them being successful, that in the interest of expediency, maybe the Government would agree to allow the City to advertise in papers that there is an order outstanding that does need to be addressed.

So I just wanted to raise briefly these two issues: make the Government aware that we will be raising these issues in committee, and that certainly we hope they will be open to positive suggestions, not only from the City of Winnipeg but from people on this side of the House, to open their minds to these issues. Having said that, I conclude my remarks.

Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale): Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to put a few words on the record in regard to Bill 16, The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act (2), in regard to the legislation that was brought forth by the NDP Government here.

I have to say that this is a continuation of some of the initiatives that we started under our administration. It more or less is a reaction to the Cuff report that was tabled by the City of Winnipeg, after extensive consultation, in a

sense, giving the City of Winnipeg more authority to the City to make decisions. It is an enabling type of legislation. It is the type of legislation, I think, that the City of Winnipeg was wanting, and this is one of the things that we recommended in our legislative package before it last year. I think what this is, is just a continuation of some of the things that we were wanting to implement with the City of Winnipeg.

So I just wanted to put on record that I compliment the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Ms. Friesen) in her quest to try to work with the City of Winnipeg, to try to work in coming to some better decision making, giving them more decision-making power, giving the ability for the City to set its own course. This is just a part of their request. I believe it is legislation that will help them to regulate the condition and the maintenance of their buildings, the process of looking after unsanitary buildings, allows the city to take immediate action in case of emergency situations, and it provides the City of Winnipeg the ability to look after unsafe and unsanitary conditions.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to put a few words on the record in regard to that bill.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 16, The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act (2).

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? Agreed?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

* (16:10)

Bill 31—The Electronic Commerce and Information, Consumer Protection Amendment and Manitoba Evidence Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and

Mines (Ms. Mihychuk), Bill 31, The Electronic Commerce and Information, Consumer Protection Amendment and Manitoba Evidence Amendment Act (Loi sur le commerce et l'information électroniques, modifiant la Loi sur la protection du consommateur et la Loi sur la preuve au Manitoba), standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay).

Is it the will of the House to leave the Bill to remain standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Seine River?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: Leave has been denied.

Also standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), who has six minutes remaining.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: Leave has been denied.

Mr. Jim Penner (Steinbach): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. Bill 31 is The Electronic Commerce and Information, Consumer Protection Amendment and Manitoba Evidence Amendment Act. It is a hodgepodge of different ideas that have been put into writing. On the other hand, it has some valuable points to it.

This bill has been in the drafting stage for one or two years and generally addresses some of the concerns of electronic communication. It should have probably been left to federal legislation so that the legislation across Canada on electronic communication would have all been the same. However, that is not the case. So we recommended to the Minister's office that the legislation be harmonized with all the other provinces instead of having a different set of rules for electronic communication in each province. Since we do interprovincial communication electronically, the rules should have been harmonized throughout Canada and be the same in every province.

However, it does address some of the concerns of transacting business electronically

through e-mail and through faxes. It is now possible to send a signed document electronically, and that signature on a signed document will be, in fact, in force of law as if it had been signed personally on the site. In many respects, the legislation simply endorses what already is happening.

It is common practice already in businesses, and it has been in our business for some years, to send signatures electronically and consider that a legal endorsement. Unless they were contested, that was never a problem. In our experience those signatures were never contested. We also believe that this bill will need constant review because the electronic methods of communicating are changing so quickly and the capabilities and the technology is changing so quickly, it does not seem possible, Mr. Speaker, that you can put together a bill in such a changing world that will stand the test of time. This bill will have to be reviewed constantly, and I would suggest that a review mechanism should have been put in place.

The part of the Bill that was really a surprise was an insert called section 6. Section 6 is called an amendment to The Consumer Protection Act. You would think that that would have been in the Consumer and Corporate Affairs portfolio instead of in the Bill on electronic communication. However, I understand that the amendment to The Consumer Protection Act, part 6 of the Bill, is going to be transferred to the other portfolio where it belongs.

Section 6 amends The Consumer Protection Act. What it does is enhance the protection of credit card holders, but in so doing it changes the agreement that exists between the issuer and the holder. At the present time, when a person receives a credit card in the mail, there is an agreement with the credit card that states the terms that the credit card can be used. Those terms are agreed to by the holder when the issuer mails them out and the credit card holder signs an agreement. When you sign the back of your card, it says you have agreed to those conditions.

However, this government says we are going to change that agreement, even though people are threatened now with the possibility of losing the right to have credit cards because the

agreement between the holder and the issuer has been overridden in this legislation. Probably this legislation will not stand the test of time.

It says in the legislation: Despite any agreement entered into before. Again, in the next section it says: Despite any agreement entered into before. Then it changes the responsibility of the credit card holder, and it says the credit card holder, if he loses his card, has no responsibility whatsoever. That is what the new act says. I do not think then that people who send out—Visa is not going to send me a credit card if they find out that in Manitoba there is no responsibility. It also says that of any authorized use, the agreement overrides the contract between the issuer and the holder.

Mr. Speaker, I think this bill will collapse on its own, so we will let it go forward at this time.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise to say a few words about Bill 31, The Electronic Commerce bill. In general, I think this is a significant and noteworthy initiative by the Government. Clearly, this is the way the world is going, and it is necessary for Manitoba to be there.

There are some clear provincial reasons why we should have legislation here, as well as there be federal legislation, and those differences will probably emerge even more as time passes. Nevertheless, we should endeavour to be as similar as we can across the country, even as different provinces probably will experiment to some extent with slight modifications on bills dealing with electronic commerce.

It is important that we are there in Manitoba because there can be quite significant savings both in time and cost from a variety of perspectives, both the seller and the purchaser of goods and services. This is important to governments trying to save costs, to individuals, to businesses and to a variety of other organizations.

Electronic commerce has the potential and, indeed, is in many circumstances more convenient. Individuals can shop at the time of day or night that they would like from their home or their office or the cottage, and it is

important that there be some assurance that the transactions that are performed have some validity in law as well as in practice. Clearly, technology advances and enables changes, and we should be there in Manitoba.

I think it is worthwhile mentioning some of the goals that legislation like this should hope to achieve. First of all, it should facilitate the ability of citizens of Manitoba, Manitoba governments and public sector organizations, including governments, to participate in the electronic world providing some assurance at the same time that privacy and security issues are dealt with in a responsible fashion and that there are legal avenues for recourse when there are disputes about contracts, about signatures, about other aspects of electronic commerce. So it is important that we put in place this legislation.

I would suggest it is also going to be increasingly important to have some understanding of what we receive in terms of effectiveness, quality, that guarantees or information that is provided on cost-savings is valid, and how we do that and how we move forward will clearly be important if this whole area of electronic commerce is going to be expanding with individuals at the moment and companies at the moment who are reluctant being slower to participate until they really have the assurances that these aspects are going to be well looked after.

It is at the same time, I suggest, important to have a goal that we provide an environment in Manitoba which facilitates the growth of companies using electronic commerce and facilitates the growth of governments and public sector organizations in using electronic means of delivering because of the cost and indeed the ease of getting information and receiving information under many, many circumstances.

Missing in this bill are details of what the Government's approach to procurement will be, what their approach to the use of taxing powers and tax credits instruments in terms of this whole area and what the Government's approach will be to areas like research and development in electronic commerce to facilitate the growth of companies that are very important to the new economy in Manitoba.

* (16:20)

Missing in this legislation is any recognition that electronic approaches can be particularly beneficial for First Nations who are often isolated, further away from other communities, and the potential advantages for First Nations in not only using but benefiting from this area, not only of electronic commerce but of electronic information, electronic learning. I would recommend that the Government indeed look carefully at this area, because it is a role that government could play in facilitating the development of the use of electronic networks, electronic information and providing advantages in new ways for First Nations enterprises, for First Nations opportunities in areas of Manitoba which are isolated and have fewer of the traditional types of opportunities for employment and economic growth.

I will also make a comment or two about the need, given the electronic world, for the Government to consider carefully the process of digital archiving of records. Clearly what is being put in place here is a validation of electronic record. As this is in place it becomes very important to put in place throughout government, perhaps centralized, but carefully a way of archiving electronic records so that where there are changes made to the electronic records they are recorded. One can have some understanding of the authenticity, the time frame, the originality of the documents. That becomes very important, not only for individual agencies or departments, but, in fact, because it is so critical I suggest it is important to put in place a mechanism at the centre of government to make sure that the processes for storing and archiving and keeping documents in electronic form is of the highest possible quality.

There is a clear need to archive now electronic documents in a way that you can record the original and what changes have occurred. The technology exists already. It is being used in places like, as an example, the patient records at the Manitoba Cancer Foundation. It would be very important that whether we are dealing with archives of museum information, archives of legal documents in government, archives of government information put out, that we have the kind of assurance that

things are being done well, they are handled well.

I suggest that this is an area that the Minister should look very carefully at, so that, in fact, the whole of government and not just parts of government are really using this area well. It is clearly a fast-moving area. There will need to be changes and adaptations made. The area of consumer protection is one of the newer areas and what works and what does not work to some extent we may have to find out in part by experimentation, in part by getting the best advice we possibly can.

So I look forward to the presentations at the committee stage, the input from citizens, and hope we get the best advice we can so that this bill, for Manitoba's sake, and for the companies, individuals and the public sector organizations in Manitoba, is the best it can possibly be. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 31, The Electronic Commerce and Information, Consumer Protection Amendment and Manitoba Evidence Amendment Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 45—The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Education and Training (Mr. Caldwell), Bill 45, The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la pension de retraite des enseignants), standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Carman (Mr. Rocan).

Is it the will of the House for the Bill to remain standing in the name of the Member for Carman? Leave has been denied.

Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak today just to put a few words on the record about The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act, Bill 45.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we are very supportive of teachers. We are very supportive of the kinds of needs they have as they go through their career. We know that this bill gives the teacher the right to purchase, on a cost-shared basis with the employer, service relating to maternity leave.

Mr. Speaker, as I look through this bill, there are many very commendable things that will support teachers as they go on maternity leave, support teachers in terms of their benefits and support teachers in terms of planning their professional career around a family. We think it is very important on this side of the House to allow teachers to be able to have a well-rounded family life as well as the opportunity to continue their professional careers and to have things in place that do not play on a detrimental point and cause them distress during the time when they choose to have and raise families.

It also is very mindful of the school divisions' responsibility to be able to supply funds for maternity leave for teachers, so they can have this time away from school and still maintain their professionalism in the academic world.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that on this side of the House, we are very mindful and very supportive of this particular Bill 45, because we feel that it does support and enhance the ability of teachers to continue in the workforce and also to continue at the pension levels and the pay levels they need as they make decisions in their lives that are family-oriented.

On this side of the House, I want to put on the record that any bill that does support teachers in a meaningful way and any bill that does provide teachers with the career support that they need is something this side of the House

definitely will support and will look forward to continuing.

I must put a word on the record about other bills where this side of House has felt that it was other bills, like 42, that have been detrimental to the teaching profession and detrimental to Manitobans across the province. Those things we have spoken against.

Mr. Speaker, this is not one of those bills. This is a bill that this side of the House can be very supportive of and mindful of the need out there for teachers to have this kind of legislation in place. So this side of the House will have no desire to stop this bill. It is something that teachers have and do need.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 45, The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

House Business

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): I wish to announce that the Public Utilities and Natural Resources Committee will meet on Wednesday, July 26, at 10 a.m., to consider the following bills: 6, 7, 14, 16, 21 and 31.

I wish to announce that the Law Amendments Committee will meet on Wednesday, July 26, at 10 a.m., as well, to consider the following bills: Bills 23 and 36 for clause-by-clause consideration.

I wish to announce that in addition to the bills already scheduled for consideration by the Law Amendments Committee on Tuesday, July 25, at 6:30 p.m., and July 26, at 6:30 p.m., if

necessary, considering Bills 12 and 42, the Committee will also consider Bill 45, The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act.

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced that in addition to the bills already scheduled for consideration by the Law Amendments Committee on Tuesday, July 25, at 6:30 p.m., and July 26, 6:30 p.m., if necessary, for Bill 12 and Bill 42, the Committee will also consider the following: Bill 45, The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act.

I will also announce that the Law Amendments Committee will meet on Wednesday, July 26, at 10 a.m., to consider the following bills: bills 23 and 36, clause by clause.

Also, it has been announced that the Public Utilities and Natural Resources Committee will meet on Wednesday, July 26, year 2000, at 10 a.m., to consider the following bills: 6, 7, 14, 16, 21 and 31.

* (16:30)

Mr. Mackintosh: I wish to obtain the unanimous consent of the House to vary the sequence for Estimates consideration, to consider in the Chamber the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training to follow Executive Council and in Room 254 the departments of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, Status of Women, and Civil Service Commission to follow Conservation.

At the conclusion of the consideration of Estimates assigned to that section which first completes its work, the Estimates of Inter-governmental Affairs will be assigned to that section.

Mr. Speaker: Is there unanimous consent of the House to vary the sequence for Estimates consideration set out in Sessional Paper No. 138 to subsequently amend it to consider in the Chamber the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training to follow Executive Council and in Room 254 the departments of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, Status of Women, and Civil Service Commission to follow Conservation, and at the conclusion of the consideration of Estimates assigned to that

section which first completes its work, the Estimates of Intergovernmental Affairs will be assigned to that section? Is there unanimous consent? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Mackintosh: I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture and Food (Ms. Wowchuk), 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)**

CONSERVATION

* (16:50)

Mr. Chairperson (Harry Schellenberg): 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 Conservation.

When the Committee last sat, it had been considering item 12.3. Resource Programs (b) Parks and Natural Areas (1) Administration (b) Other Expenditures, \$428,200, on page 39 of the Estimates book. Shall the line pass?

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): What line were you at? This is under Parks and Natural Resources?

Mr. Chairperson: Page 39, Conservation, in the Estimates book, item 3.(b) Parks and Natural Areas (1) Administration (b) Other Expenditures.

Mr. Maguire: Right. So you have passed line (a).

Mr. Chairperson: Yes, Salaries and Employee Benefits, line (a), has been passed.

I will read it again. Line 12.3.(b)(1)(b) Other expenditures \$428,200—pass; (c) Grant Assistance \$191,200—pass.

3.(b)(2) Planning and Development (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$834,100—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$194,600—pass.

3.(b)(3) Park Districts (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$438,300—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$49,300—pass.

3.(b)(4) Park Operations and Maintenance (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$9,867,500—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$4,545,500—pass.

3.(b)(5) Support Services (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$234,200—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$52,300—pass.

3.(c) Petroleum and Energy (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,557,200—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$618,900. Shall the line pass?

Mr. Maguire: The only question I have in this area of Petroleum and Energy, or two, I guess, quickly, one of them is Canada has set standards for the whole situation in regard to the Kyoto Conference and the reduction of emissions that Canada has set for us to comply to.

Can you give us any indication, Mr. Minister, as to whether you concur with the standards or the levels set by the national department?

Hon. Oscar Lathlin (Minister of Conservation): In the last little while, there have been questions in the House from the Liberal Party in regard to emissions, global warming and so on, and in my responses I have tried to explain that in 1997 the federal government became a signatory to the agreement that the Member refers to, the Kyoto Accord, and when the federal government became signatory to that agreement, that sort of sent a signal to other jurisdictions in Canada, like provincial governments and territorial governments, that they would have a part to play in Canada's efforts to contribute to the Kyoto Accord.

So each jurisdiction since then has been involved in developing their own strategies. The Kyoto agreement has not been ratified yet. In the meantime, though, provincial governments are in the process of developing their strategy. When the Kyoto Accord is ratified, all of these

strategies will be put into place, but, in the meantime, we are not even waiting for the federal government to ratify the Accord. In Manitoba, we have started to develop our own strategies so that we can become part of the national resolution.

Our preference, of course, is to have agreement across the country, provincial governments, territorial governments, and that we would endorse the Kyoto Accord with the federal government. So far that has not happened, but in the meantime we are going ahead with our own strategy.

Mr. Maguire: Can the Minister indicate to me what levels Manitoba is expected to attain by the target dates that the federal government has established and whether he believes it is possible for us to attain those standards that the national government in Canada would expect us to?

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Chairman, the Kyoto Accord calls for a 6% reduction in the CO₂ levels from the 1990 levels by 2008 to 2012. That has not been ratified yet, as I said earlier. As far as each province is concerned, there really has not been any agreement as to what those levels might be. But perhaps I could also advise the Member that Manitoba is the second lowest per capita, has the second lowest per capita emissions in Canada, and that is, of course, mainly due to the heavy reliance on Manitoba Hydro energy.

Mr. Maguire: I guess I would ask the question of the Minister: Has he instructed his department, or has the Department done any work in regard to analyzing what kind of an impact there would have to be on fuel prices in Manitoba if Canada is to attain its CO₂ emission reductions by the year 2006 or 2008?

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Chairman, as I indicated to the Member earlier, there is work going on right now by our officials. The Canadian Council of the Ministers of Environment will be meeting in October 2000, in the fall, where we will be reviewing all of these reports that will be coming from our officials. Then, by October, hopefully, we will have agreement as to what strategies to adopt and implement, and, of course, whether by that time the federal government will also ratify the accord. There is work being done right now

by our officials. As I said, the results of all that work and study will be given to the ministers when they meet in October.

* (17:00)

Mr. Maguire: Okay, thank you very much, Mr. Minister. I guess my point is you are saying that the information then will be made available to the ministers' meeting, ministerial meeting in October. I only urge you to try to move forward with the development of an outline of the impact on other sources of energy for the province of Manitoba. There are other provinces that it will have a bigger impact on, perhaps, but the offshoot of what happens in some of the other larger provinces is going to have a multiplication effect here in the province of Manitoba. It may end up costing our consumers a great deal more for energy resources such as gas and natural gas, as opposed to what it may do in other jurisdictions that do not have the opportunity to be as reliant on or as fortunate on having as much hydro as we would have in the water resources in that area, Mr. Minister. So I encourage you to do that.

I think the only other question I have in this area is just a couple with a personal note. In the situation of the southwest area, in the Tilson area in regard to the group of individuals there who have been impacted by the emissions, the H₂S gas that has come off of some of the sites there.

Can you give me an update on where that is at, Mr. Minister? I know that the Health Department officials have been brought in to help seek solutions there, and maybe you can tell me where the Department is at and, as well, where the companies are at in their effort to—I understand their effort to reduce these emissions, and I wonder if you can just bring us up to date on that.

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Chairman, yes, there is indeed a very serious concern that was brought to us by residents of that area that the Member refers to. I believe they met with the Department of Health Minister as well as officials from that department. There were other meetings held. Finally, we had a meeting ourselves with the residents from that area. The Chief Medical Officer was present at that meeting that I was at,

and it was at that meeting that I came to understand that our department is continuing to monitor the situation.

Incidentally, I should go back a little bit. For me, it was a very serious meeting because the people whom I met were people who had really bad experiences with the emission of gases from those oil wells, I guess. By the time I met with them, they had been so traumatized, I guess, by their experiences that for me it became quite a difficult meeting. Seeing people in front of you breaking down, trying to describe their situation, that is what I mean by it became a difficult meeting.

I think by the end of the meeting we were able to satisfy the residents that government was doing something, government was taking this issue very seriously, and that we were bound and determined to come up with some sort of a resolution. So we advised them that we were going to be monitoring the situation very closely.

Also, the Department of Health I understand is doing an in-depth study into those gases that are being emitted from those fields, but, as I understand it today, there have been no results produced yet. I would also like to advise the Member the recent monitoring that we are doing has apparently shown the—sorry, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to make sure I had my information right. The monitoring that we are doing currently in that area has apparently shown some hydrogen sulphide emissions from the swamp that samples are being taken from. So we are looking into that situation as well.

As I said earlier, the results are not known yet. The air quality monitoring that is going on currently, I think I would like to end by saying to the Member we are monitoring the situation very closely. I am satisfied anyway that we are monitoring the situation very closely. I am anxious to get the results from all the studies that we are doing, including that of the study that is being conducted by the Department of Health. So whenever we get those results in, of course, it will be in a report form, and I will be glad to share those with the Member for his review.

Mr. Maguire: I thank the Minister for that and look forward to seeing the review when it comes forward.

There is only one other question I have. It is in relation to the differences in taxation and licensing fees and that sort of thing in the oil industry for maintenance, and perhaps the oil crews themselves on both sides of the Saskatchewan-Manitoba border. It is my understanding that crews coming in from Saskatchewan do not pay Manitoba tax. They do not have to get a licence or a fee to come in and do work in the oil field in Manitoba. Yet similar crews going into Saskatchewan pay tax there; pay a fee there; have to get a licence to operate there. I wonder if the Minister can bring us up to date on just exactly the differences that take place and why we are not doing more to encourage sort of a made-in-Manitoba formula within our own oil industry in that corner.

Mr. Lathlin: I am sorry, Mr. Chairman, I could not follow the question. Would he mind maybe giving me his question again or rephrasing it? I do not think I got it.

Mr. Maguire: Mr. Minister, it has to do with maintenance crews and some of the crews that would do things like digging in lines between oil wells or to batteries, work that is being done in Manitoba. It is my understanding that Saskatchewan companies tendering and coming in and getting those jobs are successful in that whole area, but they do not have to pay a fee or a licence to come into Manitoba to work here in that regard.

I am not promoting that they have to, but the concern that has been raised with me personally is that Manitoba crews going into Saskatchewan to tender on similar jobs have to pay a licence or a tax in Saskatchewan as part of getting that job. So, therefore, your bidding process on those jobs would be different for a Saskatchewan company coming into Manitoba than a Manitoba company going into Saskatchewan.

* (17:10)

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Chairman, I understand that companies who do come into Manitoba have to

pay the provincial sales tax for their heavy equipment rigs that come in.

I am not so sure that I have a firm handle on that other piece of information, so what I would like to propose to the Member is that as far as the licence is concerned, the different fees that they have to pay, that is, Saskatchewan companies coming in to do work in Manitoba, I am given to understand that they do end up paying some sort of a fee, some sort of a licence fee, but I think it is dependent on how long they are in Manitoba, how involved the work is when they come into Manitoba.

I am going to find that out for sure, and I will give that information in writing to the Member, so that rather than saying to him I think that is how it works, I am going to find out for sure exactly how it works.

Mr. Maguire: Thanks, Mr. Minister, for that. I look forward to that information as well. If you could send me a copy of that, I would very much appreciate it I heard it last fall a bit and again just recently here. So it is a situation that I would like to be able to help these folks out a little bit, give them some more information as well, if we could. I look forward to your answer on that.

With that, I am prepared to pass the rest of the lines under Petroleum.

Mr. Chairperson: I will read line 12.3. Resource Programs (c) Petroleum and Energy (2) Other Expenditures \$618,900—pass.

3.(d) Forestry (1) Administration (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$342,600—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$447,700—pass; (c) Grant Assistance \$465,800—pass.

3.(d)(2) Forest Resources Management (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$896,200. Shall the line pass?

Mr. Harry Enns (Lakeside): Just a few thoughts on Forestry, I know the Minister is aware, as we were aware prior to departing from government, that the forestry complex at Pine Falls has significant expansion plans that they shared with us. It would be fairly significant. I

am aware that it was a fairly significant order, millions of dollars, additional job opportunities, of course, and, of course, that hinges with the group obtaining some additional forestry allocations. They are looking at the east side of the province to obtain those forestry allocations.

Mr. Chairman, this is in my opinion where the Department and the Minister face a specific challenge in terms of on the one hand managing our resources—in this case, forestry—as prudently as possible on behalf of the people of Manitoba. You have later on an item, Forest Economics and Marketing. It is certainly, in my belief and my understanding, that with appropriate guidelines we have sufficient forestry resources to accommodate the kind of requests that Pine Falls has before the Government, or at least had before the Government. I am assuming it is still there.

I am also aware, and I know that certainly within the Department you are aware, there are a good number of people in Manitoba who look at the whole side of east Winnipeg and would like it to just be set aside as one giant environmental reserve or park, not to be exploited in any way by roads, by forestry operations, mining operations. That is a legitimate point of view, and I suspect you harbour within your merged department a very strong sentiment about that point of view. It will be interesting for us to watch in opposition which point of view will prevail.

In other words, Mr. Minister, I am giving you fair notice that, when that \$100-million-plus investment does not take place at Pine Falls, along with those jobs, then we will know which part of your department has prevailed. I am asking you if you can give me an update, Mr. Minister, about the Pine Falls project, whether or not the Pine Falls group, former Abitibi Price Group, is still actively pursuing with you and your department significant and major expansion plans for their mill at Pine Falls.

* (17:20)

Mr. Lathlin: Yes, the Member is absolutely right. Before the last election, there had been considerable—well, I mean, there is quite a bit of discussion going back and forth, I think, between

Pine Falls, Tembec and the provincial government, and, I believe, also with some of the Aboriginal communities that live around that area, with labour, and so, because about three or four days after I had been sworn in as minister I was asked to attend a meeting in Pine Falls. I did, and I met with the company officials, the First Nations Aboriginal people, labour, and government, all four groups together. As it stands now, the mill has been granted a licence to proceed with this new mill that they had been talking about. So that is going.

They are also looking, as the Member will probably remember, at a sawmill operation. They were going to install a sawmill because right now they are a paper mill, but they are also looking to getting into a sawmill operation. Initially, they told us that they would probably need additional volume of wood in order to accommodate the sawmill. So that is where it stands now. We are working with them to determine for sure that there is enough wood in their existing area because, as the Member stated, we are certainly going to work with industry.

We are also, in our announcements that we have made recently, interested in working with the First Nations Aboriginal people who are indigenous in that area. But that is down the road. Right now, what the Member is asking is what the current status is of Pine Falls paper mill. So that is where it is at right now. They have proceeded under a licence with the new mill, and right now we are trying to determine if there is enough volume to accommodate the sawmill. So far it looks optimistic, but, as I said, it is still in the exploratory stage.

Mr. Enns: The licence the Minister refers to: Can the Minister indicate when it was granted and what specifically it is for? What type of an expansion, can he quantify that expansion? Is it an expansion of the pulp and paper operation by new additions and new machines? And specifically, when was this licence that the Minister now refers to granted?

Mr. Lathlin: Earlier in my response, I was looking for the right term, the expansion to the mill. Apparently, it is called thermal mechanical pulping process. That is what was incorporated

into their expansion plan. That mill expansion for construction, apparently the licence, I believe it was in 1998, but I am not 100 percent sure that the licence was granted.

Mr. Enns: I am not going to pursue the matter further. I think the Minister and the department officials appreciate what I am referring to. Quite frankly, I have little patience for a lot of armchair environmentalists living in the comfort of Winnipeg or anywhere else in the province telling the good people who live in the eastern part of the province—there are, as the Minister is well aware, a number of First Nations people as well as other people—this concept that that whole area should be left virgin and untouched; it does not impress me. I am hoping that the Minister, with due and proper caution and guidelines for the environment, will enable and ensure that those communities, those First Nations communities, have access to, have opportunity of some economic development that expanded forestry or indeed mining or other operations present themselves from time to time.

Mr. Chairman, I will leave it at that. We will, in the Opposition, be watchful of this particular instance. What the Minister has really told me, that the project, as envisaged by Pine Falls, really has not moved forward, has not moved forward at all. It is now nine months, close on to a year, and I do not think it is particularly fair to the company involved, and it is certainly not fair to the community involved, to the district involved. Pine Falls, as you know, is a one-industry community, one town that lives and dies by its forestry resources. I think it needs a clear signal from this minister, from this government, as to which direction they are heading. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Lathlin: I would just like to say to the Member and to everybody here that, since I have been Minister, I have not said anything about delaying unnecessarily or saying no to development or to environmental groups, or to the Aboriginal people, or to people who are living in that area. What I have said repeatedly is that we announced our sustainable development strategy not that long ago, and there are principles there that I am very interested in following and see whether those principles can be incorporated

into the planning, the development on the east side of Lake Winnipeg.

I also want to make sure that we listen very carefully to First Nations and Aboriginal people living in that area. I am very much interested in including them in the process so that, rather than standing on the periphery and watching all this development taking place, I want them to have a meaningful input and meaningful participation as to whatever might happen, whatever development might unfold on the east side of Lake Winnipeg.

Mr. Chairperson: Line 12.3.(d)(2) Forest Resources Management (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$896,200—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$627,700—pass.

3.(d)(3) Forest Health and Ecology (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,668,200—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$2,637,200—pass.

3.(d)(4) Forest Economics and Marketing (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$355,200—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$50,700—pass.

3.(d)(5) Forest Regeneration Stock \$1,411,900. Shall the line pass?

Mr. Enns: How many trees is the Minister planting this year?

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Chairman, about 4.21 million tree seedlings are being provided to the forest renewal program.

*(17:30)

Mr. Chairperson: 12.3. Resource Programs (d) Forestry (5) Forest Regeneration Stock \$1,411,900—pass.

3.(d)(6) Pineland Forestry Nursery—Nil.

3.(e) Fisheries (1) Administration (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$119,800—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$203,300—pass.

3.(e)(2) Fish Culture (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$676,400—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$279,900—pass.

3.(e)(3) Fisheries Habitat Management (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$349,000—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$64,700—pass.

3.(e)(4) Sport and Commercial Fishing Management (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$597,100. Shall the line pass?

Mr. Enns: Just a general question: Is the Fisheries division of the Department maintaining its level of stocking in our prime sports lakes? Can the Minister just give me a general indication of whether or not this budget line reflects an ongoing level of commitment to making sure that our lakes are stocked with sports fish?

Mr. Lathlin: Yes, Mr. Chairman, we are maintaining the levels that were there before. We are also encouraging more of that activity to be happening. We are using portable fish hatcheries for those communities that want to be involved in fish enhancement programs.

I would also like to maybe further advise the Member that I am very interested in again including our Aboriginal First Nations communities. I know they are very much interested in participating in the program, and it is my hope that we can actually get into some programming with those groups as well.

Mr. Enns: Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to hear that because I need not tell this minister I think there is a very good reason for reaching out and working with the First Nations aboriginal community in this sense, recognizing as we all do their treaty rights that they have, which sometimes conflict in the resource management. I hope and I wish the Minister every success in working with the First Nations people and the Aboriginal people. I think that is the way to work with all people and not have a situation develop where confrontation takes place. Pass.

Mr. Chairperson: Line 12.3.(e)(4) Sport and Commercial Fishing Management (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$597,100—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$74,600—pass.

3.(e)(5) Northern Fishermen's Freight Assistance \$250,000. Shall the line pass?

Mr. Maguire: Yes, Mr. Chairman, the objectives under the Northern Fishermen's Freight Assistance are to assist and maintain the viability of the fish movement, that sort of thing, and the transportation costs on selected fish species.

Can the Minister indicate to us which species are involved and if, in fact, the assistance of \$250,000 was used in the same manner this year as it was last year?

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Chairman, the program is targeted mainly towards walleye.

Mr. Maguire: I notice that the Expected Results of the objectives of the Department, on page 104 indicate that the Northern Fishermen's Freight Assistance Program expenditures and recommend program modifications by May 2000. Can the Minister indicate to us, given that that was a couple of months ago, what was done in that area and what was done in that review, if there were any program modifications?

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Chairman, yes, since I have been Minister of Conservation, I would like to advise the Member that I have had numerous meetings with fishermen's groups, both in the northern area of the province as well the south basin of Lake Winnipeg. I have met with several fishing groups.

One of the things that we are looking at doing is, of course, trying to come up with a province-wide policy that would guide us, manage, in this case we are talking about fish, but, of course, with regional consideration. I would like to be able to come up with a province-wide policy, co-management agreements with Aboriginal and First Nations people so that we are not dealing everyday with items like we want to increase our quota, we want to fish on that part of the lake, we want to increase or decrease the mesh size of the nets, transportation, all of these little items or issues that come into play when we are dealing with the fishermen.

For example, when we met with the northwest fishing co-op during the wintertime, they gave us some suggestions as to how the fishing industry might improve or be improved

upon for their particular area, the northwest part of the province. Several good ideas were brought forth, and at the end of the meeting we were able to agree to a working group. As a result of that working group, one of the things that I am looking at right now is ways to increase the freight subsidy and target it maybe a little bit more effectively.

The Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) will know that when I was in opposition I used to, from time to time, give him my humble opinions as to how the fishery program might be looked at. One of the suggestions I used to give him was, if you look at fishing the same way you look at agriculture, the fishermen in the North would benefit greatly. Now that I am on the government side, I am going to have to put into practice what I used to preach to the Member for Lakeside when I was in opposition, and that is clearly one of the examples I used to talk about when I said help our fishermen from the North just like you helped the farmers down south.

* (17:40)

Mr. Maguire: Pass.

Mr. Chairperson: Line 12.3. Resource Programs (e) Fisheries (5) Northern Fishermen's Freight Assistance \$250,000—pass;

3.(e)(6) Fisheries Enhancement Initiative \$350,000—pass.

3.(f) Wildlife (1) Administration (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$364,100—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$414,400—pass; (c) Grant Assistance \$207,000—pass.

3.(f)(2) Big Game and Fur Management (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$592,200. Shall the line pass?

Mr. Enns: What is the Minister going to do about the humongous numbers of beavers that we have in this province?

Mr. Lathlin: Since I have been Minister of Conservation, Mr. Chairman, I have had, again, several meetings with different groups. I have met with AMM. I have met with the Trappers Association. They are all talking about beaver.

Initially, when I first came on, I had thought of maybe relying more on the Manitoba Trappers Association to come in and help us with the beaver program because I sense that, not to take anything away from AMM, but I think AMM members, and I have said this before in public, maybe look at the beaver-control problem in a different light than, say, the trapper would. The trapper has more of a relationship with the beaver than, say, the AMM people, so for that reason I thought, like, why not let us try relying on the Trappers Association more and more for the beaver.

We have the program under review right now, and I was hoping that I would be able to do something this coming fall. I do not know if I will be able to do that. But we are looking to changing the way we do things.

I would suspect, in my estimation, the way I feel about it now, after meeting with all these people, maybe the best group to work with as far as controlling the beaver problem is the Manitoba Trappers Association.

Mr. Enns: Can the Department give you figures and population numbers? I believe they are at record-setting highs and, if anything, still rising. Can that be confirmed?

Mr. Lathlin: I do not really have a number I can give the Member. I think he himself is aware that the population has been steadily rising in the last few years. But maybe one way of putting this into perspective is to advise him that over \$600,000 has been spent over the past eight years to remove some close to forty thousand beavers. Even at that, there is still a problem out there, judging from the comments.

Mr. Enns: Well, Mr. Minister, I would just give you a little bit of advice. I would single out somebody within your large department, maybe a Mr. Shoemith or better still a Bill Podolsky and hold him personally accountable for the beaver problems. Have this person out there clearing out the culverts and making life a little easier for us rural folk, you know. Think about it.

Mr. Lathlin: I thank the Member for that advice.

Mr. Chairperson: Line 12.3. Resource Programs (f) Wildlife (2) Big Game and Fur Management (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$592,200–pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$195,400–pass; (c) Grant Assistance \$89,900–pass.

3.(f)(3) Habitat and Land Management (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$711,600–pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$152,500–pass; (c) Grant Assistance \$645,000–pass.

3.(f)(4) Biodiversity Conservation (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$321,900–pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$114,200–pass.

3.(f)(5) Canada-Manitoba Waterfowl Damage Prevention Agreement \$345,700–pass.

3.(f)(6) Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Initiative \$225,000–pass.

3.(g) Computer Graphics (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$533,900–pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$164,500–pass.

3.(h) Habitat Enhancement Fund \$50,000–pass.

3.(j) Special Conservation and Endangered Species Fund \$432,100. Shall the line pass?

Mr. Enns: Some time ago, some of the monies from this fund or perhaps all of it, or at least some of it, was generated from a special lottery ticket sale that had some of the dollars coming out of these lottery sales to this particular fund. Is that still in place?

Mr. Lathlin: I understand that there is no direct link to the Lotteries fund anymore.

Mr. Chairperson: Line 12.3.(j) Special Conservation and Endangered Species Fund \$432,100–pass.

Resolution 12.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$46,741,200 for Conservation, Resource Programs, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2001.

Resolution agreed to.

* (17:50)

We will start Resolution 12.4.(a) on page 42.

12.4. Land Information Centre (a) Administration (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$526,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$697,800—pass.

4.(b) Crown Lands Operations (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$532,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$1,273,200—pass.

4.(c) Crown Lands Registry (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$223,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$219,000—pass.

4.(d) Survey Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,521,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$451,300—pass; (3) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations (\$1,524,200)—pass.

4.(e) Remote Sensing (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$629,700—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$121,400—pass; (3) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations (\$23,700)—pass.

4.(f) Distribution Centre (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$373,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$326,900—pass; (3) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations (\$95,000).
[interjection]

There is a recorded vote from another section, and we will proceed to the Chamber. The Committee will recess.

The Committee will rise.

HEALTH

* (16:40)

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

Consideration of these Estimates left off on page 91 of the Estimates book, Resolution 21.4

Health Services Insurance Fund. The floor is now open for questions.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I would like to ask the Health Minister if he has any further information to table that has been requested?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Yes, I do. I could do it during the course of this Estimates debate as I organize my file. Perhaps if the Member wants to commence, I will proceed to do so during the course of this. I am just reallocating some of my files here.

Mrs. Driedger: As I was driving to the lake the other day, further thoughts were coming to me in terms of an earlier discussion we had had about the amalgamation of the WCA and the WHA. Based on some of these further thoughts that I was having, I would like to continue along with some of the questioning that I had begun earlier in this area and find out a little bit more information about the merger itself and the effects that that particular merger have created.

I understand too from the question the other day that the Minister had indicated the amalgamation was going to save \$800,000. I know that it had been anticipated prior to all of this that \$900,000 was an anticipated number from this particular merger.

The Minister had indicated that the establishment of a new, streamlined authority is an important step to improved patient care in Winnipeg. I wonder if the Minister could give us just a bit more detail in terms of specifically what is happening to demonstrate that this is actually being achieved with the merger happening now? Are we seeing improved patient care in Winnipeg because of the merger?

Mr. Chomiak: As I indicated in the previous discussion of Estimates, the information provided to us at this point, the estimated savings from the merger was a total of \$800,000. With respect to the streamlined nature of the merger, as the Member might appreciate, the two organizations were brought together and a number of positions were merged and/or shuffled. As it turns out, there are, I believe, if

memory serves me correctly five or six vice-presidents reporting to the CEO, Dr. Brian Postl. In terms of looking at the organizational chart of the now merged WRHA, I thought that the administration of the WRHA and the way the structure was combined was particularly useful, the way that each component part of the operations of health care in Winnipeg was divided up on certain lines, but the way that certain activities intersected the basic function, so that one function was not totally isolated in one area and another function was totally isolated in another area.

The fact is that the Member might be aware that the previous structure under the WCA and the WHA, it was very clear that the organizations were not communicating as readily as they should have. The Member might ask upon what basis one could arrive at these particular conclusions. In fact, a report was undertaken of the organizational structure for Gordon Webster as the CEO of the WHA. It was very clear that there were difficulties in communications between the two organizations. I do not want, at this late date or at this point, to point any fingers at anybody or any organization. Suffice to say, it was fairly evident throughout the process. I might add that I had discussions with various individuals who were members of the former government who indicated that they were aware of the problems in communication between the two organizations.

So, structurally, the way that the organization was structured from our perspective makes a lot more sense. The way that the organization was structured administratively provides certainly for more cross-reference and continuity between the various levels of care. The rationale and reason behind having two separate authorities was always so that the community services would not get lost in the rush towards dealing with the acute care side. From my experience with the way the organization is functioning, that, in fact, has been the case, and I have cited often the example of the PACT program.

Let us talk about PACT. PACT has been studied in Manitoba for a decade. PACT was well recognized a long time ago as a major

initiative and a way to move, but it did not happen. Why did PACT not happen in Manitoba previously? Well, there could be a variety of reasons. Again, I do not want to cast aspersions on any individuals or any organizations. The fact was PACT did not take place. Under the refined structure when we came into office and we indicated that we would like to see a PACT program being put in place, I was amazed at the way that the organization, that is, the WRHA, was able to come together and put together a comprehensive package, an approach to PACT, that combined not just the community side but a tie in with the acute care side, an area that is perennially, particularly when it comes to mental health, a difficult area to weave together.

I was struck by the number of people in the community at large who were influenced and who were commenting when I used PACT as an example of the collaboration. It was not a stated intention when we wanted to move on PACT. We just wanted to move on PACT because we thought it was time to move on PACT. What happened is that when we said, let us move on PACT, people in the community and in the organization said they were amazed at how the organizations worked together and how the WRHA was able to deliver a program and put together a program both on the acute care side and on the community side.

PACT, while it is a community-based program, requires integration with the acute care side, or else it will not work. It was not I who came up with the example of PACT being a way that the system worked. Indeed, it was people both in the community and at the executive level who indicated to me that they found that the way that PACT was being implemented, of course, it is continuing to be implemented, and the way that PACT was introduced was a testament to the way that the various components of the health care system were working together. So that in itself, I thought, was significant.

The second factor, I think and I indicated this to the Member previously, was the fact that there was a lot of concern initially when we talked about melding the boards together. There was criticism that, in fact, the community side would be lost in the shuffle to the acute care side. I think, as any reasoned look and view of

that board would indicate, that is not in fact the case, that the Board is in fact very representative of a cross-section and indeed of the community side.

That was done deliberately. We have seen both in the functioning of the WRHA and in the operations that the recognition on the community side is in fact working. We are seeing it in a wide variety of program initiatives and a wide variety of initiatives that have taken place. I indicated to the Member that, just by virtue of the needs and the requirements of the health care system, there was a significant emphasis on the provision of acute care services in this particular budget and a recognition that we had to augment some of the services on the acute care side.

I also indicated to the Member, and have said so publicly, that the orientation of the organization is now towards the community side, and lo and behold, we actually have the horses and the operations in place that we are actually seeing the developments out in the community.

At present, the WRHA has undertaken a community assessment and has done a complete review of the community-based programs being offered to look at possible expansion, possible integration, and they are doing an extensive both inventory and program analysis of the community-based side in order to effect change in which direction we want to move. So, rather than see an emphasis on only the acute care side, we are seeing program initiatives and program options being developed extensively on the WRHA side, on the community side.

In fact, I had the occasion to attend recently a board of director's meeting of all the community clinics in Winnipeg where I canvassed the community clinics and said: how has your perspective been in terms of the contacts? They were very pleased that they had been contacted by the WRHA and they had been involved in a planning process to look at the needs, to look at the requirements, to look at the possible roles for the community and the community clinics in particular in this regard within the functioning of the health care system of Winnipeg.

In terms of those initiatives, I think we have seen a significant change. Most recently, there have been discussions. In the paper on the weekend there was an article about an initiative that was launched by the WRHA, together with the aboriginal community, together with the University of Manitoba, to do a needs assessment of the aboriginal seniors population of Winnipeg and of Manitoba. That was at the community-based level. That was developed, that was undertaken and that process is an ongoing one that actually very much meets and dovetails our recognition in the community and outside of the community that we have to place some emphasis on seniors and on aboriginal population and on the elderly in the community.

We have seen a variety of initiatives and a variety of functions that have taken place that all point towards a more effective management of the overall health care system, a better co-ordination of the health care system and an ability to focus attention at one entity that crosses the boundaries and is able to deliver programming and is able to deliver services across the board.

There was talk previously of a move towards the primary care centres, an initiative that has been long advocated by the Department of Health and that is being actively pursued by the WRHA. There has been movement along those lines by the WRHA, and there are ongoing meetings and discussions, particularly as we look towards next year as to developments in that particular area.

* (16:50)

So right across the board, as one looks across the gamut of programs and the gamut of activities that are offered in the community, we see an integration of services that is effective. The other additional factor is that the authority has challenged institutions to say, and this could not have really taken place before: what programs should be delivered in an institution, and what programs can we move out into the community? With an integrated board and with an integrated authority, that question can be asked without necessarily turf wars, Heaven knows, because of the nature of this system, and this is not a criticism. There are enough turf

wars, but that challenge has been put out to the institutions within Winnipeg to come back and see what programs can and should we be delivering in the institutions and what programs can we deliver in the community.

I have indicated during the course of these Estimates there are going significant announcements in the next few months on a variety of areas. One of the better examples is the whole question of palliative care. We have now reinforced and augmented and put in place an effective institutional-based palliative care program with some community-based components. You are going to see a significant expansion of palliative care in the community that is working very, very closely together with the institutional side that has brought it all together. We will see some significant changes and some significant advances in Manitoba. That is but one example of an ongoing effort that is going to continue, has continued, has taken place, and will continue to take place.

I could cite numerous examples from my observations of the functioning of the entity since amalgamation took place. I will just reiterate at this point that of course there are all kinds of—that is not to say that things are proceeding 100 percent and are perfect. In all organizations, in all structures there are difficulties, and that goes without saying, but I am saying it anyway, but having said that, I was surprised at how quickly and how effectively the organizations were integrated and were able to deliver programming and deliver a wide range of functions in a relatively short period of time.

From my administrative experience, when I have been involved in organizational restructuring, and I have been involved in considerable organizational restructuring, generally it has taken a lot longer for the organizations to meld together and provide the kind of leadership. That is a testament not to the Department of Health or Dave Chomiak. That is a testament to the kind of people who are in place that have done an actually excellent job of melding the organizations together and doing a relatively good job of bringing people together, bringing people onside and moving forward.

As a neutral observer, and obviously I am not, but if I were an objective outside observer, it surprised me how quickly the organizations were able to integrate and begin working together. That surprised me in terms of the speed with which that took place. Obviously, it pleased me. I am not taking credit for that. I am just saying that it had actually happened from my observation if I was an objective party. I am not an objective party. I am obviously a subjective party. But, having said that, I have been very impressed with the way that the services have been integrated. One finds that when we are in contact with the regional health authority and we ask for an assessment or development of programming, we see a fairly integrated approach right across the board.

The other thing that they did very early on in their mandate is they put everyone in a room together from all the organizations and worked on common goals and objectives and common budgets, something that had not been available before. They undertook a significant planning exercise that put all of the key officers, all of the key officials from both the institutional and the community side, in one room and talked about common objectives and goals and looked at each other's sides and looked at what each group was doing and integrated it. From a structural standpoint, that was a very effective process, and we are seeing the ramifications of that in this process.

Having said that, Madam Chair, I do not want to go on interminably—

An Honourable Member: Sure you do.

Mr. Chomiak: I know that there is encouragement from the Member for Russell to go on—

An Honourable Member: We are waiting for you to say something.

Mr. Chomiak: —but at this point I will cease.

Mrs. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, the Minister indicated surprise at the amalgamation of the two regional health authorities or the two health authorities came together so well. Doctor Postl, however, has indicated that it has been a

difficult transition and indicated in a newsletter to the public that it was a difficult transition.

I wonder if the Minister could comment more on Doctor Postl's position on this.

Mr. Chomiak: Well, I did not do the transition. Doctor Postl did the transition. I indicated to the Member that I have done a lot of reorganizations myself, both in my professional life and otherwise, and I was surprised at how quickly and well the organization came together. That does not indicate that it was an easy task. I was not undertaking the task. Doctor Postl was charged with the task and did an excellent job of very difficult circumstances. I was surprised at the speed with which the organizations came together and started delivering programming. As an observer, I thought it would take several more months for them to be as effective an organization as I have seen at the administrative level.

There is no doubt that it is a difficult task. It always is a difficult task when you undertake restructuring of organizations that have expenditures in excess of one billion dollars, have programmings that affect directly Manitobans on a daily basis, are part of a political microscope that is scrutinized daily, as part of a process that has been ongoing and going through change and development for a decade, and then you meld two organizations together. Of course, it is a difficult task. I am not going to underscore the difficulty of the task, but I daresay that, from my perspective, I think it has been one of the better organizational meldings together that I have seen in my experience.

If the Member has experience in other areas where she has seen a smoother transition under circumstances, I would be happy to hear it, because, frankly, from my perspective—let me add, I have done this before—in terms of my time line, when I looked at the way it was brought together and functioned, I was surprised because the time line I had administratively in my head in terms of the result from that was a lot longer than the actual structure that came together and actually started delivering.

Any changes, in fact, when you are in a situation where people who have been with

organizations for some time leave, when you bring on new people, when you restructure an organization—you know, when you think about it, that entity is probably the largest corporate entity in the entire province of Manitoba. When you merge two entities to become what is probably the largest corporate entity in the province of Manitoba, one would not expect it to be an easy task, and one would not expect it to be done without difficulty.

But, frankly, I will credit Doctor Postl, and I will credit that organization for the excellent job they did of merging those organizations and delivering significant policies and significant programming. Do not forget, while they are merging these organizations together, there is the day-to-day ongoing administration and operation of Health of which they are charged with the responsibility. So one should not underestimate the difficulty of that kind of a transition. I am completely convinced that the job undertaken was done in an expeditious fashion. Again, I was surprised at the means and ways in which they accomplished that task.

Mrs. Driedger: In looking at Doctor Postl's statement that it was a difficult transition, I am wondering if the Minister thinks that perhaps the transition was made more difficult by the fact that they were made to merge in a much shorter time frame, that they had known that the merger was going to happen at some point but they thought they had five years to pull it together, so they probably were working with certain short- and long-term strategies, knowing it was going to happen, but because it was fast-tracked, perhaps this has had some effect in creating a more difficult transition.

Mr. Chomiak: Well, faced with the prospects of waiting for the organizations to merge in five years and faced with the prospect of fast-tracking the organizational merger, I do not think there was any darn choice in this regard, because of the way the organizational structure was going. If the Member wants to pursue that, I am happy to pursue that. I would prefer not to, but if the Member wants to pursue that, I am happy to pursue that. Frankly, had we waited five years, we would have had a lot more difficulty doing a lot of the things that are

required to be done in health care, had we waited for that time frame.

* (17:00)

I can indicate to the Member that many members of the former government had certainly reached the conclusion that there ought to be a fast merger rather than a five-year merger, even though that was not undertaken. I am quite convinced of that. I am quite convinced that people were aware there was very much a need to move faster, rather than slower, with this regard.

We were faced with the prospect of the decision do we merge quickly, do we merge in a medium term, or do we follow the five-year plan? Well, given the state of the health care system as we found it coming into office, the five-year plan was out of the question. There was no way we were going to wait five years to merge the organizations. So we were then faced with the prospect of merging over two or three years or merging over several months and to what effect the organizational change and the organizational difficulties would have on the health care system, knowing that a merger was taking place two years down the road, knowing that there was organizational planning structure going towards that, knowing there was planning going in terms of the two silos, to a certain extent ongoing.

Frankly, I am glad in retrospect that we merged them as quickly as we did. I think it was actually an excellent decision to merge them as quickly as we did. If one considers, I would dare say that had we not merged them as quickly as we did, the transitional difficulties would have been more, from my perspective, than occurred in the short-term merger.

So, if the Member is asking, if we had to do it all over again, would we have made the decision we made, I would say unequivocally, yes, yes, yes. There is no doubt in my mind in terms of operational effectiveness. From what I have seen, that has been an effective move; that continues to be an effective move. While one could argue perhaps there would have been less "transitional difficulties" in a merger that took place over a longer period of time, frankly, the

operational imperatives required that we move on that, and it outweighed the benefits of perhaps less transitional difficulties in the short term.

Now that is compounded by some of the difficulties that were encountered that I do not want to get into, that we encountered with respect to the respective organizations, but also suggested a move quicker would be more expeditious versus a move over a longer or mid-range period of time. If you were to ask from an academic or a structural standpoint in terms of time lines and time frames, if I were to come in from an organizational structure and be asked about the organization and whether it should be changed, generally there is a general tendency to do a merger over a longer period of time. I am aware of that.

That was certainly an option that was considered. But if one weighed the operational imperatives, if one weighed the dislocation, if one weighed the effects of not moving versus the effects of moving forward quickly as we did, there is no doubt in my mind that not only would we do the same thing again, I have no doubt in my mind that that would be the course of action we would follow. If I were in a similar situation, I would again undertake the same scenario that we undertook.

Mrs. Driedger: I would like to suggest that I believe that probably a lot of really good groundwork was laid by both of the authorities, you know, starting up with what they had to work with and the evolution of both of them. Certainly an awful lot of good work was done by both authorities, and I think also by having a separate community and long-term care authority to start out, I believe, created a stronger awareness of community issues.

Certainly, our government, at the time, had been in favour of a merger, would have been a direction that we would have chosen, and had indicated it was the direction that we were going. I think that what having the two separate authorities achieve was creating a good amount of awareness about the issues and the needs that were there in the community, palliative care being a good one, I think. There were some good suggestions and initiatives that came out of both

of the authorities in terms of addressing the needs of palliative care. I was happy to see us moving in the direction to strengthen that particular program.

I wonder if the Minister could tell us how the authority reports to him. Are there meetings with the Minister between the WRHA or does the Minister meet directly with Doctor Postl or both?

Mr. Chomiak: We are trying to develop an overall process dealing with all of the health authorities. I have met with the Board of RHAM and the CEOs. I have with them on a fairly regular basis. Well, not as regularly as I will in the future. We will move towards that. We meet regularly. We meet with the chairs when and if we can. We also meet with the various CEOs when and if we can.

We are trying to develop a formal structural approach to this which is still in the developmental stages with respect to the actual structure. There have been various components that we are still weighing as to how and when we actually formalize the process. We are still weighing the pros and cons. One of the difficulties is it had been my intention to circulate this summer to all of the regions, and I wanted to meet with the CEOs. I have met with the CEOs. I want to meet the CEOs and the boards within their regions for two reasons, because of the Legislature, and because of the federal-provincial initiatives it has been hard for me to do that. I wanted to do that before I actually formalize the actual structure.

So it has been done on a fairly regular basis. We have met with all of the CEOs and the chairs through RHAM. We have met with the WRHA board chair. We do meet with Doctor Postl, as we do meet with other CEOs on a relatively regular basis, depending upon the interaction and the need. One of the difficulties, as I say, has been in actually doing the formal meetings with some of the regions in terms of actually meeting with the Board formally in the various regions which has been difficult to orchestrate over the summer.

As I sort of anticipated, that would have been my August scenario, and now maybe it will

be my September or October scenario, depending how developments go. The formal structure has not been established at this point and is still part of the weighing of the pros and cons of the various relationships we have developed.

Mrs. Driedger: In looking at merging the two health authorities, the Minister must have put some thought into how this was going to be achieved prior to making it happen because two CEOs, Gordon Webster and Marion Suski, were both in significant positions within each of those authorities. Had the Minister given any thought to retaining either one of them or does he have any particular reason that he might not have kept these two people who had certainly enacted an awful lot of changes and developed both of the authorities? Was he not feeling compelled in any way to keep either one of them in their jobs?

* (17:10)

Mr. Chomiak: I would prefer not to go down the road of discussing those particular issues in committee. They are two very capable people, did some excellent work, but I would prefer not to discuss in committee with the Member the various pros and cons considering those decisions. I am prepared to talk to the Member about those decisions, but I would prefer that we do not deal with issues of that kind in committee. I just think that we can leave it except to suffice it to say I value the work of Mr. Webster, and I value the work of Ms. Suski. They both did excellent work in the system for long periods of time.

Mrs. Driedger: I know that, when we had the two separate authorities, the Minister was not pleased to see, I think he had indicated, 12 vice-presidents, and now we see in the current structure 6 vice-presidents. I wonder if the Minister could indicate for me the names of those vice-presidents who lost their jobs and what their particular titles were.

Mr. Chomiak: I think we can provide an organizational structure of the previous WCA and the previous WHA with those positions, and the Member has before her the organizational structure of the new amalgamated authority. I think that will answer the question.

Mrs. Driedger: With the current staff that are sitting here, does the Minister have access now to the information of the names of those vice-presidents who lost their job and what their specific positions were, whether they were all part of the WCA, or were some of them part of the WHA? Was it a half-half letting go, you know, half WCA, half RHA, or was there a larger focus kept on one than the other?

Mr. Chomiak: I will provide the Member with the organizational chart of the previous organizations prior to the amalgamation.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the Minister indicate what the impact of amalgamation was on field staff?

Mr. Chomiak: On what?

Mrs. Driedger: Could the Minister indicate for me the impact of amalgamation on field staff?

Mr. Chomiak: I think that most people who are caregivers in the health care system endeavour to do the best jobs they can across the system. I also think that one of the legacies of the past decade has been one of constant change and upheaval in the system and the fact that one of the benefits of the amalgamation was an ability for closer ties between the organizations and closer ties between organization. I could give the Member any number of illustrations of changes that have taken place that I have noticed with the new organization, but I suspect the Member could probably give an equal number of changes of this or that individuals who feel that it has not been as accommodated as well. I think, from what I have seen in terms of the organizational structure and the communication, that the organization is open and the organization is willing to change and willing to listen.

I was impressed when home care workers, whom I met with regularly as opposition critic and whom I have met with periodically as minister, were impressed that, in fact, for the first time, they met and had a chance to talk with some of the senior officials from the WRHA. That had never been done before, and they actually had a chance to talk with them and to make some suggestions. I was impressed with that, and I think that that particular form of

communication is an ethic that is attempting to be implemented throughout the structure. This is an organization that employs tens of thousands, tens of thousands of employees, and it is never easy. Yet, insofar as employees are the single most important group of any organization, it is obviously something that should be at one of the tops of the agenda of those in administrative and management control. I think generally from what I have seen, there has been good communication and continuing communication.

Now that all has to be compared to an evolutionary process that has seen regionalization brought in to a system that was not basically regionalized. Let us not forget that the entire purpose of regionalization was to bring together organizations, many of whom had been functioning as separate entities for some time. Nine hospitals and dozens of community-based organizations were functioning under the auspices of the Department of Health in a different role and a different function. They were brought together under a regionalized structure, brought together under administrative relationships under the WC and WHA, and then further amalgamated under one authority.

To suggest that that regionalization nature has solved problems and has solved all the problems, would be naïve. To suggest that there is a process in place whereby attempts are being made to solve as many of those problems as we can, would be correct to say. In fact, that is one of the goals, and I have been very impressed with the manner and with the means by which the organizations have attempted to communicate. That is not to say that the entire process is without difficulties. The Member was stressing the integration between the community side and the institutional side in the course of her questions, but what about the integration on the institutional side that is still a developing prospect. Each of the hospitals, each of the institutions, have been functioning for, in some cases, close to 100 years as separate entities, and all of a sudden an organization is superimposed upon them and they are told we have to collaborate and work together.

I think one of the structurally smart things put in place, which was put in place under the

previous WHA, was the establishment of the clinical programs where programs were established on a clinical basis not on an institutional basis. Has that worked effectively? It is working. Has it solved all the problems? No. Are institutions and the WRHA still at loggerheads on a number of issues? Of course. That is the nature of any organization, particularly an organization that is not totally transformed or totally evolved into a different structure. Will those problems all be solved? Probably never. On a daily basis there are still difficulties. There are difficulties between the relationships between the Department of Health and the regional health authorities. There are difficulties between the regional health authorities and each other, and there are difficulties within the regional health authorities.

So it is a developmental process, and it is continuing. I am generally impressed with the way and the fashion that it has been managed throughout the system at this point.

Mrs. Driedger: Is the Minister aware of complaints from hospitals about how long it is taking the WRHA to make decisions?

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, it has taken difficulty and it has taken time to resolve issues throughout the system. Frankly, a lot of decisions required to be made are still at the development stage here at the Department of Health, never mind at the WRHA, never mind at the regional health authority. I do not like this process of blaming the regional health authority, the regional health authority blaming the Department of Health, and this pointing back and forth.

An Honourable Member: You did that all the time.

Mr. Chomiak: The Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) said we did that all the time.

An Honourable Member: Read back some of your comments.

* (17:20)

Mr. Chomiak: I will read back some of my comments. With respect to the process, I do not

like the idea and the concept of my coming in and blaming people who work with me, or their blaming me, when we can collaborate and work together. Frankly, in terms of the operational decisions, if the Member is suggesting that the WRHA has been slow to make decisions in some areas, that is possible and probably true. We have also been slow to make some decisions in government. We have also been criticized by the Member opposite for making decisions too quickly. It is an interesting point raised by the Member. The Member could probably raise a million issues of points. I would be interested to hear what specific point the Member wants to raise with respect to particular decision making. I could give her perhaps some gauge or some idea as to where that process is at.

Mrs. Driedger: Just for some clarification on that issue, I am not personally making complaints about the speed of the WRHA. I was just asking the Minister if he is aware of complaints that were forthcoming from hospitals. There is some information circulating around out there that I have been privy to that there are certain areas that are finding that the decisions are months and not weeks in the making. All I was curious about was whether or not the Minister had any awareness of this. It is not so much that I was personally making a complaint in the area.

Having said that, though, when we look at the \$800,000 savings that has occurred, according the Minister, by the merger of the two health authorities, could the Minister be very, very specific in terms of where that saving has come from? Was it through the salaries of the six VPs that were let go? Was it also, although I cannot imagine it—well, I will leave it at that for now. Were the savings through the six VPs that were let go?

Mr. Chomiak: As I understand it, the savings were from administrative salaries and the elimination of duplication between the authorities.

Mrs. Driedger: For that amount of money, \$800,000, I would think there has to be a more specific answer to a question like that, because if a government is going to go around saying that it saved \$800,000 through a merger, I would think that that figure came from some very, very

specific information. Certainly, if you look at six people, I do not know what their salaries would have been. Say, it was \$80,000 to \$100,000 each, that is still not saving \$800,000. I think that, if a government wants to take credit for this amount of savings, the answer needs to be more specific in terms of where that actually came from.

Mr. Chomiak: I will note the Member's comment.

Mrs. Driedger: I would like to ask the Minister: What year would these savings be seen? Certainly, with the merger right now of the two authorities with the two CEOs laid off, their severance packages alone must have almost eaten up a good chunk of any savings from this particular year, and perhaps the next year, and maybe even the next year. So which year would the \$800,000 show as actual savings?

Mr. Chomiak: We were projecting those particular savings in this current fiscal year.

Mr. Derkach: Along the same lines of the savings that have accrued now, in a size of the Health budget this may not seem like a significant amount. However, it is still taxpayer money that taxpayers have the right to information on. So, therefore, I want to start by asking the Minister if he could share with us the amount of severance that was paid to the two individuals who were severed from their positions, i.e., Mr. Webster and Ms. Suski.

Mr. Chomiak: I will review past practice in terms of these particular matters. As I recall when I was critic those matters were not provided to me. I am not saying that I will not provide that information, but I will determine what the practice is and what the factors are in that regard.

Mr. Derkach: With the greatest of respect to the Minister, this is public money. This is not the Minister's money. This is not a corporation's private money. This is the money of Manitobans, and therefore Manitobans have a right to know exactly what the Government has paid for severing a salary or breaking a relationship of a CEO of a major corporation of this government. We are not talking about frivolous matters.

These are dollars that are raised through the taxpayers of this province, and the taxpayers do have a right to know. Now, the Minister can choose not to answer the question, and indeed, we will pursue it through other means. But I am simply asking for information that I think every Manitoban has the right to know. It does not matter which government were in office. If you sever an individual's salary, there is a cost to that, whether it be the president of a company, the president of an agency, whether it be the president of Manitoba Hydro or whoever it is.

Now, Mr. Webster had a responsibility for duties to be performed to the government, to the people of Manitoba, and indeed, when his contract was severed there was a penalty clause for severing that contract prematurely. So, therefore, I am not starting to cast any kind of a blame on the Minister. All we are asking for is for that information. We are not asking for the specific salary that was paid to any individual. But these are individuals who are in management. There are individuals who are managing large corporations, and the public does have the right to that information. So I simply want to know from the Minister, I do not know what past practice has been. I know that in my Estimates in Education or in Rural Development, if a salary was requested by a critic, it was provided because that was public information. I think through this Legislature we have put in place through freedom of information and other vehicles, methods where people who are earning a substantial amount of money from the public purse have an obligation to the public to have those figures disclosed. Therefore, I am asking the Minister whether or not he would do us the courtesy of giving us the information with regard to the severances that were paid to these two individuals.

Mr. Chomiak: Before the Member goes down the field of righteous indignation, the Member ought to have paid attention to my comments. I said to the Member that I would review the past practice and determine what the past practice was in that regard. I did not preclude not providing that information to the Member. Secondly—

Madam Chairperson: Member for Russell, on a point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): I have refrained from casting any kind of innuendo on the Minister with regard to his motivation for not sharing information. I would appreciate the same courtesy. I am not going down any road of self-indignation whatsoever.

An Honourable Member: Righteous, righteous self-indignation.

Mr. Derkach: Or self-righteous. But, Madam Chair, I am simply asking the Minister to provide that information. I am certainly not casting any kind of aspersion on this minister whatsoever with regard to his motivation for withholding that information. I simply tried to explain the reasons why I was asking for that information.

* (17:30)

Madam Chairperson: Mr. Minister, on a point of order.

Mr. Chomiak: I do not think that the Member has a point of order, Madam Chairperson, but I will withdraw the words "righteous indignation."

Madam Chairperson: The Honourable Member does not have a point of order. A point of order should be used to draw the Chair's attention to any departure from the rules or practices of the House or to raise concerns about unparliamentary language. A point of order should not be used to ask a question, dispute the accuracy of facts, clarify remarks which have been misquoted or misunderstood, or raise a further point of order.

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Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, as I indicated, if the Member would peruse my comments, the Member would note that I did not preclude the fact, and I said I would check past practice.

But I would outline to the Member that, during the course of my tenure of seven years as critic, I never had access to copious amounts of information that we have provided to members

opposite. We will also review that. Heaven knows that if the Member would check literally the 40, 50, and 60 hours that we did on a yearly basis in the Health Estimates, one would see that we covered a lot of that same territory.

Having said that, the Member did know that the previous government, of which the Member was a cabinet minister, had brought in a process for revealing the salaries and the remuneration to all members of the public sector, under which I believe these individuals would be covered, and that that information will, as a matter of course and as a matter of law, become public. So, having said that, I will peruse what the practice is, and one way or another that information will come out. So it is a question of my trying to clarify—it was the same point, actually, earlier on with regard to some other information. I wanted to clarify exactly what the practice was and how that practice was undertaken, particularly knowing that the process will reveal the information, either through Public Accounts or, more appropriately, in this case, through the provision of The Public Sector Compensation Disclosure Act that provides a listing of all the remuneration and salary that comes out as a matter of course. So that matter is covered off any way.

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, we could probably save ourselves a lot of Estimates time if we could just answer some questions head-on and get to this information. Really all we are trying to do is get the information from the Government. We seem to spend an enormous amount of time, I have noticed in this particular Estimates section, where we go round and round in circles, but information is very difficult to obtain. Whether the Minister likes it or not, he understands the process; he knows the process, and if we do not get our answers now, we will pursue them in concurrence. That is just a matter of course. He did that as a critic as well.

Mr. Chomiak: Except he never got all the information you are getting.

Mr. Derkach: Now, the Minister interjects with an opinion. That is okay too.

Madam Chair, my comments are with regard to the savings of \$800,000. The Minister is

correct. The Minister says that the two authorities should have been amalgamated at some point in time. I do not think there is a disagreement with regard to that. We do have perhaps some questions about the method that was pursued, and how the amalgamation occurred.

The other issue, I think, is whether this was an amalgamation because it was a position taken by the Minister when he was critic, and, come hell or high water, so to speak, this minister was going to amalgamate sooner than later. The effectiveness of that, I think, will be known down the road. I am hoping it is a positive one. I am trusting that the people in the health care field who are, in my view, very conscientious people, will make it a successful transition and also a successful initiative in the end.

However, there were a few areas within the whole amalgamation that were somewhat bothersome. Those are the areas that we would like some clarification on. One of those areas was the termination of individuals who, I think, were very dedicated to the cause. Then we find in one particular instance, an individual was then given a contract to do some other work. Then, when the public sees that, of course, they become critical of all politicians in that we would pay a severance and then offer another contract on top of that, which becomes somewhat bothersome to individuals.

Madam Chair, if there is an explanation for that, if there is a clarification that is required for that, then certainly I would be prepared to listen to the Minister's explanation, for the clarification, and the edification, if you like, of people who perhaps are asking us those same questions. I am just trying to explain for the Minister the position that my questions are coming from. The Minister seems to be very anxious to answer that question, and he will have his opportunity to answer that question. I just ask him to relax a little.

With regard to the savings, we do have some questions, specifically where those savings can be accounted for. He said somewhere in salaries, and somewhere in operational costs. I am going to be asking the Minister if he could delineate for us specifically, rather than a haphazard

answer of some savings occurred because of salaries, some occurred as a result of operational savings.

Madam Chair, if I could be so bold as to say this, the Minister knows that that is almost an insulting answer. That is not the kind of answer we were looking for. I think that, in a general sense, we all know that indeed those savings could have come from operating and from salaries. We want to know more specifically where those savings came from.

I am asking the Minister whether or not, first of all, he could outline the areas that I have just covered in my remarks, because I think he has some responses that he wants to make with regard to those; and, secondly, whether he could outline for us in more detail specifically how much was saved through operating costs and how much was saved specifically as a result of salary costs.

Mr. Chomiak: The Member did not ask those questions. Those questions were not asked. I am in this curious situation that the Member is saying: Well, you did not tell us about this particular issue, that there are concerns about a public servant being removed from office and then put on a contract. You never asked that question. You did not ask it.

Madam Chairperson: Member for Russell, on a point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. Derkach: My point of order is with regard to the Minister paying attention to comments that are made. I acknowledge the fact that the reason we are pursuing these areas is to get more clarification. I was not accusing the Minister of not providing us the answers. Therefore, I was just explaining why we were pursuing the areas that we were.

Mr. Chomiak: On the same point of order, with all due respect to the Member from Russell, I do not think he has a point of order, but I appreciate the clarification during the course of the point of order.

Madam Chairperson: The Member for Russell does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, there is much to deal with in terms of the Member's statements and the Member's specific question and the Member's allusions to particular questions.

It was interesting, because I noted in the comments of the previous member, the Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger), extrapolating. When we said savings of \$800,000 and we said it was based on salaries and based on operational efficiencies, the Member for Charleswood stated, in the course of her comments: Well, if one anticipates their salary is \$80,000 to \$100,000, six people, that works out to say, roughly, \$500,000 to \$600,000, and then one would presume that the rest would be based on operations. I thought that the Member had extrapolated something that in terms of actual information made a lot of sense to me in terms of the specifics of it. There were salary savings and there were operational savings. That was the figure on which we determined \$800,000.

*(17:40)

In the course of the Member for Russell's question, the Member for Russell, in phrasing his question, made reference to the fact of severance and made reference to the fact of the public losing faith and confidence in the ability of all politicians when someone is terminated and when someone undertakes particular activities on a contractual basis. The Member can extrapolate, I think, that if an individual is under contract, an individual changes positions to undertake other activities, presumably that contractual period would continue during the course of that individual's activities, therefore would diminish the amount of severance that is payable in a particular contract. So, that is a normal course of undertaking events, and that that is a normal course of operations in any kind of a particular transaction.

I am loath to get into specific details about the two individuals and the particular arrangements and the particular circumstances because I do not think it serves our purposes to

discuss those particular individuals' circumstances, other than what I have said previously, that they both undertook, carried out excellent work for the Province and that, under a reorganization and a restructuring, both individuals, who were CEOs of their respective organizations, were moved from those particular positions.

I think it is fairly significant that one of those individuals continued on to do some work for the Government, some specific activities for the Government. With respect to the other individual, I think you can extrapolate from what I am saying that individual had been in the service of government for a long period of time and had undertaken excellent work, both in the previous capacity as the president of a particular hospital, and then as CEO of the WCA. The Province generally benefited from the services of both of those individuals.

In the case of Mr. Webster, we continue to benefit through his activities and assistance in providing us with some of the analysis and some of the experience he had in the organization through undertaking his review and study, which is commonly referred to as the Webster report, which is a review of the accountability, financially, of the operations of regional health authorities and government. I thought we were in a very beneficial position by utilizing the services of Mr. Webster to undertake that particular report. Mr. Webster was under a contractual arrangement with the Government that continued during the course of his review that he undertook for the Province, albeit in a different functional role.

That was no longer his function as the CEO but rather as a consultant, and that utilized his expertise in assisting us in that regard. Further to that, in fact, the report that came out made a number of recommendations, some of which were very broad, some of which were very specific, but dealt with his experience and his activities and his knowledge of the health care system of which he had been part of from the formation of the WHA until the change in the administrative structure.

Just on an area of principle, I suggest to the Member opposite that if one just takes aside the

personalities and takes aside the circumstances, if you look at amalgamating two organizations and you have two CEOs, structurally often it makes better sense to have neither CEO, given some of the concerns about the acute side versus the community side, participating as the chief CEO of both organizations. Just from a straight structural business sense of view of an amalgamation, if you look at it strictly as an amalgamation under those kinds of circumstances, taking aside the personalities, it would make sense to bring in an overall CEO who was not the head in either organization.

With respect to the decision to amalgamate the organizations and appoint a CEO, we took careful note of the activities of both incumbents, we reviewed the circumstances, and we determined that the newly combined authority would be better served by putting in place as CEO an individual who is not the CEO of the community side or who had not been CEO of the acute care side. Indeed, it goes further than that.

We had the prospect of amalgamating two boards, two boards that had worked very, very hard to put together specific plans. That was a difficult process with respect to determining which members of the Board should be part of the amalgamated board and how we would utilize their expertise. Again, you were faced with some tough decisions. Would we create a board that had 30 members and amalgamate both those boards? Would we create a board that had certain component representation from each of those boards? Would we put in place a board that had representative components from the various institutions that had been structurally set up initially in the program? There were a lot of structural combinations that were considered with respect to the amalgamation of those two particular authorities.

In the end, we chose to amalgamate the two boards; to take limited representation from the previous boards for continuity; to put on the new boards representation that we thought would augment the functioning of the Board and perhaps the needs and requirements of the boards that perhaps were not met by a smaller board as well as considering the ramifications and the effect of all of the other organizational difficulties and structures that are incumbent

upon a regionalization and a process that started with nine institutions and a variety of community organizations as well as the university and other components that had a very integral part of the Board.

We had to make a functional decision as to how representative that board would be and at what level that board would be representative. So it was not just a case of amalgamating two authorities and dealing solely with the CEOs. We had two very effective boards that had to be amalgamated to provide continuity and at the same time to provide some kind of framework and some kind of future function of the various entities. In the end I think the mix we got was relatively effective by utilizing the chair of the previous WHA and making that person a co-chair and taking an individual who is outside the organization who had extensive community-based experience and making that person the chair. We thought that we sent out a particular message to the community and to this city of Winnipeg and all of the areas that it serves that we were cognizant of the delicate balance between acute care side and community side and recognizing that we wanted an integrated approach to the delivery of health care services. But we did not want one side to be dwarfed by the other.

* (17:50)

I remember when we first announced the amalgamation when members, and rightly so, stood up and said, well, we are afraid that the community side is going to get swamped. I think if you look at the amalgamation of the Board and the Board itself, I think that effectively allayed that particular concern. We are very cognizant of the need to address the community issues as well as the need to address the continuity factor, which we did, as well as the need to address concerns in, for example, the faith-based community as to where the Government is going with respect to faith-based institutions. Is it perfect? No. But I think we effectively, certainly from the—is there a vote?

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. A recorded vote has been requested in another section of the Committee of Supply. As the hour is now 5:51 p.m., is it the will of the Committee to rise

for the day before members proceed to the Chamber for a formal vote? *[Agreed]* Committee rise.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

* (16:40)

Mr. Chairperson (Conrad Santos): Would the Committee of Supply come to order, please. This section of the Committee of Supply has been dealing with the Estimates for Executive Council. Would the Minister's staff please enter the Chamber.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): I just want to introduce Karen Hill, who was not with us last week, and I suffered accordingly. She had a well-deserved holiday. She, of course, has been in Estimates that I have been on the other side with in the past and is an excellent administrator, I know that. So that is the new member of the staff team.

Mr. Chairperson: We are on page 21 of the Estimates book, Resolution 2.1. General Administration (b) Management and Administration (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,072,600. Shall this item pass?

Mr. Doer: I believe I committed myself to releasing a copy of the Deputy Minister's and Assistant Deputy Minister's and equivalents that have resigned or retired since the election. I will table that document if we have more than one copy, because I will need one for Doctor Gerrard.

There is some indication of who has replaced the individuals as well, so I will table that. Then there is a list of staff and their salaries. I think the other issue is the reporting chart in the Department, of Staff Relations, Treasury Board. Even though it is a matter not in the Estimates, I went and worked all weekend to try to get that chart.

Just by way of introduction, on the Deputy Ministers, well, first of all on the Treasury Board Secretariat, Mr. Lloyd Schreyer, I mentioned already is the secretary to the Compensation Committee of Cabinet, but the reporting order is similar to the past. On the Deputy Ministers

there were a number of reductions that were made as a product of combining departments. Mr. Carlyle and Mr. Eliasson were Deputy Ministers of Education. One was replaced by Mr. Levin. Mr. Eliasson was moved over to Industry, Trade and Mines. Mr. Thompson was combined, the Department of Natural Resources was combined with the Department of Conservation. Deputy Minister Branson is now the new deputy of both former departments, now the Department of Conservation. Mr. Kinnear, we moved Housing into Family Services. Ms. Mindell is the Deputy Minister responsible for that area of departments. Mr. Leitch is now replaced by Mr. Eldridge. His role of Deputy Minister is combined, although an individual here might argue that they are doing a lot of the work, working with Mr. Eldridge.

Mr. Rubric has left. At the end of his contract he was, of course, working out of Toronto as the Member would know, and commuting to Winnipeg. We have an acting ADM as opposed to an acting DM in that capacity. Ms. Freedman left and certainly was a big help to us in transition, as I know she was to the previous government. She has been replaced by Mr. Carson. Mr. Carson has been replaced on an acting basis by Mr. Hikel. Mr. Hodgins is over at Lotteries and seemed to have a big smile on his face the other day when I talked to him. I do not know whether that is good news or bad news for the Department of Rural Development, but Murray Elliott is replacing him quite effectively in my view because Winston was a very, very effective person. Mr. Hodgins is a very effective person who has worked in both governments or a number of governments over the years.

We have had some reductions in staffing. There are some decisions we made to replace people who were hired under Order-in-Council authority. In some departments, Family Services, we have replaced that individual with a person who has worked in the public service in the past. I think another one that may be of attention to members opposite, the ADM of Industry, Trade and Mines moved over with Tourism to the Department of Culture, Heritage and Tourism, Mr. Mesman, who has been a career civil servant, has replaced her upon her retirement.

So those are some of the changes at the senior levels of management. Suffice it to say there is less people working at that level. Most of the staff that remain in the Deputy Minister levels are career civil servants that have been here for throughout different administrations, save Mr. Levin of the Department of Education.

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (Interim Leader of the Official Opposition): Just a couple of short questions here. Doris Mae Oulton from the Children and Youth Secretariat. I know the Children and Youth Secretariat was folded back into the bureaucracy with the change in government. My understanding was that there was a competition ongoing for a person to lead the new initiative, I think it was the Healthy Child Initiative or whatever. Has that competition been completed and has someone been hired?

Mr. Doer: I am not sure of the comparability of those positions. The role has changed and I believe that the role has not been filled yet. So I will report on that if there is a decision. It is not comparable, as I understand it. I think they went through this in the Department of Family Services or will be going through it. As I understand it, that matter, that Estimate item is in the Estimate line of the Minister of Family Services and Housing.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I thank the Premier for the information that he has provided. We will have an opportunity to look through it. There may be another time through concurrence or whatever that we might want to ask more questions as a result of the information that has been provided.

Just before we move off of Freedom of Information, there was just another couple of questions that I might want to ask and I guess I just want to clarify. Is it the policy of this government for ministers to take responsibility for the Freedom of Information requests as they come into government? I think that was the First Minister's comment the other day. He indicated that ministers would take responsibility for the content of the responses that were provided. Could he clarify his government's position or his government's policy?

Mr. Doer: I think it varies with each situation. I personally took responsibility for the accuracy of the information that I was providing with travel. I saw because of the fact we did not have proper credit cards or administrative structures in place during the transition, there was a mistake based on my own credit card and a lack of filing. So there was a double billing, so that it would have been an inaccurate number. I did not want to change all the issues of it, but I thought the numbers should—I was more concerned about being accurate, so the delay was my responsibility, my taking responsibility for it.

There are other releases that go out on a routine basis without ministers. I would assume there are various degrees of requests. I recall receiving information from the department of Culture, Heritage And Recreation years ago that said please clear this with Barb Biggar before this is released. We asked a similar question to members opposite, and I think the previous premier said if there is information that is going to be in the public domain, you would expect us to have a public answer, so we would have to have knowledge of it. From what I am informed, it is a similar system to the past. It depends on the nature of the request.

I mean, let us be honest. If it is a request that comes from a citizen, it is pretty straightforward. If it is a request that comes from the media that might deal with media answers to something, it gets the attention at some point of having a response to those requests, and, thirdly, requests from the Opposition. I mean, I know that I dealt with Mr. Leitch when I was the Opposition Leader, and I knew that he was dealing with matters across government. As I understand it, the system is similar.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, I guess I just want the Premier to clarify for me what the role of Freedom of Information officers is in every government department and every Crown corporation.

If there is a request that comes forward, and the Freedom of Information officer has gathered together the information and is satisfied that that information is information that should be released under the request, what is the policy? Would ministers in any instance override the

advice of Freedom of Information officers who have been trained to deal with these requests right throughout government departments and Crown corporations?

Would, in fact, ministers ultimately make the decision or override the decision of a Freedom of Information officer, and what kind of information would be provided as a response to the request?

Mr. Doer: Well, as the Member knows, there is the Freedom of Information officers who deal with these issues. There are also the heads of public bodies, and then, of course, there is the whole issue of heads of public bodies, plural, when you have blanket requests. So, again, I know in my own dealings with the previous government, I dealt with Mr. Leitch on, say, travel matters inside the Executive Council. I did not deal with the Freedom of Information officers.

* (16:50)

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, I still have not received a clear answer from the Premier. I want to know whether, in fact, his government's policy is that ministers ultimately examine the information that is pulled together by Freedom of Information officers and whether, in fact, the policy would be to go against a recommendation that might be made by a Freedom of Information officer and direct that different information be provided.

I need to know the answer on whether that is his government's policy and practice.

Mr. Doer: Our government's policy is to follow the law which holds us ultimately accountable to, at the first step, the Ombudsman and at the second step the courts.

I think we have attempted to deal with the issues that I raised in my answer to the Member a couple of days ago. I mentioned briefing books that were dealt with in a way that had both advice to the Government and confidential personnel issues to the Government, confidential corporate issues related to the Government.

We have attempted to get the best advice we could have and then ultimately follow the law. I am not aware of any case that has gone from the Ombudsman. I mentioned last week, when we were dealing with farm income and the first budget in a very compacted period of time from the election to when we had to deal with some of these matters, it was not a top priority. I think that there was an implementation lag that will be more effective as we get more experienced with the Act, particularly dealing with advice which is not eligible for release under the Act and information that should be made available to the public. We are accountable.

Quite frankly the Freedom of Information process is accountable to an outside body to this Legislature, the Ombudsman, and then further, to the courts. We accept that as the law and we are accepting that, notwithstanding delays that have taken place in the past under the former government and under ourselves. We accept the law and the accountability under the law that goes right to the courts.

Mrs. Mitchelson: One more time. Is the Premier satisfied that there has not been any political interference by any of his ministers in responding to Freedom of Information requests? Is he satisfied that no minister under his leadership has interfered in any way with information, be it in a government department or a Crown corporation? Is he satisfied that no minister has indeed overridden any decisions that were made by government departments or Crown corporations around what information should be released and directed that something else happen, or that the content of whether information would be released or would not be released was decided at the political level, at the ministerial level? Is he satisfied?

Mr. Doer: I use myself as an example. When I saw what I believe to be an error, I corrected it. So therefore it was delayed and it was my responsibility. I thought the goal of freedom of information was to release proper information to the public. I always believe that accurate information is the best test of that. I am not aware of any matter that has gone to the courts. I know there are matters that have gone to the courts in the past dealing with VLT revenues per community with the former government.

I am not aware of any, if the Member wants to apprise me of any issue that has gone to the courts with the Freedom of Information Act, that is fine. You and I had a disagreement about ministerial interference on Crown corporations last week. I believe, for example, that when I was dealing with Crown corporations and if I was not satisfied with the numbers, I either had to find a way to get what I thought to be the accurate numbers out accurate or change the people who were providing them.

I mentioned Bill Fraser as an example who I asked to go over from the Department of Finance to the MTS Corporation when I was a minister, because I thought it was in the public interest to have accurate numbers. Last time I talked to Mr. Fraser he was very happy we made that decision, although I cannot understand it. So, I use that example. He was an excellent comptroller in the Department of Finance. He was an excellent comptroller in the telephone corporation. I hear good things about him as the CEO of the new private company.

But, yes, the genesis of that decision was I thought, part of what we are talking about, the goal of freedom of information is to get accurate information.

My expense account was wrong. It will not be now, because we have these credit cards the former government had. We got them and everything else. But I did not spend my time sitting down, figuring out all my expense accounts when I was trying to go for farm income and water coming in from North Dakota allegedly or first reported to us to be a \$300-million or \$400-million deficit, and we had to get moving on health care promises.

The goal to me is accurate information to the public. That is the goal. If I see something that I do not think is accurate, and I mentioned my own case, then it is my job—I think accurate information is the most important thing.

I also think it requires the issue of consistency, particularly when it comes to public employees. We are not the American public service. The advice that governments and ministers get from the public service, that one day he writes a briefing memo to a Conservative

member and then the next day he writes one to the NDP minister, that under the Act is confidential. Some of that stuff was intermingled with information, quite frankly, that should be released to the public.

The goal is to release information to the public. We are talking a lot about process, but the goal of Freedom of Information is to release accurate information on a timely basis to the public, one would assume in a way that is consistent with the public interest and consistent with the interests of those people that have privacy protected under the Act for good and sufficient reasons.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I am going to move on very quickly. I guess my sense is and our sense of the Freedom of Information legislation would be not only to release accurate information but to release information that the public has requested, that can be released without political interference. We need to take it one step further. I do not think the Premier is taking it far enough. Absolutely, we all want accurate information to go out, but we also do not want political interference in manipulating what information should and should not be released. That is the question I was asking the Premier.

He obviously is hesitant to answer the question on whether he is satisfied that information has not been withheld that should have been released, based on ministerial intervention and ministerial determination that content would be altered based on that particular minister's or several ministers' own personal judgment. It is not the accuracy of the information. It is the timeliness and the content and what should be released under the spirit of the law and what legitimately should be held back because of privacy issues or cabinet confidentialities or whatever.

So I will move on. I know that the Premier has not directly answered the question. Maybe he would like to just comment and I am going to move on from here.

Mr. Doer: As I understand it, the practice of implementing the Freedom of Information Act is consistent with what the previous government did. I can table memos from Barb Biggar or

memos to Barb Biggar saying should we release this or not. I think you could argue that that is quote, interference in the Premier's Office in her line department of information being released.

When I raised that the former premier said, well, of course I have to make that decision because then I am accountable for the press. The practice is very similar to the past, and there are various degrees of requirements under the Act. We are doing the best job we can to implement them.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I am going to move on now to the contracts that were undertaken with both Mr. Nadeau and Mr. Freedman for the Aboriginal casino selection process. Could the Premier, and he may not have them at his fingertips but maybe he could clarify for me who the contracts were entered into with for Mr. Nadeau and Mr. Freedman, and whether we could have copies of the contracts, including remuneration for both individuals and a cost breakdown for the selection committee meetings, legal opinions and other expenses. If they are not available today, I would appreciate having them available at the earliest opportunity.

* (17:00)

Mr. Doer: I will inquire on the status of those contracts. I would point out that Mr. Freedman is the most often used arbitrator by the provincial government and he is a person who has been agreed to by management and employees over the last 10 years more than any other arbitrator. In fact, I think that is true also in the private sector. So I would have to say that we were very happy.

Mr. Nadeau, I know, is another individual who was selected. I do not know as much about Mr. Nadeau, although he has a very good reputation in the North. But, Mr. Freedman, we were very happy to have a person with his Solomon-like past. I did not mean to say that we were not going to be dealing with the disagreements of Solomon's recommendations, but I have known Mr. Freedman for a long period of time. I have watched him in the corporate sector and in the public sector do more independent judgments or independent arbitrating decisions than a lot of other Manitobans.

I will endeavour to find out the contract, but I do know, I would say that he is a person who has been appropriately used by members opposite on considerable numbers of different situations, I think, with good effect.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I would imagine that the contracts with Mr. Nadeau and Mr. Freedman would have been untendered contracts. Or, was there a call for proposals?

Mr. Doer: I will take that as notice and see how similar or dissimilar it was to the way in which Mr. Freedman has been agreed to as arbitrator. I will check this, because I think when two parties agree to an arbitrator, for example, the Civil Service Commission agrees to an arbitrator and the employees agree to an arbitrator then that is the arbitrator. You cannot tender out. But I will check that out. I imagine it is a similar way, but I am not 100 percent sure.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I have no question about the calibre or the quality of the individuals who were hired to undertake the process. I am just wondering whether in the list of untendered contracts, these are contracts that show up through the normal course of what would happen automatically when government enters into an untendered contract. Usually, it would show up on a list. I am just asking what the process was and no question about the quality of the individual.

Mr. Doer: I will definitely take that as notice and get back to the Member.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Okay.

Mr. Doer: Whether it is in our Estimates or Concurrent Supply.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I thank the Premier for undertaking to provide that information.

I would just like to ask a question on private wine stores and ask the Premier what his position is. Is he supportive of private wine stores? Is his government going to continue to ensure they are a part of the mix for the sale of alcohol in the province of Manitoba? What is his position or his policy?

Mr. Doer: I love wine, so—

Mrs. Mitchelson: White wine?

Mr. Doer: No, no. I actually am a red wine drinker, not to be too specific about it. I read it is good for your heart, so I have taken that medical advice very seriously.

I mean, we have a legal contract signed by the previous government that we have to honour.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Would there be any change in the policy or the direction this government might take in regard to private wine stores? I am not getting a terribly full answer from the Premier around this issue. It seems that he has certainly a lot to say on many issues, but on this one he seems to be rather short and almost silent. I would just like to know what his position might be. Is he supportive of the private wine stores and the initiative that was undertaken? Is he going to continue to support that position that they have a role to play in Manitoba, or does he have a different opinion?

Mr. Doer: There are four levels of discussion dealing with this wine question that the Member opposite asked. First of all, is the individual that bottles their wine as a Manitoba citizen, perhaps in their basement or other locations, their garage, for their own consumption. That, as I understand it, is a flourishing hobby that we certainly do not plan on interfering with, the exercise of that and the development of that hobby that takes place with the support of the private sector that sells bottles and bottling corks and various forms of paraphernalia for wine bottling and consumption.

The second issue of private wine stores is the fact that most of the wines that are here in Manitoba are wines that are purchased from across the world and put on the shelves for sale by the private companies on the public shelves. I think the only departure of that was when we took the South African wines off the shelves in the anti-apartheid period. I know it was an issue of debate here. The proceeds of the wine, the wine that was taken off the shelves, was eventually given to the anti-apartheid organizations here, and I think has been mentioned more favourably by members

opposite when they were in government with the new twinning of the new province in, I believe it is northwest South Africa.

Thirdly, it is the private wine stores themselves, and fourthly, it is the Liquor Commission's stores.

On the private wine stores themselves, we have legal contracts with the stores, the private stores. We are honouring what we feel are the legal obligations that have been made by the previous government. What we do not feel to be a legal obligation, we will pursue with the advice of the Liquor Commission. I do not want to go into any more detail in case there are any lawsuits on it, because apparently there might be. *[interjection]* I know of no wineries in Neepawa. *[interjection]* I think that we certainly believe that decisions were made based on legal contracts. We are certainly not bringing legislation in the House to change the legal contracts signed by the previous members that give the right of the private wine stores pretty strong right, as we understand it, in terms of their right in the marketplace. We have looked at it, and we respect it.

I am not going to go any further, because there are lawsuits. But there are some issues there that deal with the revenues to the Province of Manitoba, and we think within the existing legal agreement we have some responsibilities to make sure the public interest is also protected. The bottom line is I am not going to say much more, because there are pending lawsuits.

* (17:10)

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, I guess I would just ask the Premier whether he or any of his ministers have directed anyone or the Liquor Commission to attempt to get out of contracts that might have been entered into by the private wine stores with companies.

Mr. Doer: We reviewed the contracts and followed the legal advice we had.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, just one more question on this issue. Is the Premier or his government supportive of the activity of private wine stores and the ability for them to function

in the marketplace as is, or is he more supportive of moving in a policy direction that would give the liquor stores that are run through the Liquor Control Commission a monopoly rather than what presently exists with the wine stores? What is their policy direction? Where would he like to see things go in Manitoba?

Mr. Doer: Well, as I said before, the Liquor Commission does not have a monopoly of wine because there are thousands and thousands of individuals making wine in their own basement, so it is a question of degree. The bottom line is there is a monopoly now, for example, in the Liquor Commission in spirits, a total monopoly. In beer distribution, 92 percent of the beer, as I understand it, goes through the private vendors through the hotel association. I think about 8 percent, maybe less, I do not know the number, I am just trying to recall this, goes through the public liquor stores. They might have more "choice." You know, you cannot get a wheat-produced beer necessarily in the liquor store that might be great for finally some diversification of our products here in Manitoba, but they are only unfortunately bottled in Alberta. Then, of course, the wine stores, the private wine stores.

When people make a decision on capital investment for private stores and there are legal contracts, we must respect them. It does not matter what our policies are, the legal contract is something that is generally what we are respecting, and there may be parts of that legal contract that are in contention and so be it. I respect their right to agree with us or disagree with us, and I respect the fact that people made capital decisions on the basis of previous government policy and we should therefore respect the legal agreements once we understand what is in them.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, I will move on, but I found it quite amusing to see the Premier skirt the issue and give the kinds of answers that he answered. It is clear as mud, his government's policy and their direction, but anyway I would like to move on to The Elections Finances Act.

I know that we have heard some very legitimate concerns from many groups, and I am sure that the Premier has heard them as well over

the changes the Government wants to bring in under Bill 4 that will limit freedom of speech and freedom of association. If the Premier was really interested in fair play during elections and an improved democratic process—you know one of the questions that has been asked of me and I do not have an answer to, maybe the Premier has an answer—why would he have waited until the last moment in the session, I think it was on June 20 or so, to introduce Bill 4, very late in the session anyway, try to ram it through the Legislature in a very short period of time and not give the concerned groups any time for input or for consultation?

Mr. Doer: I think that we will have to check the date. I do not believe it was as late as the Member opposite has indicated on when it was introduced. We certainly wanted to make sure that the Liebman principles from the Supreme Court were incorporated in Bills 4 and 17. I think that the promise was made in September of 1999, some of the areas that had been dealt with, but you know, the issue of third party, the issues of disclosure, that was identified by the Chief Electoral Officer in 1988, 1990, 1993, 1995, 1996.

I mean, you cannot say that the issue of third party and disclosure limits, et cetera, certainly the disclosure has been raised by the Chief Electoral Officer. The issue of polling, we are making that part of the limits. That has been identified by the Chief Electoral Office for a number of years. The issue of returning officers has been dealt with for 10 years. Allegedly there are going to be some by-elections taking place. We do not want Cabinet to appoint the returning officers. We want the Chief Electoral Officer to do that as he or she has recommended for the last 12 years. So to suggest that this is a premature development when one has had some of the recommendations for years is, I think, a bit unfair.

The other issue of union corporate donations and limits on third parties, we promised that, I think it was, September 19. No, it was earlier than that, because it was well before the election. The election was September 21. But September 10 or so last year, so it is almost 12 months since we promised it, and it will not take effect until January 1, 2001. So I think that it is reasonable

time from our promises, and certainly a reasonable time for the time the Chief Electoral Officer recommended some of these issues be dealt with by this Legislature. I would admit there are policy changes that we have initiated based on promises we have made to the public. There are technical recommendations that we have implemented based on recommendations of the Chief Electoral Officer, but all of those either were in the Electoral Officer's report or election promises within the last 11 months.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I know that we have heard from groups such as the Association of Canadian Broadcasters, the National Citizens Coalition, the Taxpayers Federation and other members of the media that have certainly expressed some concern that this bill will limit the freedom of speech and freedom of association provisions of the Charter, and I might ask the Premier whether he considers these concerns by third parties legitimate concerns.

Mr. Doer: Well, I consider this Supreme Court decision on *Liebmans* the clash of values between the freedom of speech issue and the desire to have a level playing field. I think the Supreme Court decision goes on to say that, if you are going to restrict political parties to have regulations in place to restrict their spending in election campaigns, it is not only inappropriate to do so for third parties; it is also appropriate to do so at a less spending limit than the actual political parties themselves that are competing. So there are two competing values here, I think, that the Chief Electoral Officer stated. But there is also on child pornography, we have erred on the side of restricting child pornography as a society against freedom of speech.

I think the federal government, once the Supreme Court rules on this issue, has to have a contingency plan in place. Yes, I personally believe that the freedom of speech rights should be limited and regulated in child pornography. I know it is not analogous in terms of the harm done, but there is a clash of values that you have to deal with from time to time in legislation or government initiatives.

I think the issue of this matter has been, I am sure, before the previous government because I cannot imagine that they would ignore previous reports of the Chief Electoral Officer on disclosure and asking the Legislature to look at reasonable limits. This was brought to our attention in 1998 when we met with the Chief Electoral Officer when he indicated that the 1996 report dealing with 1995 election recommended that this Legislature deal with it. We have dealt with it. You might not agree with it, but we have dealt with it, and I think some of the concerns that have been made by some of the groups that are concerned generally about third-party advertising, some of those concerns may be ill advised because I think the legal interpretation is not as stringent as what they believe. I think that we have had some people ask us for various consultations on it, and we certainly will do that.

Mrs. Mitchelson: The operative word that the Premier used was that, you know, the Chief Electoral Officer, and he was pretty clear this morning in committee, indicated that the whole area of disclosure was a big issue, and it was one that he has made recommendations on over a fairly long period of time. The issue of spending limits, the operative word is that, I mean, he is a servant of the Legislature, and he indicated that the Legislature should deal with the issue. We have certainly no concerns with the Legislature dealing with it. What we do have some concern with is the unilateral action of this government who believes that he speaks on behalf of the whole Legislature.

I would think, to take a balanced and a reasoned approach, that a committee of the Legislature of all parties in the Legislature would have been what the Chief Electoral Officer was talking about, not having a unilateral decision made by one governing party to suit their own vested interests or their own political agenda. So I am not sure that you would get the Chief Electoral Officer agreeing with the statements or agreeing that the Government is the Legislature.

My sense would be that there should be considerable participation and discussion around these kinds of issues. I believe, if there had been an all-party process to look at this, certainly, I

know, on our side of the House, we would have asked for comments from the Association of Canadian Broadcasters, the National Citizens Coalition, the taxpayers federation and others that might be third-party interests in the whole election finances process.

I would ask the Premier whether he believes—he talked about a fairness and balance, and that is what this legislation brings. Can he say unequivocally to the Association of Canadian Broadcasters, to the National Citizens Coalition, to the taxpayers federation, is he saying to them and is he telling them that this is a fair and balanced approach and that their concerns are unfounded? Can he unequivocally state that today?

Mr. Doer: Well, you have asked three or four questions, fair, balanced, unequivocal, no problem. I think that the first point is that this was a promise made in the election campaign on September 10, 1999. It was not made to this Legislature. It was made to the people of Manitoba. So if we were not doing this today—in fact I think I got questioned on not proceeding quickly in November of this year, 1999, by the previous leader of the Opposition, about not proceeding quickly with these amendments, and I thought that I should take our time and make sure we got the third-party issue based on the court decisions of Alberta and B.C. accurate with the Liebman decision in Québec.

The promise was ban all union donations and corporate donations; have an upper limit on donations and limit third-party spending. It goes on to promise decisions on Chief Electoral Officer and some other things, but this was a specific promise made in the election campaign. It was made to the people of Manitoba. It was a commitment we made in the campaign. It was reported in all the newspapers. It was reported on all the TV networks.

In fact, I remember Mr. Downey just saying, his comment was, well, political parties will just define a way to get around it. I thought, after the Monnin issue, that was the last—you may disagree with it, but do not say people will get around it. It is against the law, for example, for a corporation or a union to give money to an

individual for the sole purpose of donating to a political party. It is against the law now.

So I did not put it out there for the good of our health. I put it out there as a commitment we were making. We made it, and we are keeping it. How we keep it, I am sure that members will have advice in committee; I am sure that groups, before we get to committee, might have advice. The bison producers last week had some concerns; we changed the law. We did not think the legal issue was a problem, but we have got an open mind going to committees. That is the purpose of legislative committees.

If any members have constructive ideas about it, and the people or the members of the public that area affected by it, good. But constructive ideas are not to oppose an election promise we made to the people of Manitoba.

Mrs. Mitchelson: We have heard time and time again in this legislature about election commitments and promises that were made. It will be interesting for these organizations and members of the media that have been questioning the limits that have been placed on third parties. The Premier has now stated this was clearly articulated during the election campaign and that now he is following through. These organizations will be very interested in hearing again the Premier talk about the commitment made and the commitment kept. He certainly skirted around the issue without really answering the question.

I think that if these kinds of limits had been placed and clearly articulated during the election campaign, he would have seen a lot more discussion around that election commitment or the election promise. I am sure many organizations will be interested in listening to the Premier's comments. They will be interested in his comments specifically around the Bill and how it provides a balance around freedom of speech and freedom of association.

We will wait for more discussion of course in second reading, move it on to committee, listen to what people have to say. I know that there are many that are now finding out. We have seen this government not talk about certain things during the election campaign, not making

any election commitment around significant changes to labour laws, and then coming in after the fact and bringing in very regressive changes. It is interesting we do not hear the Premier talk about the omissions, the things he did not promise during the election campaign but are some of the first agenda items of his government. It will be interesting to hear and listen to members of the public provide their input on this legislation.

Can the Premier undertake to provide for me a list of all the Cabinet committees that are required under legislation? I know he will not have it at his fingertips, but across that government, there are Cabinet committees that do have legislative requirements. Could he provide a list of those committees, what the make up of the committee membership is and which ones have met their legislative requirements as far as meeting or reporting?

Mr. Doer: I will take the request as notice and in the spirit of disclosure.

* (17:30)

Mrs. Mitchelson: Just before I turn some questions over to the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), I would just like to ask a final question of the First Minister. The question would be sort of general in speaking, and ask whether he has confidence in each of his ministers and their ability to run their departments. I will just ask that question: Does he have the confidence in all of his ministers that they are running their departments effectively? Or does he have to double-check on any of his ministers because there are issues that maybe they are not dealing with in the most appropriate fashion?

Mr. Doer: I certainly believe that the confidence I have in the ministers I have and the way in which I work with them is similar to the confidence that was expressed by my predecessor in the manner in which he worked with them in their daily responsibilities to the public of Manitoba.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I want to thank the Premier for the comments and the discussion we have had. There are certainly a few more issues I

would have liked to have had the opportunity to discuss, but we do have other opportunities, probably through concurrence and maybe even questions in Question Period. There will be committees around The Elections Act and The Elections Finances Act where we will have the opportunity for dialogue and discussion. So I want to thank him for his comments.

I think we are prepared now to move on to the Premier's Salary.

Mr. Doer: I would like to thank our staff and the courtesy with which the members of the Opposition expressed their views about the difference of opinion with the political, perhaps, decision making by the Government but not with the competency of the staff. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: The Honourable Member for River Heights had some questions?

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): As soon as we are on the Premier's Salary.

Mr. Chairperson: We have to pass all these things.

2.1. General Administration (b) Management and Administration (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,072,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$397,900—pass.

2.1.(c) Federal-Provincial Relations Secretariat (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$360,500—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$115,600—pass.

2.1.(d) Government Hospitality \$10,000—pass.

2.1.(e) International Development Program \$500,000—pass.

2.2. Amortization of Capital Assets \$13,200—pass.

Resolution 2.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$13,200 for Executive Council, Amortization of Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2001.

Resolution agreed to.

We are now on Item 2.1. General Administration (a) Premier and President of the Council's Salary \$43,600.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Chairperson, I would like to, in this area, move a motion. I will provide a copy, seconded by the Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings). Shall I proceed with reading the motion?

WHEREAS The Sustainable Development Act of Manitoba contains a series of provisions including:

1. By two years after the Act coming into force, July 1, 2000, the Government must have brought forth a sustainable development strategy with component strategies for achieving sustainability in specific economic, environmental, resource, human health and social policy needs; have a procurement goal and guidelines in place, which are integrated into provincial procurement manuals and procedures, with government organized to meet the goals; have involvement of the Round Table in development of the strategy;

2. The Act sets up the Round Table on Sustainable Development and mandates that it meet at least three times a year. The Act provides that a minimum of four and a maximum of one-third of the members shall be cabinet ministers, and where the Premier is a member of the Manitoba Round Table, he or she shall be its chairperson; and

WHEREAS the strategy tabled by the NDP Government before July 1, 2000, was the COSDI report, the Consultation on Sustainable Development Implementation; and

WHEREAS, as the Government itself acknowledges, the COSDI process was to address the components of the white paper that were not reflected in The Sustainable Development Act; and

WHEREAS the COSDI report only addresses those components of the white paper that were not reflected in The Sustainable Development Act, and is not providing the

required overall strategy and component strategies; and

WHEREAS the COSDI report failed in not providing procurement goals and guidelines as required in the strategy; and

WHEREAS the Government has still not named the members of the Round Table, and continues to be in breach of The Sustainable Development Act because the Round Table has not met for more than a year; and

WHEREAS the COSDI report does not contain component strategies for achieving sustainability in specific economic, environmental, resource, human health and social policy sectors; and

WHEREAS the COSDI report does not contain a strategy for Manitoba's approach to global warming and climate change; and

WHEREAS the NDP Government is wrong to suggest that no work was done on the Sustainable Development Strategy since a committee of the Round Table, chaired by Logan Krueger, presented a long consultation paper as a forerunner to the strategy and with ample time for the NDP Government to have a full strategy in place by July 1 of 2000; and

WHEREAS the NDP Government, in more than nine months, has not yet designated either the Chair or the new cabinet members, the Round Table cannot meet and has not met, and in this respect the NDP Government is breaking the requirements of the laws of Manitoba.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Premier's (Mr. Doer) salary should be reduced by 25 percent as a result of his showing a poor example to Manitobans in breaking the laws of Manitoba in failing to meet the time lines for actions specified in Manitoba's statute The Sustainable Development Act.

Mr. Chairperson: May we have some clarification here? What is the base of the 25 percent?

Mr. Gerrard: It would be 25 percent of the salary amount in 2.1(a).

Mr. Chairperson: Generally a motion will also indicate the dollar value of the reduction.

Mr. Doer: The motion is out of order because it fails to have a dollar amount. I would ask you to rule accordingly.

Mr. Chairperson: Is there unanimous agreement in the Committee to have the dollar amount inserted to correct the flaw in the motion?

* (17:40)

Mr. Gerrard: I would agree to have the dollar amount inserted so that it is a correct motion.

Mr. Chairperson: Is there unanimous agreement?

Mr. Doer: Just on that, it is interesting that when one is pointing out the weaknesses of technical implementations of another minister, one is technically incorrect themselves. I will agree with the change.

Mr. Chairperson: There is unanimous agreement that the dollar amount will be added. The base is \$43,600. So you get 25 percent of that. I have no calculator. That is \$10,900. I have to read the motion with the dollar amount.

It will be corrected in the record.

It has been moved by the Honourable Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), seconded by the Honourable Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings):

WHEREAS The Sustainable Development Act of Manitoba contains a series of provisions including—dispense.

1. By two years after the Act coming into force, July 1, 2000, the Government must have brought forth a sustainable development strategy with component strategies for achieving sustainability in specific economic, environmental, resource, human health and social policy needs; have a procurement goal and guidelines in place, which are integrated into provincial procurement manuals and procedures, with government organized to meet the

goals; have involvement of the Round Table in development of the strategy;

2. The Act sets up the Round Table on Sustainable Development and mandates that it meet at least three times a year. The Act provides that a minimum of four and a maximum of one-third of the members shall be cabinet ministers, and where the Premier is a member of the Manitoba Round Table, he or she shall be its chairperson; and

WHEREAS the strategy tabled by the NDP Government before July 1, 2000, was the COSDI report, the Consultation on Sustainable Development Implementation; and

WHEREAS, as the Government itself acknowledges, the COSDI process was to address the components of the white paper that were not reflected in The Sustainable Development Act; and

WHEREAS the COSDI report only addresses those components of the white paper that were not reflected in The Sustainable Development Act, and is not providing the required overall strategy and component strategies; and

WHEREAS the COSDI report failed in not providing procurement goals and guidelines as required in the strategy; and

WHEREAS the Government has still not named the members of the Round Table, and continues to be in breach of The Sustainable Development Act because the Round Table has not met for more than a year; and

WHEREAS the COSDI report does not contain component strategies for achieving sustainability in specific economic, environmental, resource, human health and social policy sectors; and

WHEREAS the COSDI report does not contain a strategy for Manitoba's approach to global warming and climate change; and

WHEREAS the NDP Government is wrong to suggest that no work was done on the Sustainable Development Strategy since a

committee of the Round Table, chaired by Logan Krueger, presented a long consultation paper as a forerunner to the strategy and with ample time for the NDP Government to have a full strategy in place by July 1 of 2000; and

WHEREAS the NDP Government, in more than nine months, has not yet designated either the Chair or the new cabinet members, the Round Table cannot meet and has not met, and in this respect the NDP Government is breaking the requirements of the laws of Manitoba.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Premier's (Mr. Doer) salary should be reduced by 25 percent as a result of his showing a poor example to Manitobans in breaking the laws of Manitoba in failing to meet the time lines for actions specified in Manitoba's statute The Sustainable Development Act.

The debate now is on the motion.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Chairman, I think that it is interesting that this motion has come forward in the Estimates of the First Minister. I am trying to recall all the disagreements I had with the former government whether I ever moved a comparable motion.

I think that we are proceeding to deal with matters in the Sustainable Development department of government under Conservation. I think that our first priority has been items that were foisted upon us by international events. I have been personally involved in trying to stop water projects, the Devils Lake outlet and the North Dakota State Water Act provision. Those measures have required a considerable amount of time and effort of my office. Sometimes when you have the whole Senate of the United States passing motions to affect your water quality for a long period of time, you have to act accordingly.

Secondly, the procurement policies, the Member has asked questions about that. We are working with Government Services to properly develop a procurement policy. We could just put out some statement that says we are doing it, but unless it has some teeth and implementation, I think it would be insincere.

Thirdly, we have just appointed a new Clean Environment Commission chaired by Mr. Duguid. That Clean Environment Commission is a condition precedent of the Schneider's proposal. I would point out that the previous government, contrary to the views expressed by the Member from River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), the views expressed at that Clean Environment Commission—that Clean Environment Commission—has not sat for years. I think it is important to note if you have policies in place that require the law to be implemented at Clean Environment Commission hearings, and you have not had a Clean Environment Commission public hearing for literally years, I think it behooves the Government to correct that.

You would note the issue of Maple Leaf is quite different than Schneider's. Maple Leaf had no requirement for the Clean Environment Commission hearing. Therefore, there were no hearings that took place for the Maple Leaf plant. On the issue of Schneider's, the contract clearly states that there must be a Clean Environment Commission hearing.

We have taken our time to try to get the best person possible to chair that meeting. We have come forward with the name of Mr. Duguid to chair the body. The Member opposite made the claim that the Premier must chair the meeting, the round table. It is not required by law. In fact, I think the Member from Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings) was the last chair of the Round Table and not the Premier of the Province of Manitoba, so on the one hand—

A Honourable Member: When he is a member, he must chair.

Mr. Doer: I noted that, but there was a comment made that I was, quote, breaking the law by not chairing this committee when I was not a member of the committee, and the previous First Minister did not do it, so people just throw these things around pretty loosely.

We are doing a tremendous amount of work on the east side of the lake, Lake Winnipeg. For example, when we came into office, the proposal was to extend the cut area into the boreal forest. This minister, in truly the spirit of sustainability in the province, met with the developers, met

with the stakeholders, met with the people adjacent to the community, met with the workers. The issue is, should we extend the cut area, or is there enough fibre in the forest itself to sustain the proposed development without extending the cut area, as I say, before we took office.

It may not be acceptable to the Member opposite that this progress, in our first nine months in office, has not moved as quickly as the two-year period, but we have not had two years to act. We have had nine months. I am very confident that all the requirements of the law that were passed by a government but not implemented—and, believe you me, any government that does not have a Clean Environment Commission hearing for years is not exactly on the leading edge of sustainability and sustainable development.

We believe that the provisions of the Act are there. We are going to meet them. We are now making decisions to tie natural resources to sustainability together. So be it.

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Chairperson: Question being called. Any other speaker on this issue?

Mr. Cummings: I move that the question now be put.

Mr. Chairperson: This is a non-debatable motion, so we are going to vote.

It has been moved by the Honourable Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings) that the question be now put. Shall the motion pass?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Mr. Chairperson: All those who are in favour of the motion moving the previous question, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Chairperson: Those who are opposed, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Chairperson: In my opinion, the Nays got it.

An Honourable Member: Yeas and Nays.

Mr. Chairperson: Is there a seconder?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Mr. Chairperson: Is there a second member who wants to request a written vote on the issue? The Member for St. Norbert and the Member for River Heights.

* (18:50)

Formal Vote

Mr. Chairperson: Call in the members.

All sections in Chamber for formal vote.

Mr. Chairperson: In the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in the Chamber to consider the Estimates for Executive Council, during debate of a motion to reduce the Minister's Salary, the Honourable Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings) moved that a question be put. This motion was defeated on a voice vote, and two members subsequently requested that a counted vote be held.

The question before this committee is shall the motion for the previous question pass.

A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 52, Nays 0.

Mr. Chairperson: The motion for the previous question is accordingly passed.

We shall now proceed to the original question before the Committee, which is the motion moved by the Honourable Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) to reduce the Minister's Salary. Is it the will of the Committee to have the motion read?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

WHEREAS The Sustainable Development Act of Manitoba contains a series of provisions including:

1. By two years after the Act coming into force, July 1, 2000, the Government must have brought forth a sustainable development strategy with component strategies for achieving sustainability in specific economic, environmental, resource, human health and social policy needs; have a procurement goal and guidelines in place, which are integrated into provincial procurement manuals and procedures, with government organized to meet the goals; have involvement of the Round Table in development of the strategy;

2. The Act sets up the Round Table on Sustainable Development and mandates that it meet at least three times a year. The Act provides that a minimum of four and a maximum of one-third of the members shall be cabinet ministers, and where the Premier is a member of the Manitoba Round Table, he or she shall be its chairperson; and

WHEREAS the strategy tabled by the NDP Government before July 1, 2000, was the COSDI report, the Consultation on Sustainable Development Implementation; and

WHEREAS, as the Government itself acknowledges, the COSDI process was to address the components of the white paper that were not reflected in The Sustainable Development Act; and

WHEREAS the COSDI report only addresses those components of the white paper that were not reflected in The Sustainable Development Act, and is not providing the required overall strategy and component strategies; and

WHEREAS the COSDI report failed in not providing procurement goals and guidelines as required in the strategy; and

WHEREAS the Government has still not named the members of the Round Table, and continues to be in breach of The Sustainable Development Act because the Round Table has not met for more than a year; and

WHEREAS the COSDI report does not contain component strategies for achieving sustainability in specific economic, environmental, resource, human health and social policy sectors; and

WHEREAS the COSDI report does not contain a strategy for Manitoba's approach to global warming and climate change; and

WHEREAS the NDP Government is wrong to suggest that no work was done on the Sustainable Development Strategy since a committee of the Round Table, chaired by Logan Krueger, presented a long consultation paper as a forerunner to the strategy and with ample time for the NDP Government to have a full strategy in place by July 1 of 2000; and

WHEREAS the NDP Government, in more than nine months, has not yet designated either the Chair or the new cabinet members, the Round Table cannot meet and has not met, and in this respect the NDP Government is breaking the requirements of the laws of Manitoba.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Premier's (Mr. Doer) salary should be reduced by 25 percent as a result of his showing a poor example to Manitobans in breaking the laws of Manitoba in failing to meet the time lines for actions specified in Manitoba's statute The Sustainable Development Act.

Mr. Chairperson: Shall the motion pass?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Mr. Chairperson: All those in favour of the motion passing, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Chairperson: All those opposed to the motion being passed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Chairperson: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

An Honourable Member: Yeas and Nays.

Formal Vote

Mr. Chairperson: A recorded vote being requested, call in the members.

All sections in Chamber for formal vote.

Mr. Chairperson: The question before the Committee is the motion moved by the Honourable Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard).

A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 23, Nays 29.

Mr. Chairperson: The motion is accordingly defeated.

The hour being 6 p.m., committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if you could canvass the House to determine if there is consent for the Committee of Supply sitting in the Chamber to reconvene to consider and put the question on the remaining items on the Executive Council.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to reconvene to put the questions on the Executive Council? [*Agreed*] Is it the will of the House to sit after six o'clock? [*Agreed*]

**COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY
(Continued)**

**EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
(Continued)**

Mr. Chairperson (Conrad Santos): We are back to the item on the Minister's Salary, 2.1.(a) Premier and President of the Council's Salary \$43,600. Shall the item pass?

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (Interim Leader of the Official Opposition): There were a few questions on our side of the House around the

Premier's tour into southwestern Manitoba tomorrow.

I am wondering whether the Premier could indicate where he is going and what communities he will be meeting with and what the agenda will be. Is he meeting with individuals and farmers in southwestern Manitoba who were severely hurt and devastated in the 1999 flood? Will there be some discussions or some announcements made around the much needed help that they have been waiting for?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): We are indeed going to Crystal City tomorrow. I have given the copy of the schedule, invited the opposition members in their communities to attend the meetings. We are visiting Crystal City tomorrow, and we will be then going to Killarney to meet with members of the community for some suggestions on economic development that they have. We will be stopping in at the Deloraine agricultural office.

Following that, we will be going to Melita, and, Mr. Chairperson, we are meeting with the Mayor and Council. The Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) is going to be visiting some farms in the area as well. Then we are arriving in Brandon tomorrow night.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): It has always been our view that this Premier and his Minister of Agriculture have paid no attention to the flooding in the southwest area. It was our view when we asked the Premier whether they were going to visit and he said they were going to go visit tomorrow, it was clearly our view that the intent of the tour that the Premier and the Minister of Agriculture are going to do in the southwest area tomorrow was going to be flood related.

We find out now that the Killarney visit is going to be an announcement of the Grow Bond Program—or the Crystal City one, I am sorry. The meeting at Killarney is going to be with council. Then the drop-in at the Killarney ag office is going to be with the ag rep from the area. The Deloraine ag office is going to be with the ag rep, I assume. The Melita ag office is going to be with the ag rep. Then there is Chicken Chef, 9 Boundary Road. I have no idea

what that is all about. Is that where you are meeting with flood people? The last one is 3:30 meeting with Melita mayor and council in the council chambers, and 6:30 arrive in Brandon.

It does not appear to me that the Premier (Mr. Doer) and his Ag Minister have made a great deal of an attempt to meet with those who were hurt by flooding or to tour the area to talk to farmers about the '99 flood damages. That was our intent that we had hoped the Premier and his Ag Minister would attempt. That kind of a tour, you would attempt to make. Can the Premier give us a straight answer whether this is simply a tour to go announce an ag economic development project and whether the minister wants to go visit with her ag reps to discuss whatever agricultural discussions she wants to have with them, and where are the meetings with the farmers in the area and the coalition that was formed over there to talk about the flood issues and the non-payment of support for 1999?

* (19:00)

Mr. Doer: I cannot recall ever receiving a copy of the itinerary of the former premier. It was done as a courtesy to members opposite, which I thought was appropriate—*[interjection]* I am still receiving copies of them. They are in the mail.

The meeting in Melita, with the greatest of respect, follows a meeting we had with municipal officials. It is a follow-up meeting. It was suggested that I return to Melita by members in your own caucus, sir, and I am doing that. It may be desirable to have 57 people develop an itinerary for one individual. It is probably not the most effective way of doing things.

Having said that, the Minister of Agriculture is working with and meeting with farmers in the southwestern quadrant. We are also going to Melita, to return to Melita. This is the schedule we have set up. Brandon also is where we are returning tomorrow night. The Member can provide his own itinerary or his own views on it. This is the most effective use of time we feel tomorrow and includes meetings with farmers. But, with the greatest of respect—*[interjection]* We are proceeding accordingly. Do you want us to cut out the meeting in Crystal City or the

meeting in Killarney? That is your advice, but we will not necessarily follow it.

Mr. Jack Penner: You know, it does not take much of an effort, quickly frankly, Mr. Chairman, to put together a tour for a Minister of Agriculture to go visit her staff in her departmental offices. When I was the Minister of Natural Resources, I visited virtually every Natural Resources office in this province. It did not take a great deal of effort. All you did was go in the car, go from office to office and say hi.

If the Minister would have been serious about discussing the flood aid, the requirements of the area and the hurt that is still out there for the 1999 flood, she would have made an attempt to organize no. 1 with the coalition that was established of virtually all the organizations in the western part of the province. She would have made an attempt to convince her Premier to attend with her a meeting of those farmers who had been hurt in that area. It would have demonstrated clearly a will to recognize the need that is out there and the hurt that is still going on.

So I ask the Premier again if and when he is willing to go out to this western part of the province to meet with those people that are hurt by flooding and discuss with them the needs they have, and give them some kind of indication as to the kind of government support that they are going to get from this province?

Mr. Doer: There is no disagreement from those of us on this side on the need for disaster assistance that has been stated in this Chamber by the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), and the Minister responsible for EMO and disaster assistance. There is no disagreement on a number of the issues arising from the flood in southwestern Manitoba.

We met with the coalition two weeks ago. I said we would come back to Melita; that was their request. The Member opposite may want to talk to the coalition, but they asked me to come back to Melita to meet with them again. I am going back to meet with the mayor after they requested I meet with them in that community. The Minister of Agriculture is also—the Member opposite might be all things to all people. He is the Minister of Agriculture; he is the mayor of

Melita; and he is planning the First Minister's tour. With the greatest of respect—*[interjection]*—well, the people will decide that.

The members opposite may not want me to go out there tomorrow, and that is their prerogative. I will let the people know that, but I have acknowledged that I will be going out there. We were working off of a rather tentative schedule, I might say, because we did not know when the Premier's Estimates would be up or down or completed, so we were trying to work, as a courtesy, with the opposition members who wanted to ask questions in this House, and we are working with community members. But, if the members opposite want to cancel the tour, let me know, and we will let the people know. We think it is important to go out there and—*[interjection]*

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please.

Mr. Jack Penner: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson. The Premier seems to be a bit sensitive on this issue, and I do not blame him. I would be, too, if I had an outstanding commitment to the farmers of western Manitoba, especially those hurt by flooding. I think the Premier and his Minister of Agriculture would, without fail, have received support from this side of the House if they had at any time indicated that they wanted to go meet—*[interjection]*

Mr. Chairperson: I cannot hear the Honourable Member, who has the floor.

Mr. Jack Penner: Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. I can see the sensitivity of members opposite. That is very obvious.

The Premier knows full well that if he would have, at any time, come to our House leader and requested to be paired that we would not only have offered to pair, we would have offered to accompany the Government. If they would have wanted two or three or five of us to accompany them to the western part of the province to discuss the flooding issue, we would have been there. As a matter of fact, our whole caucus would have gone.

I think we clearly demonstrated our support for the farmers when 3000 farmers in Melita

met. We encouraged the then Leader of the Opposition and the Liberal member to attend that meeting. We fully asked for and received the support of the now Premier at that meeting for farm aid, and yet this Premier has indicated clearly his unwillingness to co-operate with the farmers to tell them what this province would do and what kind of support this government would give to the farmers of western Manitoba. The only aid that they have received is aid that was a joint program between the federal and provincial governments. That went to all farmers on transportation aid. That is the only aid that this government has given to farmers, and that is small consolation to western Manitoba farmers that were flooded.

Now I say to the Premier, if he wants to indicate to this House today that he is willing or his Minister of Agriculture is going to organize a meeting with those affected by flooding in western Manitoba, tell us when, we will pair you, and we will accompany you to that meeting. We will stand side by side as both sides of the House to support the aid that will be announced, and hopefully it will be similar to the programs that were announced in the Red River Valley, the Swan River Valley and the Interlake.

* (19:10)

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Chair, I am going to rise to make these comments and ask this question because I feel aggrieved by the way in which this Premier has treated this matter. Mr. Chair, we were asked to continue the Estimates for the Premier tonight so that he would have leave to go to the southwest part of the province, assuming that he was going to be dealing with the flooded people of southwestern Manitoba and the Minister of Agriculture was going to be accompanying him. Now, in our minds, that was what we have been asking of this Premier for a long time and something that we would have supported 150 percent. As a matter of fact, I as an individual would propose to lay aside the business of this House for one day for the Premier and his colleagues to be able to go to southwestern Manitoba and deal with the pain and the hurt of the people in that region so that the Premier and his cabinet would get a better understanding of what is going on in the

lives of those families, the children, the women of southwestern Manitoba.

Mr. Chair, once the House Leader and our Opposition House Leader agreed on the process, we then received an itinerary which truly spelled out the intent of the Premier. Was it to meet with the people who were affected by the flood? No, and that is where the aggravation is. I will give the Premier leave anytime to meet with the people of this province who have been truly hurt by the way in which governments have dealt with them.

An Honourable Member: You would not pair for weeks on end.

Mr. Derkach: The Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) has nothing to say about this issue because he does not understand the issue. All I ask him to do is go out there, meet with the people and then to get a better understanding of what really is going on. We have been patient on this side of the House.

Mr. Chairperson, this is not an issue I take lightly, because I will tell you something. When the Red River Valley was flooded, when this city was flooded, people from southwestern Manitoba got in their buses, took their children, took the women, the men and came into this part of the province to help the flooded victims in 1997 because they knew the pain and the hurt. They helped the Government, and they asked nothing in return. When these people have been hurt by that very, as a matter of fact, much more dramatic incident because people could not put their crops in not for one year but for two years, all we have asked from the Premier (Mr. Doer) and the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) to do was to go out there.

Yes, they can contend that this is a federal issue, and we will stand with them and say, yes, this is a federal issue, but in the meantime let us stand side by side with the people of southwestern Manitoba and let us tell the federal government. Indeed, in the interim, perhaps our consciences should tell us that we should deal with these people in some rational and modest way so that indeed they can have some dignity as they try to make a living this year on their

farms. They have not seen an income for two years.

All I am asking the Premier to do today—yes, I know he is going to Crystal City to make a Grow Bonds announcement. I support that. I say he should be there. Make that Grow Bonds announcement, of course. I will applaud him for doing that, because I remember the comments from that side of the House when I introduced the Grow Bonds Program. So I endorse that.

I want him to stand in Crystal City and say to the people of Manitoba: We are going to stand with you in helping economic development in this area, the same in Killarney. I want him to meet with the people of the economic development region and tell them what his plan is for rural Manitoba. As a matter of fact, I would expect that the Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs (Ms. Friesen) will be there too. But in addition, when he visits Deloraine, Killarney, Eden, Souris, Hamiota, those areas, those are the areas that were affected by devastation.

I do not expect him to take a bag of money there. Neither do the people. I expect him to go there and perhaps to hold the hand of that farmer and that farmer's wife who are suffering immeasurably because of the devastation that was caused to them in last year's flood. That is what I expect. That is why we gave leave to this Premier to go to southwestern Manitoba, because we were led to believe that was the reason that he was going to southwestern Manitoba and that was the reason that we were going to be dealing with his Estimates today. I was prepared to deal with that, Mr. Chair.

I do not know how many farmers have been notified to meet with the Premier tomorrow. How many farm leaders have been asked to come and meet with the Premier today because he is going to be in southwestern Manitoba? It is okay to meet with the Mayor of Melita. That is fine. But what about those farmers that surround the Melita area who have pain today? What about the women and their children? What about the school? Go into that school and find out what is going on for those families who are having a difficult time to put food on the table for their families.

That is a government responsibility, Mr. Chair. That is not the Opposition's responsibility. But it is our responsibility to hold the Government accountable for that. Yes, we would accompany the Premier there, and there would not be any negative talk. There would not be any political barbs thrown at the Premier. I would be proud of the fact that my Premier of Manitoba, regardless of his political stripe, came into my community, came into my area to deal with the real hurt of the people of my province, but that is not happening. So all I want to ask the Premier is: Why?

Mr. Doer: Mr. Chairperson, this schedule was handed out as a courtesy to members opposite, a courtesy to members opposite because we were going into the constituencies of their representatives. Some of the announcements will, I hope, be good for the communities. Some of the meetings we will have are going to be listening to Manitobans. We want co-operation and extend courtesies because we believe we should be working in a co-operative way.

Let me say also that the Executive Council Estimates I think have been through three days, more than I used to hold the former member opposite in Estimates. We were trying to make the best judgment we could and make the best scheduling decisions we could in a very, very ad hoc kind of situation because of the nature of this House.

If the members opposite want to suggest that we cancel some meetings or some sessions, we do not feel we can. We on the one hand get told, go to Melita and meet with people. On the other hand, we gave our commitment a couple of weeks ago to the community of Melita that we would attempt to get there to answer a number of questions that they have raised with us. We are going to do that.

But, Mr. Chairperson, if members opposite want to deny leave, that is their prerogative. We will make our judgments accordingly. We will make all our judgments accordingly. You know, I was not intending when I talked to members opposite when I gave them the list of places we are going to—I was doing it as a courtesy. I get people in my own caucus saying I should go to this place and that place. I respect that. But at the

end of the day, if you have five or six places to go in 18 hours, that is how many places you can go to. Because of that, the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) is going to meet with farmers. If you do not like it, that is your prerogative. That is your prerogative.

* (19:20)

There are some matters outstanding with Melita. Nobody on this side disagrees with the situation there in terms of what happened. We would not keep working and working without success on the disaster assistance unless we agreed with the people there. That is not in dispute. The \$40 million or so that we believe the federal government owes those people is not in dispute. I want to say that for the record. That is why we are going there. I am over 18. I can cancel the trip tomorrow or part of it tomorrow and go back when we can make it. That is fine with me. I am just trying to do this as a courtesy. I am not asking for any quote. We can handle doing the Estimates. We know that that is an obligation of this House. We know that comes before all matters including outreach into communities.

If members opposite feel that I should cancel tomorrow, that is their prerogative. I respect the rules of this House and will judge myself accordingly. I can get to six communities and the Minister of Agriculture can get to some farms. But we are certainly prepared to cancel the outreach and let people know the reason.

Mr. Derkach: No one in this House is suggesting that the Premier (Mr. Doer) should cancel his itinerary. Nobody in this House is suggesting that at all. And the Premier is simply trying to turn this back on the Opposition. It is not going to work.

Mr. Chair, the reality is that when the request and the notion came we expected there was going to be a visit to southwestern Manitoba, we were relieved because we were assuming that indeed the Premier would be visiting with the people who have been requesting his presence and that of the Minister of Agriculture for a long time. No one here would deny leave for that. We are not denying leave for the Premier to do his outreach either.

That is his responsibility. That is his job. But I think for too long we have been playing games in this House. The Government has been playing games with us with regard to meeting with the people of southwestern Manitoba who were affected by the flood.

All I am asking the Premier and his Minister of Agriculture and his Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Ms. Friesen) to do, the Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs who is responsible for rural development, who is responsible for rural economic development, is to go out to rural Manitoba to meet with those people who had suffered that hurt in 1999, who are still suffering the effects of that today, to give them at least some comfort that indeed there is caring about that part of the province. That is all I ask of the Premier.

Mr. Doer: And I respect that. The Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister responsible for disaster assistance, we met with the community group three weeks ago. They asked us to come to Melita, to come back and meet with them. If the mayor and councils bring in other people which I expect they will, that is fine. If they do not, the Member is going out there. This was not planned long in advance because of the very nature of this House.

I will not disagree with members opposite about the hurt of the southwest Manitoba flood last year. There is no disagreement on us. There is a disagreement about how we should proceed with the national disaster assistance program, and we have had that debate. I am prepared to have it anytime, anyplace. But there is no disagreement. There is no one on this side of the House that ever, ever disagreed with members opposite when they talked about the flooding in southwestern Manitoba and the fact that they have been treated in a way that has been very un-Canadian in my view, relative to the Red River Valley flood victims.

We agree with you. We will continue to agree with you. You will disagree about how we are handling it. That is your right and your responsibility, and you will continue to say that publicly. We thought when the session was over that we should get out there, and we think now

that the session is continuing, we should get out there. That is what we are doing. We are doing the best job that we can within the period of time. We have cabinet on Wednesday morning, as the Member opposite would expect. We are trying to get there and trying to get back.

I get out to a lot of the communities. I have certainly been in Brandon 15 or 20 times since the election and will continue to go there, but I thought it was important not just to go to Brandon. For southwest Manitoba, we would go to Melita. You say I should go further than that. I think ideally all those suggestions are correct, but you cannot get to every place, and that is why the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) is going to those places.

I agree it is last-minute notice. You may disagree with what we are doing and may give us opposite advice, but the bottom line is there were no secrets about our itinerary. I would have released it when it was finalized as soon as I had it. There was not any intent to be anything but saying these are the communities we are going to because we thought it was important that MLAs from other communities be at the events where we are announcing things. I can assure you I did not get invited to a lot of announcements that members of the Opposition were making when they were in government, when it was a good announcement for the community. Maybe that is why they lasted 11 years—I did not get invited. Maybe I am a little naive, but I think as a courtesy we should let you know. That is what we are trying to do. So there was nothing untoward.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): I guess my question to the Premier and to the Minister of Agriculture in regard to your itinerary tomorrow in southern and southwestern Manitoba, it may have been a very short, quickly organized kind of an agenda, and you may have done that according to not knowing whether we were going to be here in the session or not.

But, if you were making an opportunity to go to at least Melita, I would have assumed that you would have called the southwest lobby group or the Rural Recovery Coalition. Neither of those organizations knows anything about the Premier and the Minister of Agriculture coming

to Melita tomorrow. The Mayor may, I have not been able to get a hold of him today, but any of the people in the Rural Recovery Coalition or southwest lobby group and some of the local farmers who were key in organizing the rally there last summer, none of them know about either of you being in Melita tomorrow. So I guess if you are going to depend on the Mayor—and he is a very good mayor, believe me. He has been part and parcel of the whole process out there, and he certainly does know the process. He knows the disaster in the area as well.

But it behooves me to think that you would not have given them a call to say we are coming and we will meet with you. I am sure that instead of being in meetings here in the city of Winnipeg, as they will be tomorrow, some of the people off of the Keystone Ag Producers executive at least, they would have stayed home and been there in southwest Manitoba to meet with the Premier and the Minister of Agriculture on this important issue, one that they have been working on forcefully and very hard and tiringly, every effort they can possibly work on to meet with you. It is unfortunate that that was not considered as part of the co-ordination of the process of taking a day to be in the southwest part of Manitoba.

I guess I only raise these issues because of the consternation that it leaves me with after all of the concern that we have shown in this House. The Premier, the First Minister agrees that we may disagree on the process and we may disagree on the fact that there has been no direct disaster aid in southwest Manitoba, but surely we could have agreed upon pulling a group of farmers together in one of those communities and having the opportunity to do that. If the Premier wants us to do that, we would probably still be able to do that for sometime tomorrow afternoon on the agenda. I am sure that they would be able to get half a dozen or two hundred farmers together, perhaps, to have a discussion with them on some of these issues.

So I would leave that with you, Mr. Chairperson. Thank you for those comments.

Mr. Doer: I am not 100 percent sure of all the arrangements, who was contacted. I know KAP was at our last meeting that we had on the

disaster assistance. The vice-president from KAP was there, and he had some very excellent points. I do plan on going back and spending more time again when we get some more time. I know the Minister of Agriculture is meeting with the farmers. We do consider this to be one of the files with the federal government that is unresolved, and it is something that we are still continuing to work on. They did ask us to come back to Melita. It was hastily set up. We felt going to the six communities that we were going to, which are tightly scheduled, including obligations in Brandon after that, each one in their own is important. I recognize the Member, the agricultural minister's meeting in there, but, as I say, this is not the first time that I have been in that area, and it will not be the last time.

* (19:30)

If there are suggestions you can make in the future, I was taking up the suggestion from the Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer), whom I have a lot of respect for, last week. It was not his recommendation I not be with the farmers. I want to make that clear. I do not want to get him in trouble with his own caucus, so I apologize. We did meet with the committee. It was suggested that we go back there to meet with some of them, and we are doing that. I am not arguing with you. I just cannot get to all places all the time in a very short period of time. So I respect what you are saying. I just cannot humanly get everywhere. You can pound your fist on the table or you could be, you are not pounding on the table, or we can pound our fists. We do not disagree with members opposite. We have got the cards. We have got the letters. We have got the phone calls. We have got the faxes. We agree that people there were flooded. We believe that input costs were not covered, that people were treated in a horrible situation relative to the Red River Valley and that they are entitled to disaster assistance. We do not disagree a bit on that point. I think the Minister of Agriculture is going to meet with people there, and I am going to be meeting with individuals. There are two components to this issue. One is the communities that have been affected because of the farm income and the disaster, and the other one is the farming income itself and the disaster assistance. So I know that members are sincere on this issue.

As I say, I can handle, if we have to keep going on the Premier's Estimates tomorrow, that is fine. I am able to do that. We will just go back. We will reschedule, but schedules get pretty tight in this office, and I do not have as much control of those schedules as I would like to have, believe me.

Mr. Penner: The longer I listen to the Premier (Mr. Doer), the more convinced I become that he and his Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) simply do not know what the problem is and do not understand the issues. That is becoming very clear. The longer they talk, the more evident that becomes.

The second thing is, Mr. Chairman, that the Premier is pointing constantly fingers at the federal government. We all realize that the federal government has a role to play, but if the Premier is serious about some of the things that he has said previously, that would have convinced farmers in Manitoba that the Province also has a role to play.

If he is as convinced as most people who should be that the Minister of Agriculture is indeed the spokesperson or should be the spokesperson for agriculture and agricultural issues, then surely he must understand that, when he leaves us with the impression and when he leaves this House with the impression that he is indeed finally going out to visit with southwestern Manitoba people that were hurt by the flood, and that is the impression he left in this House when he made the statement that he was going out to southwest Manitoba—he did not say that directly, but he certainly left the impression—that caused us some heartfelt appreciation on this side of the House for the Premier's attempt to take time off during a session to go out and see the damage for himself, to talk to the people about the damage that they have incurred.

We were hopeful, quite frankly, that the Premier would give some indication as to what kind of support they could expect from their Premier and their Minister of Agriculture, indeed from their Minister responsible for disaster assistance. Yet, when I hear the Premier, all he does is blame everybody else for his problems.

He wanted to be, Mr. Chairman, the Premier of this province. He has a responsibility to treat the people of Manitoba fairly. That is what he and his colleagues have constantly called for from Ottawa: fairness and equity. The people of southwest Manitoba, indeed, all of western Manitoba and all of Manitoba, all they have asked for is equitable treatment and fairness. For him and his colleagues to put themselves off today as actually going to southwest Manitoba finally to deal with flood issues, and then now trying to blame us for wanting to stall this, is one of the unfairest connotations I have heard from this Premier. Surely, there has not been an indication.

In my opening statement, in this discussion, the Premier heard me clearly say that we would be willing to pair and we would be willing to attend with him if he would just ask. We would be willing to support any initiative that he takes to go out and discuss with those farmers that are hurt by the flooding in this province to discuss that issue with them. That is all we have continually asked, and for the Premier to sit there as Premier of this province and put in place the kind of questionable comments that he has done during this debate leads us further to clearly question his intentions.

To go out to any community in this province and announce a Grow Bonds Program and the Premier (Mr. Doer) to be there is honourable, but for the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) to just visit her ag reps in the area is not honourable, and the Premier should not allow that. The Premier should insist that the Keystone Agricultural Producers, the Farmers Union and all other farm organizations, including the municipal organizations and the municipalities, should be invited to a meeting to discuss the problem. That is what we did as a coalition, and we met with the coalition. These people out there, the leaders of those communities do not even know you are coming, sir. I think that is unfortunate.

So all I want to do is ask, as the former member did, why? Why will you not be honest with them and give them an honest answer, give them a straightforward answer, say: Yes, we will come; yes, we will discuss; yes, we will debate with you? I think Mr. Premier that you would do

yourself a favour and you would increase in stature if you would do that.

Mr. Chairperson: Item 2.1.(a) Premier and President of the Council's Salary \$43,600—pass.

RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,500,200 for Executive Council, General Administration, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2001.

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Chairperson: Do I hear differently?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Mr. Chairperson: All those in favour of passing this resolution, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Chairperson: Those who are opposed, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Chairperson: In my opinion, the Yeas have it. The resolution is accordingly passed.

An Honourable Member: On division.

Mr. Chairperson: On division.

This completes the Estimates of the Executive Council. Committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Mr. Speaker: The hour being after 6 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Tuesday).

