

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

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The Honourable George Hickes
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Ninth Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 7, 2009

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PETITIONS

Winnipeg Regional Health Authority

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

Manitoba's Premier and his NDP government have not recognized the issues of public concern related to the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority.

The WRHA is building an administrative empire at the expense of bedside care.

Winnipeg Regional Health Authority needs to be held accountable for the decisions it is making.

Health-care workers are being pressured into not being able to speak out no matter what the WRHA is doing or has done.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Premier (Mr. Doer) and the NDP government to call a meeting of a standing committee of the Legislature and invite representatives of the WRHA to appear before it.

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by J. Sarinas, J. Chan, K. Bradley and many, many other fine Manitobans. Thank you.

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

**Neepawa, Gladstone, Ste. Rose, McCreary—
Family Doctors**

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

These are the reasons for this petition.

Access to a family doctor is vital to good primary health care. Patients depend on their family doctor for many things, including their routine

health-care needs, preventative care and referrals for diagnostic tests and appointments with specialists.

Family doctors in Neepawa, Gladstone and Ste. Rose are unable to accept new patients. The nearby community of McCreary has not had a doctor available to take patients in months.

Without a family doctor, residents of this large geographical area have no option but to look for family doctors in communities as far away as Brandon and Winnipeg.

Residents of these communities are suffering because of the provincial government's continuing failure to effectively address the shortage of doctors in rural Manitoba.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) to consider prioritizing the needs of these communities by ensuring they have access to a family doctor.

To urge the Minister of Health to consider promptly increasing the use of nurse practitioners in these communities in order to improve access to quality health care.

This petition is signed by Leonard Law, Gladys Law, Reine Cameron and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Long-Term Care Facility—Morden

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background for this petition is as follows:

Tabor Home Incorporated is a time-expired personal care home in Morden with safety, environmental and space deficiencies.

The seniors of Manitoba are valuable members of the community with increasing health-care needs requiring long-term care.

The community of Morden and the surrounding area are experiencing substantial population growth.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) to strongly consider giving priority for funding to develop and staff a new 100-bed long-term care facility so that clients are not exposed to unsafe conditions and so that Boundary Trails Health Centre beds remain available for acute-care patients instead of waiting placement clients.

This is signed by Richard Schmidt, Jeff Knaggs, Brent Laverty and many, many others.

Midwifery Services—Interlake Region

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition.

Residents of the Interlake Regional Health Authority do not have access to midwifery services.

Midwives provide high quality, cost-effective care to childbearing women throughout their pregnancy, birth and in the post-partum period.

Women in the Interlake should have access to midwifery care.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) to consider working with the Interlake Regional Health Authority to provide midwifery services to women in this region.

This is signed by Rebecca Wood, Michelle Santchi, Angela Falk and many, many others.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us from Riverton Collegiate 25 grade 9 students under the direction of Ms. Linda Stevens. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff).

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Provincial Debt Repayment

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, three weeks ago, this House voted on a budget that contained within it

\$180 million in debt reductions over the next two years. Only two weeks later, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) introduced a bill that changed that to a \$330-million reduction in debt payments over three years. This is, over two weeks, a change of \$150 million in terms of the Finance Minister's budget plans.

Is the Premier not concerned that his Finance Minister, in the middle of this economic crisis, when he changes his plans by tens of millions of dollars in the span of two weeks, is starting to look a little bit unbalanced and unsteady?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): I've been meeting with a number of business organizations, labour organizations, community organizations over the last period of time. Members opposite, with their extreme views, are out there on the extreme edge of the debate, Mr. Speaker. The only instability I see is the teetering on this edge, this extremist edge that they're on.

Mr. Speaker, over and over and over again, people think it's sensible, first of all, to have a pension liability payment that wasn't made for 30 or 40 years actually, begun by our Minister of Finance and continued on in this budget. The old days of hiring a jail guard or a highway operator or a public health nurse paid 7 percent less for 40 years, those days were ended in 2001 with that budget.

The hidden liability that was underneath the table from members opposite is now above the table so everybody can see, and there's a payment plan. All the capital expenditures—again, there was no health capital and health capital debt in the budget before. All those are above the table now, not below the table, above the table, fully transparent and an amortization plan. There's some \$450 million of obligations in the budget for repayments of past capital, past pension.

I think it does make sense, though, to deal with the stimulus package, to deal with needed priorities, to reduce the debt payment on the operating side of government. It is only reduced. The budget is balanced under GAAP financial planning as the Auditor General has recommended. It's one of only two provinces in Canada that's done so. I'm disappointed the members opposite voted against it, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, again, the self-appointed historical fiction writer of the 1990s

again is going off and providing incorrect information. In fact, the 1999 budget that he now seems to have so much difficulty with, how did he vote on that budget? Maybe he'd be honest enough to remind Manitobans he voted for the very budget that today he seems to be criticizing. That Tory budget of 1999, he's on the record voting in favour of.

Now, Mr. Speaker, bringing us to the year 2009, it was only five months ago that the Premier said, and I quote: I would also point out that we have a debt payment that we've also recommitted to of \$110 million. So if you look at a potential draw of the rainy day fund of \$60 million and you still have a \$110-million debt repayment, we are actually at a situation that's very, very positive.

That's what he said five months ago. Now he says that's an extreme position, the position he was putting on the record five months ago. One week ago, Mr. Speaker, they introduced a bill that made a \$130-million change in the budget that they introduced and voted on three weeks ago.

Mr. Speaker, where are they going to be next week when it comes to their fiscal plans, and is it going to be anything that resembles where they stand today?

* (13:40)

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, I would point out that the '99 budget that we voted against, some columnists thought that it was an unwise move. We actually thought—

Some Honourable Members: You voted for it.

Mr. Doer: Or voted for it. We voted for two budgets over 10 years. One was a copy of our election commitments on family tax credits. We thought that was a positive budget, and we voted for the budget in '99.

Now, I would point out, the '99 budget had a \$185-million draw from the rainy day fund. It was the second year in a row for a \$75-million debt payment.

This budget has \$110-million debt payment, reduced to \$20 million, which is obviously a \$20-million better position, if members can add.

And, Mr. Speaker, not only that, this budget is much better than the '99 budget, even though we voted for it, because it has pension liability payments. That wasn't in the '99 budget. It wasn't in the '98 budget. It wasn't in the '97 budget. It wasn't in

any budget right back to 1962. It was a ticking time bomb.

Members opposite, for 11 years, didn't pay one cent down on pension liability. The stability and balance of this budget includes that in this budget, and I'm proud of it, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, five months ago, the Premier said a \$110-million debt repayment commitment was a positive thing for Manitoba—this is after the financial crisis started—and then several months later, he said, no, that's wrong; we're going to reduce that to \$20 million for the next two years.

Three weeks later, Mr. Speaker, they adopted a third position: We're not going to make any debt repayments for the next three years.

I want to ask the Premier: Will he at least go back to the position that they had three weeks ago, when they voted on the budget, and ask his Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) to amend the bill and at least go back to where they were three weeks ago when they voted on the budget, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Doer: There's been \$960 million of operating debt payments made by our government, including the \$110 million that the member opposite references. We did not bring this budget in to be retroactive to the '08-09 year, Mr. Speaker. This is an '09-2010 budget.

Mr. Speaker, the federal government has gone from an infrastructure program that's seven years long. It has now gone to an infrastructure program that requires, in two years, to meet the obligations by provincial and municipal governments that were originally scheduled over seven years.

We actually know that the federal government is doing this. It's running a deficit. I know their friends are running a deficit, but they are running a deficit, Mr. Speaker, on the basis of stimulus for the economy.

Luckily, here in Manitoba, with the good work of our workers across the province, with the productive work of our farmers, with the innovation of our businesses, we can match those infrastructure investments by reducing the debt payment but maintaining a balanced budget.

No, we're not going to go backwards to three weeks ago. We always go forward, Mr. Speaker.

Manitoba Hydro Bipole III West-Side Cost

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain): It's painfully clear this government has lost touch with Manitobans.

Bill 30 proves we're in financial difficulty, yet this government forges ahead with its west-side bipole decision.

A concerned Manitoba taxpayer wrote to the *Free Press*, and it appeared in today's paper. J. Hugh McMorrow wrote: "Perhaps the NDP government requires bypass surgery to connect its decision-making process to its brain!" Mr. Speaker, this is the average Manitoban speaking.

Mr. Speaker, given our very difficult financial circumstances, will the minister reconsider his west-side decision?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister responsible for the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act): I thank the member for the question because it allows me, once again, to put the accurate facts on the record about what we're doing, with respect to debt repayment, in the province.

There's \$20 million on the general purpose debt repayment. There's \$135 million for pension liabilities, never paid by members opposite in the entire 11 years they were in office. There's \$135 million of amortization debt repayment, and there's \$127 million of principal repayment, for a total of \$417 million of debt repayments in the budget.

Now, I actually don't think the members were aware of that when they voted against the budget, and I would like to ask the members opposite, now that they know the facts, are they ready to reconsider their position and vote for the budget?

Mr. Cullen: Well, Mr. Speaker, we're hearing from Manitobans and they're speaking out about the bad decisions this government's making. It's clear after 10 years in government, they've simply lost touch with Manitobans. Mr. McMorrow talks about the confusion and dishonesty of the Doer government.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 30 is a classic example of a government losing touch. How can the minister justify running up the credit when we can't even pay off our own obligations right now?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, one of the common things that the members opposite do is they like to

ask for roads, schools, hospitals and facilities in their area, and then they like to separate from the reality that you have to pay for those things and blame that on the government.

Here are a couple of facts for the members opposite. Since '04-05, the gross domestic product in Manitoba has grown by 26 percent. The book value of our assets has grown by 49 percent, more than double that, and the per capita debt has grown by 6.4 percent.

We are getting value for the money. The amount of value, the amount of wealth in Manitoba, is more than eight times the amount that we have invested in debt. Manitobans are better off. Their debt-to-GDP ratio has gone down and their credit rating has gone up.

Mr. Cullen: Well, Mr. Speaker, here are the facts. There are no plans in place to reduce the debt. There is a plan in place, though, that will blow millions of dollars on a west-side line.

Yesterday, Manitobans were questioning the logic at the Cabinet table. Today, they're saying the government needs brain surgery.

When will this government come to its senses and make decisions in the best interests of all Manitobans?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the government has responded to the challenges of the day. We are in the middle of a global recession, the greatest economic meltdown since the Great Depression, driven by irresponsible financing arrangements made through the barons of Wall Street, the good friends of the members opposite, the members they like to emulate.

In response to that, the global community of all political stripes has said we need to have stimulus in the economy, a 2 percent stimulus. We are creating 10,000 person years of additional employment with this budget. The members opposite would rather that people go on the unemployment rolls so they can make a little debt payment. We think we can have fiscal discipline and more jobs in Manitoba to the betterment of everyone in Manitoba, and you vote against it.

Pediatric Allergy Testing Wait Times

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Today there are 575 children with allergies and asthma waiting to be seen for the first time by an allergy specialist at the pediatric allergy clinic at Children's Hospital.

Three hundred of them have appointments between now and the end of July; 275 of them are waiting on a waiting list for appointments to be set up after August 1.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Healthy Living if she thinks that it's safe to have so many children with allergies waiting so long to see a specialist.

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Healthy Living): We work with community partners across this province and we work on reducing lists. We have some exceptional programs that we work with: Youville community health centre where we provide a camp for children with asthma to come and play and learn about their disease and how to manage it, and we provide those ongoing supports for their family.

Mrs. Driedger: I don't blame her colleagues for not clapping for that response, Mr. Speaker.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, wait times for these children are broken into three levels: Non-urgent cases wait for nine to 12 months; urgent cases, but non-life-threatening, wait for four to six months; but urgent and life-threatening cases have to wait one to three months.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe that children with life-threatening allergies and asthma have to wait one to three months, and this is according to a Freedom of Information document from the WRHA.

So I'd like to ask the Minister of Healthy Living to please explain why a child with life-threatening allergies has to wait one to three months before being seen by a specialist.

Ms. Irvin-Ross: This government has worked very hard to bring nurses and doctors to this province, and we have proven those successes.

I want the people of Manitoba to know, when there's a life-threatening issue, those issues are being dealt with immediately to support those individuals and those families, and that's the truth.

* (13:50)

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, this minister knows absolutely nothing about what she's talking about. Children who have life-threatening allergies and perhaps go into anaphylactic shock after eating a peanut—and we know about dangerous peanut

allergies because peanut allergies can be very, very dangerous for children—these kids have to wait one to three months before seeing a specialist.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Healthy Living to explain how such a dangerously high waiting list can exist today for children in this province.

Ms. Irvin-Ross: The facts are that we have made investments in emergency departments across the province, including the Children's Hospital, to provide those emergency life-threatening supports that are required.

What we need to talk about—the member opposite talks about what the facts are. The facts are that we continue to make investments around children's asthma education program. We, right now, currently, have an expanded allergy and asthma clinic under construction, which will be up and running. While that is under construction, we continue to offer those supports through education programs and those emergency supports every day to families and individuals in Manitoba.

Photo Radar Tickets Construction Zones

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, after being inundated with e-mails and phone calls, the Minister of Justice was in full retreat yesterday. He now seems close, however reluctantly he wants to do it, to be landing on the right position of refunding tickets to drivers who were driving below the regular posted speed limit at construction zones where there are no construction workers present.

The e-mails and the phone calls kept on coming today. One example is from a mother who was ticketed in a construction site where there were no workers and no equipment and who couldn't pay for the ticket because she was taking care of her sick husband. She and thousands of others now want to know when they're going to be able to apply and be eligible for their refund.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, it's very interesting that the member's gone from the, I'm on the side of the angels, a couple of days ago, to say, refund everything to everybody, to now saying, now you should look at those people that were between the overspeeding level and the particular regulations in place, as administered by the police and the City of Winnipeg.

Very interesting that the member's understood the fact that legally we can't step in there and do that. In fact, it's the police and the City who are responsible for it.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I want to advise the member that we intend to meet with the mayor and the chief of police tomorrow. We intend to revise the regulation to make it official and move on that. We also intend to go forward with the City to look at their responsibility with respect to retroactive—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Goertzen: In performing his political 180-degree turn yesterday, there was a number of surprising revelations from the minister. Among those surprises was his order to take down photo radar in construction sites, even where those construction workers are still present, as he undertakes a review of the regulation.

Can the Minister of Justice please tell us how quickly he expects this review to take place so that police, so that the public and so that construction workers will know where photo radar is eligible?

Mr. Chomiak: Well, the problem with the member's position today is that I don't have the legal authority to do that by just announcing it. We have to change the regulation with respect to that, and we will change the regulation because, Mr. Speaker, as the member indicated—as the member indicated, there are certain criteria that have to be met with respect to guilty pleas, not-guilty pleas, et cetera, and there's certain criteria that the City did not meet with respect to signage. Without the signage in place, we cannot enforce it in the courts.

We have to talk to the City. We intend to change the regulation as early as this weekend. We intend to have the photo radar back in construction sites under the three conditions: condition No. 1, workers present; condition No. 2, safety; condition No. 3, you have to meet the signage commitments that the City agreed to meet with respect to their agreement with the Province when they asked for photo radar to be put in place. I thought members opposite supported that.

Mr. Goertzen: Just as surprising and frankly a little unbelievable was the minister's statement yesterday that he only learned yesterday morning that there were 60,000 tickets given last year, an increase over 3,000 the year before, a 2,000 percent increase.

This is an issue that's been in the news not for days but for months. The Minister of Justice wants Manitobans to believe that he ignored the phone calls, the court cases, the media articles, all the money that was flowing in to the government, and they never, ever piqued his curiosity to ask how many photo radar tickets were coming from the construction zones.

Either this minister is living in a political bubble and he's completely out of touch with his own department, or he wasn't quite forthcoming with the truth yesterday. Which is it?

Mr. Chomiak: As I indicated, the Crown, the independent Crown—I know the member wants to play Crown all the time and stick himself in the decision-making process—decided to do an appeal. An appeal was undertaken. Evidence came forward that signage was inappropriate. The Crown ethically said, we cannot, on the basis of all Manitobans, prosecute these cases. The City is responsible. The police are responsible for this. We can't prosecute because we don't have the legal ability to do so, and we'll stay charges.

The member stood up the next day and said, pay back all the tickets. I said we don't have the legal responsibility. If someone's going 120 miles per hour in a construction zone, he'd want us to pay that back. I said we've got to look at that.

We'll ask the City to sit down and look at that, Mr. Speaker, but the member opposite has gone from his extreme, conservative, right-wing view, as members opposite, to actually realizing that there's a legal issue to be dealt with, an issue of public safety to be dealt with. Welcome aboard.

Building Permits Value Reduction

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Carman): Statistics Canada has released figures that show the value of building permits increased by 23 percent in Canada. That's the good news. Unfortunately, the value of building permits decreased by the same 23 percent in Manitoba.

When the NDP introduced their 2009 budget, they claimed it was steady and balanced. We already know it's not balanced. Today's statistics prove that it's anything but steady as the NDP would have us believe.

Mr. Speaker, how can the Minister of Competitiveness, Training and Trade claim that

things are steady when the value of building permits is plummeting in Manitoba?

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Competitiveness, Training and Trade): As the Member for Carman and I have discussed, there are issues that arise from month to month, and a much better view of what is going on in the economy is not from month-to-month fluctuations in building permits, which could be affected by cold weather, could be affected by a flood, could be affected by other issues.

If I look, as I suggest the member should, at Manitoba's change in building permits year over year from March 2008 to 2009, indeed, Manitoba compares very well with Saskatchewan. In fact, we are doing substantially better with, I suppose, his dream destinations for himself of Alberta and British Columbia.

Manitoba is indeed doing, relatively speaking, very well among other Canadian provinces.

Mr. Pedersen: Mr. Speaker, I guess with the late spring, they're having a lack of warm weather. That'll be the next excuse why building permits are down, but somehow other provinces, in spite of their weather, have posted increases in the value of their building permits. Yet Manitoba posts a 23 percent loss, according to the minister, because of the weather.

Mr. Speaker, when is this government going to wake up and realize that by crossing their fingers, closing their eyes and hoping for the best, it's not good enough? How can this minister explain to Manitobans why Manitoba's doing so poorly as compared to the rest of Canada?

Mr. Swan: I presume, Mr. Speaker, that the Member for Carman didn't understand what I said so we'll try it another way. Capital investment is actually a very important measure of how public sector and private sector entities believe in the strength of a certain jurisdiction. Indeed, last year, Manitoba ranked No. 1 among all Canadian provinces in the increase in private capital investment.

Private companies across the country, indeed across the world, are seeing that Manitoba is a very good place because of our stability, because of our diverse and our increasingly well-trained work force, that, indeed, they're voting with their feet and they're investing dollars right here in Manitoba.

* (14:00)

Mr. Pedersen: Mr. Speaker, the minister talks about private capital investment and that's correct as long as you stay small, because the minute you start to grow in Manitoba, you get walloped with the payroll tax. That's not support. That's not how you do it for business. They're taxing growth and now we're seeing the result of this taxing growth in the decreasing value of building permits.

Mr. Speaker, when will this government realize that if we continue on this path, we're not going to reach our potential? Manitobans deserve better, not the rhetoric they hear from this government.

Mr. Swan: Well, Mr. Speaker, let's hear what Jayson Myers who's the president of the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters Association said, who represents very many large companies across the country, many of which have growing facilities here in Manitoba. What does he say? He said on CJOB on March 11, 2009: I just wish that what's happening here in Manitoba could be replicated elsewhere across the country. When he talked about the recession, he said: Companies are affected by this but they are in a much stronger position right now, and I think a lot of that is because of the support that Manitoba's government's been giving.

What more does he need?

Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Enhanced Driver's Licences

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): There isn't a province in Canada that wouldn't appreciate a \$4-billion transfer pay.

Mr. Speaker, we already know that the NDP government's enhanced ID cards projection has been a failure. Thirteen million is budgeted for these cards even though less than 1,500 have applied.

Can the minister responsible for this boondoggle tell the House exactly how much money has been spent on these ID cards and how much will be spent this year?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act): Mr. Speaker, last year when the members apparently supported enhanced ID cards, we provided the number to them.

The member will know, in fact, that the regulations aren't coming into effect in the United States until June 1. The member will know that only 31 percent of Manitobans have passports. The member will know that there's been a big issue I

think with travel as a result of issues relating to perhaps viruses and issues perhaps relating to flood-related matters.

Perhaps travel isn't the first thing on Manitobans' minds, but we expect—as Ontario, as B.C. is doing, as Québec is doing—that there will be a need for an enhanced driver's licence that's totally voluntary. It will be not only convenient; it will be a cost savings giving Manitobans a choice and the ability of which the—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Graydon: Mr. Speaker, I don't think the weather should have any effect on the deadlines that they had put on themselves of June 1.

Can the minister tell the House exactly how many staff have been contracted or hired by MPI to implement the enhanced ID card project and how much money it's costing Manitobans to keep them employed?

Mr. Chomiak: When we outlined the steps for the enhanced ID card, we outlined time lines and dates that we would have to establish going towards the June 1 kick-in date of the U.S. regulations. The member knows that. The member's making a point that there hasn't been as large an uptake for Manitobans right now as we expected. We expect more of an intake as we get closer to June 1.

The Emerson border is the third busiest border in the country where people go by car. Thirty-one percent of Manitobans have passports. Are they going to stop going? They'll have an opportunity for another choice of an enhanced driver's licence which will move us towards enhanced identification for all Manitobans that we have to go to anyway.

We think it's convenient for Manitobans. Members last year supported it. The project still is not complete because it's still being worked on according to the time lines. All of a sudden, the members have jumped up prematurely and, as in most cases, have jumped on this issue when, in fact, the issue is still an ongoing matter.

Mr. Graydon: Mr. Speaker, prematurely June 1 is the deadline that's there, the deadline they knew about, the deadline when they started this project. The new ID requirement travel to the United States comes into effect June 1, less than a month from now.

Can the minister tell this House where the ID cards are being printed and does he guarantee that

the applicants, the few applicants, will have their cards in their wallet by June 1?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I don't understand. In the first question, he said it was useless and a boondoggle, and in his third question, he says, can you guarantee that you're going to have it?

That's the problem when you're an extremist and you have extreme views. You go from one end of the equation to the other end of the equation, and it doesn't make any sense in the middle. We decided that we would have a plan, we'd stick to that plan, and we'd provide it to Manitobans, and we're working on that same plan and that same schedule, not, Mr. Speaker, on any kind of extremist viewpoint that we get every day from members opposite.

It's an extreme view, it's an out-of-touch view, and that's one of the reasons why we continue to work with Manitobans and not go on this extreme right-wing agenda.

Hog Industry Economic Challenges

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, today's prices for hogs on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange are 38 percent below the price a year ago, and the price a year ago was already low. Shipments of hogs from Manitoba to the U.S. a year ago were 25,000 a week and are now down to 1,000 a week. If you're a hog producer in Manitoba without a farm contract from Maple Leaf or not associated with Hytek in their plant in Neepawa, you may be in big, big trouble.

Yet the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) insists she is standing by the industry, but she doesn't appear to have any plan to deal with the situation. Her previous plan to deal with country-of-origin labelling was a total disaster.

Will the minister today table her plan for the present situation for dealing with the hog industry?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): I know the member knows that the country-of-origin legislation goes back to former Ambassador Frank McKenna and now the Ambassador Michael Wilson and different trade ministers. I think there were seven different trade ministers under the former Liberal government, and a couple now, in Canada—the third one, I think, at this point.

Mr. Speaker, we personally believe that the rules that have been worked on by the hog industry and by the Canadian ministers and the Minister of

Agriculture in Manitoba on predictable issues of country-of-origin legislation, the rule that we worked on was an acceptable compromise. Unfortunately, the Secretary of Agriculture has provided, since then, a voluntary agreement from the producer—

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

Mr. Gerrard: The problem is that when you know that a disastrous situation like country-of-origin labelling is coming, you should do something about it in Manitoba to protect Manitoba producers. The industry said, we want to build extra capacity, and you said, put it in Winnipeg, which was a disaster. When the industry said, we're going to put in additional finishing barns, you said, we'll put a moratorium on and end that plan.

What is the minister's plan now to deal with the major problems that the industry is facing? Where is the minister's plan? When is she going to table it? What is she going to do to help the hog industry at a critical time?

Mr. Doer: We know, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite wrote a glowing letter to Mark Chipman and then joined in the opposition to the new MTS Centre downtown, tied a yellow ribbon around his forehead and pranced around with about 10 other people opposing the arena.

We also know, on hog processing, he's got the same duplicitous position. He opposed the Olymel plant and OlyWest plant that was proposed in Winnipeg that would have processed hogs, delayed us a number of years. We're now building that plant in Neepawa. We're building more capacity in Brandon and again, the member opposite, all he can do is vote against it. He makes a lot of noise, votes against it. Why don't you vote for hog processing in Manitoba instead of voting against it, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I would have supported it if the Premier had had the common sense to locate it in rural Manitoba instead of in the middle of Winnipeg, the wrong place. The fact is that right now, as I was told earlier today by a knowledgeable Manitoban, much of the hog industry in our province is on the brink of disaster.

Where is the minister's plan? When is she going to table it? Is the minister going to offer a buyout to troubled producers? Is the minister, at the very least, going to join with other parties who I'm sure will be

onboard with having a summer of pork barbeques to help the industry?

What is the minister's plan? When is she going to table it? What's going on here that you're standing by, standing up and doing nothing?

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, I would point out that the member opposite voted against a new plant in Neepawa. The member opposite voted against the second shift in Brandon. Those are contrary to what he just says now, and he has a similar position about how to treat people with H1N1 as President Hu from China does, a position we don't accept on this side of the House.

* (14:10)

Communities in Motion Government Initiative

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): So, Mr. Speaker, in the last five minutes we've seen the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) say he knows where a rural processing facility should go. The Member for Carman (Mr. Pedersen) doesn't know anything about building permits. I'm going to show members opposite how to ask a question and not look silly. I'll do them a favour.

Could the Minister of Healthy Living please inform the House of any new initiatives her department may have initiated to help young people in Manitoba enjoy our gorgeous Manitoba weather and stay healthy and safe while doing it?

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Healthy Living): Well, I'd like to thank the member for that question.

I want to remind the House about an important event that happened today at Luxton School. I was joined with grade 1 students where we celebrated \$1-million worth of investments in communities across Manitoba for Communities in Motion. Communities in Motion has been embraced by Manitobans across this province where they are offering programs such as snowshoeing, yoga, physical activity courses in the community as well as in the schools.

There are programs all over the province of Manitoba: St. Theresa Point, Erickson, Matheson Island, Cross Lake, Riverton, Norquay Colony, Swan Lake First Nation, Berens River, Pinawa, Steinbach, Winnipeg, Brandon, Portage la Prairie.

Orthopedic Surgery Wait Times

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Carman): Mr. Speaker, that was a hard act to follow, but I really do have a serious question.

There is a serious backlog for Manitobans requiring shoulder surgeries. Without timely surgery, there can be permanent damage to tendons in the shoulder. I ask the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald): What is the average current wait time from the time of injury to the actual surgery day for shoulder surgeries?

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Acting Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I'd like to inform the House about what we've done about wait times. We have reduced hip and knee surgeries by 60 percent. We have continued to increase nursing and doctors. We have twice as many nurses as they fired; radiation.

What we've done is we've made investments in health across the board. As well as that, we provide healthy living strategies to ensure injury prevention.

Mr. Pedersen: Mr. Speaker, my constituent was referred to two different surgeons for shoulder surgery by his family doctor. Both surgeons declined my constituent as they were not able to do the surgery on a timely basis. My constituent was then referred to a surgeon in North Dakota by his doctor where the shoulder surgery was performed in less than two weeks.

Why is it Manitobans are forced to go outside of Manitoba to get timely surgery to repair tendons in the shoulder?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: Mr. Speaker, I ask the member opposite to please forward that information to us, and we will certainly follow up on this. You cannot talk about specific cases in the House, but I can tell you about what we've done around wait times.

We continue to have the shortest wait times in radiation therapy. We also have the shortest wait times, along with Alberta, in cardiac bypass surgery. Hip and knee wait times are 15 weeks down, 66 percent. CT wait times are down; MRI wait times, down. Ultrasound wait times are down.

We are committed to improving the health-care system and we will continue to do that work.

Mr. Pedersen: Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister will get the chance to hear this because my constituent now has to hire a lawyer, at his own expense, to

plead his case to Manitoba Health for remuneration. Manitoba Health will have a lawyer, five directors and a consultant present at the hearing.

Who do you think's going to win this hearing?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: Mr. Speaker, I'll review for the member again the reductions that we've been able to make in wait times. These wait times are making a difference for Manitobans across this province.

We have reduced wait times for radiation therapy, cardiac bypass, MRI, ultrasound. CT wait times are down. We continue to make these investments across the province of Manitoba. There are these services that are provided in hospitals beyond the Perimeter. We will continue to work with Manitobans and we will continue to improve the health-care system.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Junior Achievement Award Recipients

Ms. Sharon Blady (Kirkfield Park): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to share with my fellow members the accomplishments of some outstanding young people involved with Junior Achievement. On April 15, I attended the Futures Unlimited Banquet where achievers were recognized for their accomplishments within the JA Program.

Junior Achievement is the world's largest organization dedicated to educating students about work-force readiness, entrepreneurship and financial literacy through experiential hands-on programs. Junior Achievement programs help prepare young people for the real world by showing them how to generate wealth and effectively manage it, how to create jobs which make their communities more robust and how to apply entrepreneurial thinking to the workplace. Students put these lessons into action and learn the value of contributing to their communities. As a former Achiever, I know the value of this program and the mentorship that community leaders provide to students.

This year, for the first time ever, the students in the JA company programs had to meet the challenge of making their businesses green and address environmental sustainability within their business mandate and products. I am pleased to say that each company rose to the challenge and demonstrated ingenuity and passion in creating and successfully operating green small businesses. This combination of social responsibility and economic development is

reassuring as we look towards growing our green economy in Manitoba and globally. I am sure these students will be among the leaders in the next wave of environmentally responsible economic growth.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make special mention of some of the award recipients at this year's banquet: Web site of the Year went to Green Being; Club G was recognized for Best Business Plan; and Gogee Inc. was successful in three categories: Corporate Citizenship, Best Shareholders' Report and Company of the Year. This year's Achiever of the Year Award went to Caitlin Giesbrecht from Club G.

In closing, I would like to congratulate all of the students who took part in JA programs this year for their dedication and hard work and to recognize the dedicated JA staff, the volunteers and advisers for their contributions to another successful year for Junior Achievement in Manitoba. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Intermountain Sport Fishing Enhancement Group

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, last Friday I, along with the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Hawranik), Member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson), Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire), Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach), Member for Brandon West (Mr. Borotsik), Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Briese) and Member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) had the great pleasure of attending the International Sport Fishing Enhancement Group Banquet in Dauphin. This is an extremely popular event in the community, attracting more than 500 guests annually.

The Intermountain Sport Fishing Enhancement Group was established in 1990 to help promote sport fishing and tourism in the Parkland region. Among their stated objectives is to encourage proper management of the ecosystem and support initiatives to that end to guarantee the sustainability of the natural resources.

The group is active on many fronts. For example, they help educate the next generation of fishers, by offering activities like children's ice fishing and a kid's trout pond. The group has been involved in many fish and fish habitat enhancement projects. During the 1990s, they worked with the Dauphin Lake Advisory Board to get pool and riffle structures installed on the Vermillion and Wilson rivers and Edwards Creek to provide walleye spawning habitat. Another very important project in

which the group is involved is the rearing ponds at Methley Beach. Approximately 200,000 walleye are reared in these ponds and then distributed to area lakes to help ensure the level of fish stocks is strong.

* (14:20)

The group is involved with the Manitoba Fisheries Enhancement fund. This fund helps support research and other projects aimed at conserving and enhancing Manitoba's fishery resources.

Group members consult regularly with provincial departments like Manitoba Conservation on fish management issues such as slot limits and cash limits. Behind every successful group is a hardworking board of directors. I would like to take a moment to recognize them. The board includes president, Steve Hogue; vice-president, Todd Gardpie; treasurer, Dean Yarema; secretary, Doug Walker; past-president, John Boyd and directors, Jason Gibbs, Glen Zurba, Shelly Slyziuk, Stan Burdeniuk, Brad Durston, Shawn Bailey, Mark Talbot, Don Stokotelnny, Rob Remple, Scott Fordyce, Dean Bodner, Glen Haugen, Malcolm Pelypiw, and Ron Harvey.

Members of the Intermountain Sport Fishing Enhancement group are deeply committed to ensuring the fisheries in Dauphin and area remain healthy for future generations, and we appreciate their ongoing efforts. My colleagues and I would also like to thank them for the tremendous hospitality we enjoyed at the banquet, and we look forward to attending future banquets. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

Collège Saint-Norbert Collegiate Drama Production

Ms. Marilyn Brick (St. Norbert): I'm pleased to rise today to share with this House some information about a play I attended on February 25 at Collège Saint-Norbert Collegiate. *Urinetown* is a satirical tale of industrial corruption in a Gotham-like town that is experiencing a terrible water shortage. In an attempt to regulate water consumption, the government creates a law whereby everyone must pay to use public washrooms which are owned and operated by the heartless Urine Good Company. Any citizen who refuses to pay is sent to the worst place in the world, Urinetown. When young Bobby Strong decides he'd had enough, he takes a lead to have a revolution to overthrow the greedy corporation.

I was incredibly impressed with the students' production. Based on the 2001 Broadway musical by Mark Hollmann, *Urinetown* is an entertaining look at the dark underbelly of capitalism and corporation mismanagement. With memorable characters like Officers Lockstock and Barrel, Caldwell B. Cladwell and Penelope Pennywise, and musical numbers like "Follow Your Heart" and "I See a River," this show was witty, fun and thought-provoking.

I would like to congratulate the cast, crew and band members who worked so hard to make the play a success, including: David Betz, Rebecca Gole, Mitchell Forrester, Shawnee Davis, Troy Jazser, Victoria Rutowski, Max Semchuk, Justin Mann, Aurel Smith, Tarek Rashwan, Lisa Spiers, Justin Willems, Katelyn Giesbrecht, Zack Gerbrandt, Stacey Archer, Dustin Schlag, Samantha Blanchette, Nicole Rosner, Sanna Kocay, Nicole Aubin, Alicia Hoffman, Ella Greer, Belinda Goertzen, Rachelle Garton, Natalie Hocking, Cassie Ralph, Renee Marion, Alana Ramnauth, Karl Enns, Haley Wiens, Caitlin Engel, Reily Mann, Kamini Ramnauth, Kyla Westra, Brooklyn Enrentraut, Nicole Rosner, Rob Woods, Carson Mauthe, Allison DeRuddere, Samantha Erickson, Desiree Waldner, Zona May, Alexis Cherniak, Aynsleigh Kerchak, Adam Benson, Levi Willems, Brittany Kelly, Michelle Claeys, Max Strickland, Stephanie Wallis, Alis Froehlich, Marvin Namaka, Claire Wheeler—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The member has gone quite a bit over the allotted two minutes.

The honourable member's asking for leave?

Ms. Brick: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave for her to continue? *[Agreed]*

The honourable Member for St. Norbert, to continue.

Ms. Brick: Kerri Huff, Stuart Harris, Bonnie Dack, Sydney Barton, Caitlynn Taczynski, Breanne Nicole, Amber Lotz, Sawyer Marshall-Stanchuk, Curtis Erickson, Lynn Sumka, Breanna Corlett, Emilie Derksen-Poirier, Chantal Schlamp, Olivia Ballentyne, Kiera Dayholos, Ali Froehlich, Madelaine Crierie, Shamus Dack, Nykol Pishak, Gisele Smith, Eileen Dionne, Matthew Lagace, Logan Sali, Cheyenne Neufeld, Al Omichinski, Rene Ahrens, Andrea DeRuddere, Victoria Jenkins, Cody Smith, Deanna Smith and Suzanne Cormier.

I would also like to congratulate Director Bev Betz and the staff and parent volunteers who participated.

Mr. Speaker, I thoroughly enjoyed St. Norbert's production of *Urinetown*. The school has a long tradition of producing excellent theatre, and I'm so proud to have such talented young people in my constituency. Thank you.

YWCA Women of Distinction

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I'm proud to rise today and congratulate the well-deserving women who were honoured last night at the YMCA-YWCA Women of Distinction Awards ceremony. This year marked the 33rd anniversary of the prestigious awards which are bestowed upon those women who have displayed exceptional leadership, achievement, imagination and innovation in how they have contributed to the development of others in their community.

The annual presentation of these awards continues to emphasize the importance of publicly recognizing the positive contributions that many different women from a multitude of backgrounds have made in our society.

I was pleased to attend this event last night, along with fellow Progressive Conservative MLAs from Morris, Portage la Prairie, Pembina, as well as our leader.

Nearly 60 women were nominated for the Women of Distinction Awards this year and all of them deserve to be congratulated for the positive spirit and dedication that they bring to their communities, and which merited a nomination for this award. This commitment that each of the nominees has shown deserves our respect, our admiration and our sincere thanks.

Of the 60 nominations, 10 exceptional women were chosen for a Women of Distinction award. Among them are, in the area of Health and Wellness, Leslie Galloway, a nurse at the Children's Hospital; for Community Volunteerism, Elaine Bishop, executive director of the North Point Douglas Women's Centre; for Education and Training, Wanda Wuttunee, director of the Aboriginal Business Education Program at the Asper School of Business and head of Native Studies in the Faculty of Arts; for Arts and Culture, Carmen Infante, founder of Sol de Espana folk dancers; for Business and Professions, Noelle De Pape, executive director of Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba; for

Research and Innovation, Elissavet Kardami, a doctor and principle investigator at the Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences at U of M; for Sport and Recreation, Jo-Anne Clark-Gillespie, a physical education teacher at Portage Collegiate Institute; for Creative Communications, Lisa Meeches, president of Eagle Vision Inc. and Meeches Video Production; for Young Woman of Distinction, Kim Le, a student and active volunteer; and for the Gerrie Hammond Memorial Award of Promise, Jacqueline Proctor, a student and president of her student council in Warren, Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I heartily congratulate all of these women on their significant achievements, and a particular acknowledgement to Pat Flaws for chairing an exceptionally wonderful evening and dinner. Thank you.

Youth Parliament of Manitoba

Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today to speak about a wonderful organization, Youth Parliament of Manitoba. Youth Parliament is a group that seeks to introduce young people to Manitoba and our legislative system by holding a mock parliament twice a year. It is one of the oldest model parliament organizations in the world and has held sessions continuously since 1922.

The organization is run for youth by youth. The board of directors are all members of our community between the ages of 18 to 25, who have been elected by their fellow parliamentarians. The executive appoints a 20-member cabinet who are responsible for the day to day running of the legislative session.

This organization is an institution in our province, an 88-year legacy we should be proud of. Youth Parliament alumni are scattered not only across Manitoba, but the world. Some are working on Parliament Hill; others are lawyers, Rhodes scholars, doctors, journalists, teachers, while some walk the halls of this very Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, it's with great pride that I share with all members about all my three children, Piyooosh Jha, Prabhat Jha and Reena Jha. They were all Manitoba Youth Parliament members and they are the alumni.

We know one member right here, the Member for Elmwood (Mr. Blaikie), ex-dean of the House of Commons in Ottawa, among distinguished alumni of Manitoba Youth Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, it's my view that the world would be much better tomorrow built on solid democratic principles and by participation by our youth from our society. Thank you very much.

ORDERS OF THE DAY (Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Steve Ashton (Deputy Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, before resolving into Committee of Supply, I believe there's agreement to also continue Committee of Supply tomorrow. With that in mind, if you could resolve into Committee of Supply, please.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, orders of the day, to remind members that Committee of Supply will continue tomorrow.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

FAMILY SERVICES AND HOUSING

* (14:40)

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

The floor is now open for questions.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Housing): I know the department is rallying some answers to questions we were making best efforts to get back today. There was the boilerplate contribution agreement, and I'll leave that for the member.

The Manitoba Child Benefit changes from CRISP: The '08-09 numbers show 5,325 children. That's an increase of 219.2 percent over the previous year, and part of that—no, that's the right way to put it—and then the other one was the amount. I think that was the question. Wasn't it the number of children on the Manitoba Child Benefit? Yes. We had a 2.8, 35.5, and that's an increase of 305.9 percent.

Then, Madam Chairperson, there was a question around the SPAs: Agency Accountability and Support Unit, one; Children's Special Services, 21; Child Protection branch, 21; Employment Income Assistance, eight; Family Violence Prevention

Program, 27; a multi-division, in other words, involving several areas of the department, 23; Supported Living Program, 87; and Employment and Training Services, 11, for a total of 199. Those are active. There are two SPAs, one with B&L, and the other, essential living assistance services, that are under negotiation for renewals, but the current SPAs continue until such time as the renewals are completed, I understand.

So, if there's other information that we can provide, we will do so.

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): I just want to thank the minister for those very timely responses, and I'll read those in the record that he's put on the record and also take a look at that contribution agreement.

Can we move on, then, to—actually, I don't know whether you'll have this, but this is information that I got out of the last annual report and several annual reports previously. It's on child abuse investigations. It's on page 89 of the last 2007-2008 annual report and, under centralized provincial services, it says that the number of child abuse investigations that were done in that year were one thousand, five hundred and—no, pardon me—2,250. The year before it was 1,535.

I noticed as I went back into annual reports, I guess I went back as far as 2003-2004, and, you know, the number of investigations has gone up and down a little bit. I guess the lowest was 1,100 in '05-06 up to a high of 2,250 in '07-08.

The first question I would have is, as I looked at the annual reports earlier on, there were several agencies that didn't report. In '03-04, 10 of the agencies didn't report child abuse investigations. In '04-05, the Northern Child and Family Services authorities didn't report. In '05-06, there were four agencies that didn't report. I guess I was—in '06-07 and '07-08, there was no mention of agencies not reporting, and I guess I would just ask the question then: Did all agencies report, and that was why it wasn't referred to, or do we have any other information?

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, I'm advised that in some years there are some agencies that may not get their information in by the time the deadline is in place for the compiling of the annual report's statistical information. I'm advised that with an enhanced emphasis on data collection—we talked about that yesterday in the area headed by Rhonda Warren that

we anticipate that for the collection of this year's annual report, that there's going to be more timely reporting. But that has been a pattern that's been noticed over the years with that deadline.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chair, I'll be watching for that in the annual report, I guess, that comes out. By September, we should have that cleared up and we should have all the information.

It says in a footnote beside child abuse investigations, that this includes investigations completed by the provincial investigator. I guess I would just like to understand a little bit better of what we're talking about and what the difference is between the provincial investigator and whoever else does investigations.

* (14:50)

Mr. Mackintosh: We someday will move to staff directly answering questions. You know, every hour or so, I wonder why we got into this, but it's about ministerial accountability, I understand that and that's very important. It also sometimes informs the minister of what goes on in the bowels of the department.

The provincial investigator role was set out in section 18.6 of the act. The provincial investigators versus the agency investigators take on those investigations that are in regard to complaints about residential facilities, No. 1, and No. 2, where it concerns usually staff of another child protection agency or organization; in other words, to avoid a conflict of an agency investigating itself. For example, there was that St. Amant example that is well known publicly, where the provincial investigators looked at that situation rather than relying on St. Amant to look at one of its group homes because their allegations were against a staffperson.

It's a province-wide service that's offered. I think that historically there were two investigators. Just last year, we doubled it to four investigators. There's one manager. There are over 200 investigations annually. Of course, they must work closely with police; often there are joint investigations.

Mrs. Mitchelson: So where do I find those positions on the—oh, don't tell me I didn't bring the—I know they were long pieces of paper that you gave me yesterday with the org charts.

Where do I find that increase in positions on the org chart?

Mr. Mackintosh: In the org chart that has Claudia's name at the top—Ash-Ponce. If you move over to Erickson, and under Erickson is Ms. Hanson. She's the manager, and she has a history of being one of the investigators. Then you'll see Ms. Schellenberg and Greeley, Fewster and Yager.

Mrs. Mitchelson: So if there are 200 investigations done by government, approximately, in a year, and there were 2,250 done provincially, that would mean then that the agencies or the authorities, I guess—who else does the investigation?

Mr. Mackintosh: If the investigations aren't done by the branch itself, they would be done by child welfare agencies across Manitoba; generally, the designated intake agencies.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Can the minister tell me how many designated intake agencies there are then across the province? I believe it's ANCR that—and I'll get into some questions around that later, but—does all of the Winnipeg intake, I understand?

Mr. Mackintosh: There are 14 DIAs, Madam Chair. ANCR has jurisdiction in Winnipeg, Headingley and St. Clements.

I am advised it's not all of St.—like I'm using that term generically, but it's part of St. Clements. We can provide a map, if the member seeks that.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Does the department keep statistics and do the agencies keep statistics on how many of those allegations were substantiated and how many were not?

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I wonder whether the minister could tell me, over the last couple of years—and I know we don't have the annual report from last year and you may not have all of the information in from all the agencies because I know you said there was a bit of a backlog sometimes—but for the year 2007-2008 then, could the minister indicate to me by designated intake agency or authority, whatever it is, and the branch, how many of the allegations were substantiated?

Mr. Mackintosh: I am advised that certainly that information can be collated, but the numbers on substantiated allegations, of course, will only deal with investigations concluded in that fiscal year. So that will be the caveat on the information, but I think that's what the member is looking for.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thanks. I'd just like some sort of general indication of—and can that be done then by category? How many children were in sort of their natural home versus foster care versus residential—all of the different categories that—I might not be thinking of something, but if you could do that breakdown for me and in the most current year, I guess. If they don't have the detail for this year, maybe from the year before, last year.

Mr. Mackintosh: I'm advised that that information is recorded and can be collated.

* (15:00)

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thank you for that. I notice there's been a significant increase in the number of FTEs in the Child Protection branch and I see, by the org chart, I think the minister indicated to me already two new positions that were created and those would be in investigations, just in his previous answer. But could he just go through the department and indicate to me, because I believe staff has increased from 56 FTEs in 2006-2007 to, I believe it's 72 in this year's budget.

Mr. Mackintosh: The numbers I have are 56 in '07-08, 72 in '09-10.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chair, I thought I was waiting for an answer. My question was, where are the new positions? There were 56 to 72, and you did indicate that there were two new investigation specialists, but I was wondering where the other positions in the org chart are that would constitute the increase.

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, '08-09, there was one position out to community service delivery, and the new positions to net out was one management secretary.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Where's that? If we could just have the org chart, if the minister has a copy of the org chart. I've got it in front of me, the one he gave me yesterday, so it would be, you know—I could just put a little mark beside the new positions. If you've got that, it would be helpful.

Mr. Mackintosh: They actually made a list here, so they'll cross-reference that to the org chart. I can go down the list. There's a management secretary, and there's one quality assurance, one admin support, the two provincial investigators we spoke of, one issues management specialist, two CFSIS business analysts and one CFSIS trainer.

Then, in '09-10, two were transferred out, and the new positions are the one authority relations specialist, two policy analysts, one project manager for the child victims centre, one admin assistant, one differential response co-ordinator, one co-ordinator for sexual exploitation, one quality assurance specialist, and the two new sexual exploitation strategy specialists under Tracia's Trust.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Can the minister tell me whether the positions—and I see a position, an acting manager of training, a C. Martinez, and then three trainers underneath in the boxes underneath that—are any of those new positions?

Mr. Mackintosh: One of the three advisers is a new position.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Just for clarification, is this training on the CFSIS system?

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Is there any other training then within the department or any other positions that are responsible for training?

Mr. Mackintosh: The three in the branch, aside from CFSIS training, do an intake training in core competency training, Madam Chairperson. Core competency is supplemented by contractors who deliver training. In addition to that, the joint training unit is a standing committee. That's the organization comprised of the four authorities in the branch. Under the Changes for Children initiative, the Province has four positions there as well that are funded.

Mrs. Mitchelson: So there are four positions in the joint training unit. Where does the budget show for that?

Mr. Mackintosh: The JTU positions are funded under the authorities and maintenance of children line on page 77 of the Estimates—of the detailed supplementary Estimates, joint training unit.

Mrs. Mitchelson: When were those positions created?

Mr. Mackintosh: Those positions, I'm advised, were funded during '06-07 as part of the Changes for Children initiative.

* (15:10)

Mrs. Mitchelson: Can the minister tell me what has happened? There are four positions funded in the joint training unit by the department.

So, are they part of the FTE component or—I guess I'll ask that question.

Mr. Mackintosh: Those are not FTE expenditures. They're not provincial civil service positions. Those are positions created as a result of a grant to the authorities for the provision of the joint training initiative.

Mrs. Mitchelson: So, are there only four training positions in the joint training unit?

Mr. Mackintosh: The grant to the authorities for the four positions is distributed on the basis of one for each of the authorities. Then the branch is represented at the JTU by Ms. Martinez, which is one of the FTEs in the branch for training.

As well, there is funding for an administrator, and that flowed to an authority for the JTU. I'm advised that, as well, there is funding available for contractors to provide services.

Mrs. Mitchelson: So, then, there are four staff positions in the joint training unit, with one administrative support for those positions, and that joint training unit falls under the standing committee, which is, I understand, the CEOs of the four authorities plus our director.

How often do they meet?

Mr. Mackintosh: They meet twice a month for one-and-a-half days.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I wonder if the minister could tell me what kinds of issues would be discussed at the standing committee.

Mr. Mackintosh: The standing committee is involved in work on, first, the funding model development that we spoke about yesterday that has been approved by our Treasury Board.

Standards development: one of the achievements there has been, 19?—thirty now, 30 new standards that have been developed; 19 I know that were approved and were out the door by summer.

Intersectoral work, which includes work with, for example, Healthy Child Manitoba, Manitoba Adolescent Treatment Centre, Health, FASD, suicide strategy, all of those initiatives that were important to the Changes for Children initiative.

There are regular meetings, formalized meetings now with the office of the Children's Advocate and

the Ombudsman quarterly on issues of mutual interest, but as well, the Changes for Children, action on Changes for Children.

Quality assurance matters: budgeting, overall co-ordination of Changes for Children, province-wide shared resource development, the development of the differential response model for Manitoba and how family enhancement should roll out. They can deal with legal presentations from legal services from time to time, the development of common processes and forms.

Madam Chair, getting back to the original question from the member, joint training initiatives and the methodology of that operation. There is problem-solving from time to time, and the CFSIS redevelopment; it's an initiative called Information Matters. Finally, reviewing the work plans for the Changes for Children initiative.

Now, that information comes from both the ADM and the director, so I suspect that it's pretty comprehensive then. But I think there's a catch-all there; matters that arise from time to time as well are dealt with there, but it is the consensus building and co-ordinating part of the child welfare system today in this province.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chair, the minister talked about the new funding model that has been approved. I guess my question around that would be: Would the funding flow under this contribution agreement that was tabled for me?

That is in the function of this committee, I believe it would be the quality—yes, I'm just wondering, is it the same branch that develops service purchase agreements that would be negotiated with the authorities over this new funding model?

* (15:20)

Mr. Mackintosh: Essentially, the answer is yes, but there are other complications. But, yes, the dollars do flow under the—they will flow under the auspices of the contribution agreement, and they will have to be amended accordingly to flow those dollars.

There are some conditions that attach. For example, each agency is to conclude a five-year business plan and that has to be approved then by the respective authority. So that will be part of the contribution agreement.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Are there contribution agreements signed now with the four authorities?

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Are there any business plans? Are there five-year business plans presently?

Mr. Mackintosh: The next step in the funding formula's roll out is the agreement with the federal government, then, on the funding formula itself and its components. The next step, then, is to ensure that the dollars flow according to the contribution agreements and the plans of the agencies.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chair, are the negotiations complete with the federal government, and what commitment do we have from the federal government on funding?

Mr. Mackintosh: The framework is all the product of the ongoing work over the last, what, year and a half or more, of provincial and federal officials; in terms of federal officials, both from the region and from headquarters in Ottawa. As well, there's been discussions at the deputy level and political correspondence. It's our understanding that the federal officials, now that the Province has put in its budget—we had to make that commitment in our budget—and the next step, then, will be for the Cabinet memorandum to be concluded by the officials—or federal officials. Is it Cabinet or Treasury? Well, they call it a memorandum of Cabinet.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Has there been a change in the funding formula from the federal government?

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes. Well, that will be what to watch for, is that change in funding formula from Ottawa.

Mrs. Mitchelson: The minister mentioned new standards, and that that was a function that was discussed and worked on at the standing committee level, and that there were several new standards that were developed or have been developed and they have been implemented.

Can I ask, what is the process for training front-line staff for the new standards? I'm asking this because of a genuine concern that I have when we look at a lot of the reviews of child deaths that have been done. There are a lot of recommendations, but I believe, if more training had been done up front and workers knew what their roles were and what their jobs were, that maybe some of the tragedies that have occurred might have been prevented.

So, when I look at recommendations, I see training as the underlying thread of what's missing

for many of the front-line workers, and if they don't have the resources or don't understand their roles and responsibility, that's where we run into trouble. I'm very interested in how much work is going on since the reviews have been tabled with government to ensure front-line workers understand their roles and responsibilities. That can only happen through good training and good training initiatives.

Mr. Mackintosh: The standing committee created a standards training package that provides the basis for all of the authorities to ensure that agency staff receive training on a consistent basis. Of course, the standards manual is available. It's based on the provincial legislation and policy.

There has been an enhanced focus now with the JTU on training. I'm advised that last year approximately 1,600 staff and some foster parents as well received training in core competency and CFSIS and practice approaches co-ordinated by the joint training unit as well. JTU is now working on several joint training initiatives in three prioritized areas: critical incident and stress management, suicide prevention and intervention, child abuse investigations. There's intensive work on a new orientation package for new workers. I've got new numbers here from April '08 to December '08, Madam Chair. Attendance at training sessions exceeded 6,200 participants.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I wonder if the minister could share with me the training packages that have been developed. I'd be really interested in seeing those if I could.

* (15:30)

Mr. Mackintosh: Just to clarify, then, we don't have them available here, but we can provide them on a timely basis to the member, but just if you could indicate whether it is only with regard to standards or whether core competency as well. There may be other areas that are of interest to the member; in other words, would she like a full training package or just those related to standards training?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I think I'd like the whole training package and I think orientation is one piece that I'm very interested in, so if we could do the whole thing and I could just have a look at it and see what is happening because I feel it's a very critical component to what needs to happen.

Can the minister indicate for me how stable the work force is in the agencies? I do know, if we go back to looking at the Phoenix Sinclair review that

was done—certainly in the agency that Phoenix Sinclair was associated with there was significant turnover in staff and there were very few workers on the front line that had any training or any experience. That is of great concern to me. Could we have statistics—maybe let's just start at the top, and could I have a history authority by authority on—now, what do we call them; do we call them CEOs of the authorities? Is that the head person? I just wasn't sure of the title. Could the minister indicate who the CEOs are now of the four authorities and how long they've been in place, and maybe since the authorities were created? What's the history of the CEOs? Who were the initial CEOs and then how has that changed over the years?

While we're getting that information—I understand it may take a few minutes—I wonder if the minister could indicate to me, since 1999-2000, could he just give me a history of the deputy ministers in the Department of Family Services and Housing, the ADMs in—I guess I'm mostly interested in the Child Protection branch, since 1999, if he could just give me the names and the dates that there have been changes in those positions.

Mr. Mackintosh: So far at the table here we're good with names, but the dates are not exact. But we can give time lines in terms of, first of all, the CEOs. The North CEO is Marie Lands, and she will be one year this summer. The southern authority CEO is Elsie Flette, and she's been in place since the authority was created. The general authority, Jay Rodgers is the CEO. He's been there about two years. The Métis, Leilani Buschau. Did I say how long Leilani has been there? One year, approximately, one year.

The deputy ministers, '99, Tannis Mindell—well, the member knows that—followed by Debra Woodgate and then Milton Sussman. I know Martin Billinkoff was appointed, I believe the same day that I was, in September of '06. So we don't have dates for the others, but we could provide those. *[interjection]* If there's no further question on that one, we won't search for the dates.

The ADMs for CFS, as the member knows, David Langtry, a fine person. Peter Dubiensi, who was there when I first arrived—for Changes for Children, and then Carolyn Loepky. Carolyn's been in office as ADM for about two and a half years and still standing.

Madam Chairperson: This is called corporate memory. We're all scared we're going to lose when people retire.

Mrs. Mitchelson: In the position that Carolyn Loeppky is in, I sometimes wonder how you can keep track of the days and years because it is a hectic position.

Could the minister just indicate to me who the directors of Child Welfare have been since '99?

Mr. Mackintosh: The director is Phil Goodman, who the member will know. I had the pleasure of meeting this summer, a northender, who described Alberta's approaches to DR and information management and sexual exploitation. It was very insightful.

I understand there's an interim—is that acting or interim—Bev Ann Murray. The next director was Dennis Schellenberg, who then went on to the general authority's leadership. Joy Cramer, who now heads up Housing. Jay Rodgers, now the general authority CEO. Josie Hill, as the member knows, was briefly director and Claudia Ash-Ponce now who, thankfully, has a life contract with the department.

*(15:40)

Mrs. Mitchelson: I wonder if the minister could provide for me the—I guess it would be the executive directors of the agencies throughout the province. Do we have that information?

Mr. Mackintosh: We can compile the list of the agencies' directors.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I'm rather interested in both the CEO positions, and I know that besides Elsie Flett, who has been there since the beginning in the southern authority—if I could just have the history of the CEOs, then, and their length of stay in the other authority.

I don't need that today. I'm just saying if I could have that for looking at compiling information that I would appreciate having. That would be one thing. Then, also, the executive directors of the agencies, how long they have been there, and who may have preceded them.

Do both the authorities and the agencies have boards?

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Could the minister tell me who's on the board of the authority? Again, this isn't information that I need right now, but if that could be provided to me, I would appreciate it.

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, we can provide that very quickly.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Back in 2008, Bill 34 was passed, which was agreed to and supported unanimously in the Legislature, and one of the key standards that was enshrined in that legislation was protection and well-being of children, as the primary consideration. I appreciate that becoming the first and foremost priority.

Can the minister tell me what changed after that legislation was proclaimed? Was there any directive that went out to authorities and agencies in regard to implementing the new legislation?

Mr. Mackintosh: The chief work after the bill was passed was to enhance the standards in this regard, accompanied by the training that rolled out then beginning in that fall.

First of all, the legislation was, as the member knows, intended to make absolutely clear beyond any doubt in The Child and Family Services Act that safety was paramount, which was expressed in the authorities act, but not in The Child and Family Services Act.

As well, the legislation brought in a second emphasis, and that was that when a child is to be seen under the standards, the child must indeed be seen. "Every child seen every time" was the mantra that was developed, and standards, again, reflected that, the dissemination of those standards and the training that followed. That can't be a one-time operation. Know that there has been continued exploration on how and development of reminding front-line workers and everyone in the system about "every child seen every time." There'll be further work on that as well, but there was a comprehensive standard around that with the training component.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I guess I'm still hearing within the system that safety isn't necessarily always first and foremost within the system, so I guess my question is: Is the minister satisfied that the direction and the intent of the legislation is being followed, and what process would there be to ensure that every worker in the system understands and knows that?

Mr. Mackintosh: It was timely that, given a lot of public debate and, quite frankly, insights following tragedies, that all the system understand that while devolution was intended to enhance the importance of culture, it was never intended to diminish the importance of safety. Indeed, the authorities act, which is the devolution act, expressly said that as the

first part of the bill. So that expression was made loud and clear, starting with the fundamental document of the system which was the act. The salience of the change depends always, of course, on, then, standards reflecting that and training, which I'm told is part and parcel of strengthening our responses.

Now we also know that every time a child welfare worker or social worker has to make determinations, they have to use professional judgment, and sometimes there is a balancing of many factors. In the balancing, safety underpins the reason why the system exists in the first place, so it's important for that reminder to be there, but there will, I'm sure, always be circumstances where people can argue that safety may not have been a paramount consideration, in which case I'd like to know of those situations, but professional judgment again will balance some often very difficult situations.

Now the development of a risk-assessment tool as well provides meat to the words and the intent of the legislative change. The risk-assessment tool is now being piloted, the new risk-assessment tool. There always have been risk-assessment tools, but there has been the development of one that is stronger, based on practices and experiences elsewhere, which, by the way, has proven not to be an exact science because, again, professional judgment and the human factor always plays a role in individual situations. But we now have, along with the development of DR, differential response, in the family enhancement stream, the new risk-assessment tool that's being piloted.

* (15:50)

So that is one part of the answer. The other is the funding model will also fund a quality assurance position at each agency, not just at the authority level, to build capacity at the agency level, to monitor compliance with standards.

There was a recent analysis done that every state in the U.S. was failing to meet standards, child welfare standards, and you have to ask, well, what do we have to do to reduce the risk to children when there is that kind of finding? That is all about a multi-faceted response, which is not just strong legislation but the standards, the training, the funding model, quality assurance reviews, the provision of workload relief, which has been so important. We hear that so much from the front lines.

We've been able to put in place 103 new positions as a result of Changes for Children so far.

At the same time, we have seen the growth in the number of children coming into care, so we realized that we had to continue this effort, at the same time bringing into place in Manitoba the differential response model, based in part on what Alberta's experience has been, Minnesota and other places. But you have to continue to provide that workload relief, and this budget allows for further workload relief as well as the introduction of differential response in Manitoba.

Mr. Doug Martindale, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

The member well knows the workload issues in child welfare, not just here, of course, but this is Manitoba where we are elected to work on behalf of children. But it has been an experience all across North America and perhaps beyond that has not adequately, I think, been addressed in most jurisdictions. So here in Manitoba we have made some extraordinary investments now in providing workload relief.

By workload relief, too, I shouldn't just say that it's about more staff. Differential response is really important. When the family enhancement model began in Alberta, Phil Goodman, for example, told me about what a difference that was making to the protection cases. The numbers were going down. Then Alberta had a bit of a bump. It may have been a lot of migration issues at work there, but the numbers certainly are stabilizing in Alberta. The increases are not as great as they had been before their introduction of differential response. That has been the experience in Minnesota as well and I think in other jurisdictions that have been moving to differential response.

So that's one. The other, though, is just better management of agencies, ensuring that CFSIS is continually redeveloped and strengthened, because if CFSIS is inaccessible to workers, if it's too complex, if they're not trained in CFSIS, that's going to take away time from them. It's a matter of organizing activities, too, and getting social workers out of the coffee rooms and into the living rooms. That has been a reason why the workload relief wasn't only for social worker positions. The external review said they also needed relief with the administrative support because the social workers were doing so much paperwork around their files.

So all of these enhancements are expected now to work together to reduce the risk to children and to better ensure that those decisions that the member

started her questions around are made by social workers in the best interests of children. So the question, I think, really begs an answer from a number of approaches.

I don't know if the member wants to go into any of those areas where there have been enhancements. I'm getting notes here on examples of the CFSIS enhancements. As well, I just will say maybe in conclusion that I'm seeing the authorities taking on their responsibilities very seriously. We're seeing the quality assurance reviews, the ongoing reviews that are happening not just in response to tragedies or concerns about financial problems as they arise, some very historic. We're going to continue to see that work because the authorities are seeing the impact of those reviews with agencies.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Acting Chair, I wonder if the minister could provide for me the standard that enshrines Bill 34 and the training document that might highlight Bill 34.

Mr. Mackintosh: We can highlight that with the package of printing materials. I had been carrying that around. Actually, that one for every child seen every time, but we can provide that for the member.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Acting Chair, the minister mentioned, in his response, 131 positions that have been added—*[interjection]* Oh, sorry, 103 positions. How many of those are front-line positions? And where might they be?

Mr. Mackintosh: We're going to have to provide that information for the member. There were some further numbers, some further positions beyond the statistics that we have here today. But—do we have an idea there?

We'll answer the member's question. We have 103—or 103.5 now? But when we had 99.5 positions, I have those numbers here. So that, I think, pretty well answers the question. Front line was 66; supervisors 10.7; service assistant 2.5; admin 20.3; for a total of 99.5.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Acting Chair, does the minister have any more detailed information on the 66 front-line positions, where they might be?

Mr. Mackintosh: We have a breakdown, but it's not in the room here. So we can provide that.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Does the minister or the department have any idea how many vacancies there are in the front-line positions, agency by agency, and whether it's an issue?

Mr. Mackintosh: I'm advised we would have to canvass the agencies, unless the authorities have something recent as well, but, of course, that will change, well, almost daily. But I will endeavour to collect that information.

* (16:00)

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes. It always will be a snapshot in time, depending on the circumstances. One of my concerns, again, is the number of staff that might have some longevity and some experience versus new staff members because I do know there were some recommendations that talked about mentorship, and ensuring that new staff weren't left on their own to make difficult decisions without some sort of mentorship or supervisory support.

So I'm interested in knowing whether we're retaining our staff at the agency level, or whether they're moving out to some other opportunity. I know it's a little bit or work and I know that it's—but I mean I think that's all about accountability. I'm sure that the authorities would be looking at that very carefully in their monitoring of the agencies and, you know, some red flags went up if there was an agency that seemed to be having difficulty, it would appear to me that either more support and whether that be—whatever kind of support to try to help that agency get on track or get on its feet might be really important.

So I would hope that kind of function is happening and I would hope those kinds of issues would be raised at the standing committee so that everyone can try to work to resolve the problem. I mean, God knows, we know there never will be a perfect child welfare system because we're dealing with human beings that are delivering service and having to make decisions, and we know we don't have a perfect health-care system and there are mistakes that happen. We will never have a perfect child welfare system, but, I guess, you know, all of our goals—and I believe it is the goal of everyone—is to try to ensure that we have the best we possibly can have and that the supports are put in place to try to make sure that the mistakes are minimal, if possible.

So I think that's important information for all of us to have. It's not necessarily information that would be looked for to be critical but to understand where the real issues are, and hopefully we can all work towards finding better solutions. So I think that is all about outcomes and accountability within the system. So I would hope that even if it does take a little bit of time that that information—and I know it

would have to be a snapshot in time. I mean, it changes on a regular basis but if I could have that information it would be very helpful.

I do know that one of the things that was talked about in October of 2006 when the Changes for Children was launched, the strategy, there was a bullet in the news release that said foster parents will also see increased support through stronger protocols to build teamwork for social workers and their agencies to ensure a voice for foster parents and planning for children in their care.

I'd like to ask the minister how that's going and how that has happened.

Madam Chairperson in the Chair

Mr. Mackintosh: One of the priorities has been and must continue to be, to better embrace the value of the role of partnership between child welfare agencies and their workers and foster parents. The first piece of that was the development of better recognition of foster parents and their contribution to the lives of children, and there were several pieces to that.

* (16:10)

The first was significant increase in the foster rates, as well, recognition that sometimes there are other special costs, for example, cribs, car seats, that had not been recognized as eligible for support. As well, it was building the Foster Family Network strength and recognizing them in ways that we hadn't in the past, enabling them to provide more supports and liaison, and working with the authorities in child welfare agencies. In that regard, as well, we've some very significant improvements where the Foster Family Network now is partnering with the authorities and agencies. We're seeing them up in the north doing tremendous work. We're seeing working groups where they are a vital piece of this. Those kinds of protocols make all the difference to remind workers in the child welfare system of the important contribution of foster parents and what they bring to a child's care.

A tangible outcome of that is the new development of a curriculum for fostering in Manitoba. This is developing as a result of the insights of the Foster Family Network and workers in the child welfare system. What is coming to the fore in Manitoba is a made-in-Manitoba approach that builds on some of the practices. There's a model called PRIDE, for example. There's another model in British—what's the other one, Safe, and what they

have decided in Manitoba as a result of, I think, a new era of mutual respect, is a made-in-Manitoba model that is near conclusion and ready for being piloted. So this new emphasis on the role and value of fostering is a big part of what was intended with that bullet in that piece.

The other is the training that is ongoing and, of course, the standards, but there, as well, I think, as a result of this, has to be a renewed emphasis on engaging foster parents in the creation of plans, and as well, recognizing the grief that foster parents endure, not only when there is tragedy but when a child leaves the home. It's my view that that has been underestimated. The Children's Advocate, I think, has helped me to understand some of that, but I have heard from foster parents. I know some in my own neighbourhood. I know some that have come to my office as a result of challenges, some that the member knows about. I think that we have a lot of growth to do, and it's not just here, I understand. I understand that this is a challenge elsewhere, as well, where we have professional views of child welfare workers that sometimes don't respect, to the extent, I think, should be taken of the views and insights of the foster parents themselves.

So we now, as well, have foster parents being invited and taking part in the training that workers have been involved in. So those are some examples, and if the member has other ideas—I know I've had some correspondence from her that I think are some examples of the need to enhance those dynamics. But I'm bound and determined to do what is necessary to breathe new life into this respectful relationship that I'm beginning to see unfold now as a result of these changes. I look forward to the conclusion of the new fostering curriculum, and I think that empowering foster parents, as well, in how the system works. They have to have better information on aspects of it, whether it's, you know, like the rules of the system, and that is as well part of it. It's not only changing attitudes on the part of child welfare workers but empowering and helping to provide accessible information for foster parents.

So we'll be continuing to work on those kinds of initiatives, and there are some other initiatives that we have been noodling with that I would like to see develop. But if the member has other information on this one—I know she has a relationship with some foster parents in her community, and I think some of the best ideas come from the foster parents themselves when they get into difficult situations and disagreements about what may be the best interest of

a child. Sometimes, there are hard decisions that do have to be made in the end and, often, it's the courts that actually make those decisions. I think we're starting to see the courts, as well, better respect the views of all the parties. I think even recently, I've seen the development of different approaches to reconciling differing views and more recently even the role of mediation, perhaps, was one I'm advised of that is current now that has been a challenging case for family and for others, so maybe when things are really difficult there are ways to remediate it by way of ways that we haven't thought of before. But I think the member has a very important issue. When we recruit this number of foster families, they have to know that they are going to be valued members of a team. I think historically we haven't done the job that's necessary, and that's why that bullet was there which has ushered in these changes that I've talked about, but there may be other ways as well.

Mrs. Mitchelson: That bullet was there three years ago, and we're still seeing significant problems. It's not just in my community, and I know the minister's heard of others, but there are others that I'm working with out in the community that have really felt that they're not recognized and appreciated within the child welfare system the way they should be, and that nothing is provided in writing to foster families. It's verbal, and it's fairly widespread, and I think it's an issue that needs to be looked at and addressed. I do know and I've got lots of issues, but I want to stick to one theme. I've got lots of issues around the recommendations from the reviews that have been done.

There was one recommendation, and you probably have heard it from me in correspondence or seen it in correspondence, and that is the recommendation of the 47 and the Gage Guimond report that indicates that foster families should have something in writing regarding the plan, that there should be an assessment of the circumstances surrounding the placement of children, that there should be a thorough assessment, including that child's relationship and bonding with the foster family that they're in and that that should be provided in writing. I know I asked the minister a question, I think it was back in December, and I know I didn't get an answer to the question. So I'm asking him here now whether he has moved in any way on that recommendation from the Gage Guimond report.

Mr. Mackintosh: I agree with the member that plain language information on processes for foster parents are critical, and that's why the curriculum which is

being in large part designed by foster parents themselves is going to—the attention is to address that.

In terms of the situation that the member raised, I'm advised that there are some unique issues with regard to that placement. As we recall here, I understood that there was an agreement of a temporary placement of those children where that had been set out early on with a reunification objective, and then there was an involvement of the courts, I think, as well which played a role here. But I don't dispute that the recommendation is an important one, and that's why we accept that that should be in writing.

*(16:20)

Mrs. Mitchelson: I did ask a question in question period, too, about foster family rates and a freeze on foster family rates. I think the minister indicated in his answer that there was no freeze and that foster family rates had been increased, and I heard him say that, I think, in his opening statement, again.

It is my understanding that, through the AJI initiative, that special rates were frozen for foster families, and that was back in, well, 2003-2004, possibly, and that those rates haven't changed. They are still frozen.

Will the minister confirm that or can he confirm that today?

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, I think there may be some confusion on the rates here. The foster care rates increased; I think the real increase is about 23 percent when you compound it. I think there were two increases of 10 percent over two years, effective January 1, '07-08.

That was across the province, and if I recall, too, the member was talking about Anishinaabe Child and Family. That would affect Anishinaabe Child and Family.

There's been no freezing of any foster rates, to my understanding, Anishinaabe—it's across the board—and basic rates are always under review, and, as well, special-needs funding has increased.

The member now is talking about what is called the Winnipeg special rate, and it's my understanding that there was an arrangement entered into because the Winnipeg rate was disproportionately higher than the provincial rate. So, in other words, there was some top-up or some additional funding available at Winnipeg Child and Family that exceeded that

anywhere else in the province. So that's what the member must be talking about now.

The other thing that happened, then, we had the external reviews take place, and one of the recommendations in the Changes for Children initiative was to ensure that there was a consistent foster rate across the province, that there were too many inconsistencies.

So, now that Winnipeg's special rate—which, by the way, has seen increases in expenditure. There was no freeze in the sense of there were exceptions. There are exceptions to that you can apply for. I think there's three of them. We can provide those to the member. But that is now under review to determine if that should be adjusted or not beyond what is in place today, but the member shouldn't confuse the foster rates and the Winnipeg special rate.

The review of the Winnipeg special rate is being launched this fiscal year.

Mrs. Mitchelson: But the minister kind of talked around, and I think talked around in circles, and I'm not sure he gave me a straight answer.

Can I ask a very basic question? I'll try to keep my questions very simple. The foster rates are standard at the basic rate, level 1, across the province today?

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes.

Mrs. Mitchelson: What is that basic foster rate?

* (16:30)

Mr. Mackintosh: The foster care rates in effect, I'm advised, are—and this does not include what's called an agency allowance, which can be for gifts and other recreation. In the south, ages zero to 10, it's \$21.57 per day. For ages 11 to 17 in the south, it's \$26.78. For the north, ages zero to 10, it's \$23.02, and in the north for ages 11 to 17 it's \$28.57.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Now, can the minister explain to me what the special rate is for children? That's the rate that's been frozen.

Maybe if I could just read from the Auditor General's report on pre-devolution. The Auditor General says that the department wrote a letter in November, 2004, that stated the freeze of special rates in foster care at Winnipeg, rural and northern CFS is an issue connected with the AJI. As such, discussions have been held. No final decision has been made regarding exactly how or when the freeze

will be lifted. That's out of the Auditor General's report in 2004.

I have heard today, and I believe the Foster Family Association has confirmed, that freeze is still in place. I would like to know what freeze we are talking about.

Mr. Mackintosh: In addition to the foster care rate and the numbers that I provided, there's an agency allowance that's available, that's for recreation and special gifts. Also, special needs is recognized for compensation or for clinical services, respite and then—

Mrs. Mitchelson: Before we move on, would that be—we're talking about respite or are we talking about child care and all of those things? Would that all be included in special needs, if there was a need for, you know, sort of one-on-one in a child-care facility? Is that part of the special needs? We're getting to the special rate. I just wanted some clarification around special needs.

Mr. Mackintosh: So in addition to the basic rate then, we're looking at possible remuneration. Basic rate, the agency allowance, then the special needs, which is really about compensating for costs and then special rate that agencies can negotiate with guidelines with foster families. That really is about a compensation for families for exceptional circumstances and needs.

* (16:40)

When a child comes into care an allocation can be negotiated. In addition to what I've said, there are three exceptions for special rate amounts. Also, that if there are exceptional needs that are not getting recognized by way of special rate, case-by-case consideration is made by the branch on an application. So those, I'm advised, are the different kinds of forms of remuneration available for foster families.

Mrs. Mitchelson: So you're saying that the special rate has guidelines. Is special rate available to all agencies?

Mr. Mackintosh: I'm advised that that's the case.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Now, that special rate then, it's negotiated with guidelines. Do we have a copy of the guidelines?

Mr. Mackintosh: I'm advised that agencies have these guidelines, and we don't have them available here, but one of the problems that has been identified

by the external reviews and by the department is the discrepancies between the guidelines across the agencies. That's why we have to move to a standardized approach, but we can get a compilation of those guidelines and provide them to the member.

Mrs. Mitchelson: How many children across the system would be getting a special rate?

Mr. Mackintosh: We can get that information for the member.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thank you. Could I get a breakdown agency by agency and the cost for the last fiscal year?

Mr. Mackintosh: The cost of the special rate? The expenditure per agency?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I guess what I would like is a breakdown. I think there was a breakdown in the annual report of level 1 funding and then level 2 to 5 funding. There is that breakdown there already, but it doesn't break down.

I guess, is a special rate included in level 2 to 5 or is it over and above?

Mr. Mackintosh: Twelve could be in each one, each level.

Mrs. Mitchelson: So, if we're looking at level 2 to 5 funding, is the special need funding all inclusive in that and the special rate for children?

Mr. Mackintosh: The department advises that they will make best efforts to separate out that from special needs and we'll let the member know of the result of that.

Mrs. Mitchelson: So then the minister is indicating to me—will he confirm today that the special rate has been frozen in Winnipeg, rural, and northern CFS since the AJI initiative was undertaken?

Mr. Mackintosh: As I said earlier, I'm advised that the special rate need in Winnipeg was out of whack with the rates elsewhere, the expenditures. So there was a decision made, apparently, that with regard to Winnipeg there would be no ad hoc increases for family compensation but adjustments are available according to three exceptions and as well if the needs of the child changed. That was for Winnipeg.

Mrs. Mitchelson: So is the minister telling me that if a child remains in that same foster home and the needs of that child change, there is an adjustment and there is no freeze?

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, a couple of points there. When a child comes into the child welfare system, there is a negotiation with the family to recognize needs first of all. There are three exceptions, and as well where needs change, there can be an application to the Child Protection branch.

As well, the big picture here is that in accordance with the Changes for Children recommendation, on this one there is a review being launched so that there can be some more consistent approach across the province for a special rate because Winnipeg was out of whack.

* (16:50)

Mrs. Mitchelson: I wouldn't be raising this issue if it hadn't come to my attention from foster parents that are hearing that there are other children that are getting special rates significantly higher than their special rates. It has become an issue. A lot of them are long-time foster families that have been providing, obviously, pretty adequate care or the children wouldn't remain in those foster families. So there is some concern that new foster families that are coming into the system are getting different treatment and that their rates have been frozen since 2004.

It's my understanding that this is a Treasury Board directive. There has been reference made in conversations that I've had that it's a Treasury Board directive that this should happen, and there seems to be some inconsistency and unfairness. Now, I heard the minister say that there might have been unfairness in the past, and that's why the rates were frozen. But it appears to have tipped the other way now. So I know that these comments will be on the record for those to see that have felt that there's an issue. So, hopefully, the minister can indicate to me whether there has been an application by the department to lift the freeze, and whether that's been stalled somewhere outside of the department.

Mr. Mackintosh: We thought it advisable that, given the discrepancies of the past and discrepancies that continue, and recognizing that we have to have a more consistent approach, the current approach is going to be maintained until the review is completed and then we can make an application for any adjustments to Treasury people; but that has to be preceded though by that analysis. But, in the meantime, the rates, the basic rates, we've seen historic adjustments now getting back to levels, and I think we're now finally getting back to—[interjection] Yes, so there are enhancements to recognize the

importance of foster care across the board as a result of the foster rate adjustments.

Mrs. Mitchelson: When can we anticipate that review being completed? How long has it been ongoing?

Mr. Mackintosh: There are two components to that. One first is our review and I should say too, that there's been an analysis of what is taking place, how rates are being dealt with in other provinces and their systems. We've also had an analysis of American rates, which, by the way, place us very favourably and, in fact, very, very favourably. But drilling down in terms of a special rate that analysis has begun now. There will be necessary discussions with the federal government for on-reserve amounts as well so that we can marry the two rates. It's expected that over the next year or so that we can get this completed, and it could be ongoing discussions with our partners as this unfolds with the Foster Family Network, for example.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Are the amounts in the Estimates book purely provincial government support, or is it a combination of provincial and federal government support in the detailed Estimates?

Mr. Mackintosh: That just comprises provincial dollars.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I know we haven't got too much time left today, so I'll try to just ask a very quick question for some clarification. Under the southern authority, we have Animikii Ozoson child and family services—maybe I could just say Animikii. What's the mandate of this agency?

Mr. Mackintosh: Animikii, mandated by the southern authority—the client group served, I believe was the question from the member: First Nations children and families in the Winnipeg area who are members of Ontario First Nations. It doesn't provide direct service to any of the Ontario First Nations communities, but instead provides statutory services in a culturally appropriate manner. I think that answers the question.

Mrs. Mitchelson: So these are children from Ontario that are here in Winnipeg receiving support or services through the Child and Family Services system.

Mr. Mackintosh: Just to clarify, the group served is First Nations families who are resident in the Winnipeg area.

Madam Chairperson: The time being 5 o'clock, I am interrupting proceedings. The Committee of Supply will resume sitting tomorrow at 10 a.m. Thank you.

LABOUR AND IMMIGRATION

* (14:40)

Mr. Chairperson (Rob Altemeyer): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will now consider the Estimates of the Department of Labour and Immigration.

Does the honourable minister have an opening statement?

Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Labour and Immigration): Thank you very much. I'd like to take this opportunity to just say a few words about what an honour and a privilege it is to be the Minister of Labour and Immigration, and Multiculturalism. I believe that we have a pretty awesome department and an incredible team of people that really do a lot of work in this province in regard to providing a better place to work and live and enjoy this great province that we live in.

The highlights of our 2009-2010 budget, the total request is \$51,379,000 and the total increase over last year's Adjusted Vote is 2.9 percent, which is 1.457 k's—I'm doing that because it's easier—so there is a pretty big increase in the transfer of federal funding from CIC, which is Citizenship, Immigration and Immigration Canada. Obviously, that is funding that is in our enabling vote, and that is funding to help us provide programs and services to settle our newest newcomers. There is a 62.8 increase there.

There is also a 293,000 increase, or 18.9 percent of the total increase reflects an increase in the amount that is going into Workplace Safety and Health for our new workplace safety and health officers. We have a net increase this year of 11 full-time equivalent positions: five of those positions will be used to help us with our workplace injury and illness prevention plan; three of those positions, those FTEs, are for the Employment Standards division; and two of those FTEs are for the Immigration division and that will help us implement the new legislation, WRAPA, The Worker Recruitment and Protection Act, which was proclaimed April 1, 2009; and one FTE is going to be used for ITS, it's a business analyst to provide additional information technology support for the

immigration initiatives and other departmental programs.

I'm going to keep my comments short because I believe that it's a good opportunity to have lots of time to have question and answers from my critics, and both of them are here today, so I'd like to proceed.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the minister very much for those comments.

Does the official opposition critic have an opening statement?

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): Mr. Chair, I don't really have an opening statement. I have a lot of questions, so I think we'll probably have some dialogue as we go along, but I would just like to thank the staff that are here today and look forward to getting on to some questions.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the honourable Member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu) for that.

Under Manitoba practice, debate on the minister's salary is the last item considered for the department of Committee of Supply. Accordingly, we shall now defer consideration of line item 11.1.(a) contained in Resolution 11.1.

At this time we'll also invite the minister's staff to join us at the front table and once they're settled perhaps the minister could introduce the staff in attendance.

Ms. Allan: Thank you very much. I'd like to introduce the officials that are with me from the department. I'd like to introduce: Jeff Parr, the deputy minister of Labour and Immigration; and to his left is Ben Rempel, the assistant deputy minister of our Immigration branch; across the table from Jeff is Victor Minenko, who is the director of research, legislation and policy; and Ken Taylor, who is the director of financial services. We also have with us today: Melissa Whiteside, who is a senior analyst; and Sara Obaid, who is the executive assistant to the deputy minister; and Rebecca Blaikie, who is the assistant to the minister.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you very much for that, minister.

A question for the committee, do you wish to proceed today through the Estimates of this department chronologically, or to have a global discussion?

Mrs. Taillieu: Mr. Chair, I will likely go through in a global fashion, if that's acceptable. I probably will refer to the Estimates book on certain pages as we go along. I'd like to get through a lot of questions, so I may jump over things today and come back to them tomorrow, if that's acceptable.

Ms. Allan: Agreed.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay. For the record, it is agreed that questioning for this department will proceed in a global manner, with all resolutions to be passed once questioning has concluded.

The floor is now open for questions.

Mrs. Taillieu: I think, in the minister's statement, she did indicate that there were some increases in her department, and indicated the funding and the positions—I may just start with some of the positions, though, just in reference to the org chart. I think that this year is fairly—it's spelled out who the directors of these departments are, so that's fine.

I'm wondering if there's a list of—if the minister can give me a list of the political staff that she has within her office.

Ms. Allan: In the Legislative Building there was one political person, and that is Rebecca Blaikie, who is the special assistant to the minister. In my constituency office there is Brenda Reeve-Deamal, who is my executive assistant, and then there's another staffperson, Jackie, who works with Brenda.

Mrs. Taillieu: In the constituency office, are those political? Is one of those a political staffer?

Ms. Allan: Well, I don't think they're political. They're just staffpeople that work in the constituency office and provide services to my constituents.

Mrs. Taillieu: Would those staff in the constituency office be then paid by member's allowance or paid by the Department of Labour?

Ms. Allan: They're paid through the LAMC budget. That's my understanding. That's what all political staff—or all staff in MLA's constituency offices are paid through that budget.

Mrs. Taillieu: Mr. Chair, the minister indicated that there was an increase in the number of staff. I'm just wanting to clarify if any of these staff—are they employed within her office or are they employed in—I think she said there was one other person. I wasn't quite sure where she said that person was employed. There was some in Workplace Safety and Health, some in Employment Standards.

Ms. Allan: All of them are employed in the department. The five that are employed in Workplace Safety and Health are individuals that we have hired as workplace safety and health officers to help us get our injury rates down. Then, in the Employment Standards branch we have hired three new people to help us roll out enforcement around the WRAP legislation. Also, we have two new people in our Immigration branch who are also helping out with that. Then, the one person you probably might be referring to is one person for computer program analyst to perform business analysis to address immigration initiatives. That individual is in the Immigration branch.

Mrs. Taillieu: Can the minister tell me how many new hires there have been in this last fiscal year?

Ms. Allan: Fourteen—oh, tab 14, oh sorry. Excusez-moi. *[Interjection]* That's better. I didn't think that was very many. That was pretty funny. Where do you see it? Okay. Got it.

That would be 45.

Mrs. Taillieu: Is that a net gain or how many people have left the department?

Ms. Allan: I'm going to ask my officials to figure that out, because they are going to have to look at the staff turnover that was involved in that. If we could go on—if you wouldn't mind with questions and then they'll kind of try to figure that out—the exact number for you.

Mrs. Taillieu: Of the 45 new hires in the last year, how many of these would have been through competition, or how many would have been appointed?

Ms. Allan: Of the 45 hires, 29 were hired through competition. Seven were hired by direct appointment and nine were hired under our employment equity initiatives. The direct appointments were for difficult to recruit positions or short-term positions.

Mrs. Taillieu: Could the minister elaborate on what that exactly means—short-term positions or difficult to fill positions, and where are these positions located?

Ms. Allan: In one department we hired two short-term appointments, actually, a business analyst and a policy analyst. Those two individuals were Kurtis Penner and Andrew Donachuk. In the Manitoba Labour Board we hired two short-term appointments to cover unexpected retirements. There were two administrative secretaries, Annalina Rosit

and Monique Racine. In Workplace Safety and Health, we hired a short-term appointment, Jeffrey McCulloch. In the office of the Manitoba Fire—*[interjection]*—Manitoba Fairness Commissioner, a new acronym that I'm not used to yet, is Robert Millman, and it was a short-term appointment.

Mrs. Taillieu: So of those appointments, then, they were short term so they're not presently on staff?

Ms. Allan: They are still on staff.

Mrs. Taillieu: Can the minister indicate, then, what term they were hired for and if they've extended past the term that they were hired for?

Ms. Allan: We'll get that information to the member.

Mrs. Taillieu: I just want to clarify. You indicated seven that were difficult positions to fill by appointment and then you said nine. I just want to clarify what that nine were and whether you had covered those in the people that you mentioned.

Ms. Allan: Nine positions were hired under our employment equity initiative; it's the civil service Gateway program, which encourages people—the Gateway program is a civil service program that encourages people that are already bureaucrats in departments to come on programs to learn senior management. So it's a program where the Civil Service Commission runs competitions for visible minorities, and then they hire them and they provide them to different departments so that they can get experience.

* (14:50)

Mrs. Taillieu: It's unclear to me. There were nine people that the minister said were by appointment into the employee equity program. Then she said they were hired by the Civil Service and appointed to different departments for experience. So is this a training program, or are these people hired for a specific job, or is it a training program? Specifically, is there an individual that is in charge of who would hire them?

Ms. Allan: It's a program that is run through the Civil Service Commission, and what they do is they have lists of people, and they interview people, and they put them on a list. Then, if we're looking for certain skilled individuals, we can actually go to the Civil Service Commission and say this is what we're looking for; do you have anyone within the civil service that you have hired in the Gateway program? It helps us create a diverse government when we

have more of those individuals that represent the communities that we serve.

Mrs. Taillieu: Where would I find a description of the Gateway program in the Estimates book?

Ms. Allan: In the Civil Service Commission, but it's probably on the Civil Service Commission Web site, as well. We can provide you with that information if you'd like.

Mrs. Taillieu: Yes, thank you. If you could provide that information, it'd be great.

I'm still—

Ms. Allan: I can go back to that again. So, 45 hires, 29 through competition, seven were hired by direct appointment, and those are those ones that I talked to you about in regard to short-term appointments, and then the nine individuals that we hired through the Gateway program where we went, okay, so we've got a retirement, we've got someone who's left, we need somebody in our department to be, you know, let's go to the Civil Service Commission; let's see if they've got someone there because we feel it's important in our department to reflect diversity.

So we did those nine hirings through the Civil Service Commission.

Mrs. Taillieu: Of the seven direct appointments, who hired those seven people?

Ms. Allan: The business analyst and policy analyst in—is the Management Services division which is the IT shop. So the person who was in charge of the IT shop would have hired them.

The Manitoba Labour Board is an arms length adjudicative labour board. So somebody in the labour board would have hired the two administrative secretaries.

The Workplace Safety and Health department, it would have been somebody in the Workplace Safety and Health department, probably our assistant deputy minister, Don Hurst or Jo-Anna Guerra.

The office of the Manitoba Fairness Commissioner, it probably would have been Ximena Munoz.

Then the one other position or appointment that was hired is Rebecca Blaikie, my special assistant.

Mrs. Taillieu: Just to clarify, then, those seven people are still on staff on a temporary basis, or are they hired into full time now?

Ms. Allan: We said we would get you that information. We'll do that for you.

Mrs. Taillieu: Can the minister indicate, of the last fiscal year, people that were appointed at that time, how many of those people are now employed full time? When they were appointed for a temporary or part-time position, how many of those actually gained full-time employment?

Ms. Allan: So you're not asking for the people that I just listed in the '09-2010 year if you want those individuals from the '08-09 year?

Mrs. Taillieu: Mr. Chair, I'm basically asking of last year's Estimates when—how many people would have been appointed on a short-term, temporary or difficult-to-fill position? And then, of those, how many of those would then have gained full-time employment and would still be on staff?

Ms. Allan: We'll get that information for you. This is '08-09 information that I'm giving you because that's the most recent hirings that we have. So we would have to pull the '07-08 information to have a look at that.

Mrs. Taillieu: Are there any positions that are vacant in the Department of Labour at the present time?

Ms. Allan: Mr. Chairperson, 18.3.

Mrs. Taillieu: Eighteen point three vacancies. That's a lot, isn't it? Where are those vacancies? In what specific areas are those vacancies?

Ms. Allan: In the Management Services Division, there is a half-time position which is a revenue clerk. In the Mechanical and Engineering, there is a gas inspector and a boiler inspector and the competitions are under way for the boiler inspector. The gas inspector will be filled by the fall. At the Manitoba Labour Board, there is a labour board position, labour board officer that is vacant. In the Workplace Safety and Health office, division, excuse me, there is a senior safety and health officer in Winnipeg and a mines inspector in Flin Flon. Both of those positions will be filled by September.

In the Employment Standards division, there is a 0.8 admin secretary position that was hired into another position so we will be looking at that position in the future. The administrative assistant position as well, we're going to fill that one by the fall. The Worker Advisor Office, a worker advisor position. Immigration, there are three program officers that are actually—one is working in an

Employment Standards position right now because he went over to the Employment Standards to help with the management training position. There's a PM3 program officer and he or she is actually currently acting in a different position right now. Then another program officer that is also currently acting in a different position. All three of those program officers, we're moving to competition right now.

Then the management of settlement support services, that's Ximena Munoz's position probably. Ximena went to the Fair Practices Office, so we're in the beginning of moving to filling that position. Then there are five other positions that are going to competition, a policy analyst, three program officers, a program co-ordinator and an admin assistant that are also going to competition as we speak.

* (15:00)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I appreciate the answers from the minister, listening to the Member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu). I did have a couple of very specific questions. One of the things I do respect is that as the minister you do have special assistants, executive assistants, and so forth, and you will have a direct hire. No doubt you would play a role, a personal role, in the individual that you choose. I guess I just look for the minister to provide comment on the other seven that the Member for Morris makes reference to. There's always this concern the public has in terms of ensuring that there's equal opportunity for people that are looking for employment or even from within the union, that they're not going to be overlooked because someone's going to be assigned a position.

What is done, not with respect to the minister's appointment, but to ensure that those other appointments are not short-circuiting or preventing the civil service from being able to hire into these full-time or even short-term spots? What can the minister just tell us just to give us assurance that these are done in an appropriate fashion?

Ms. Allan: Each one of these positions we've referred to in regard to the short-term hire, usually what happened was we didn't have a lot of lead time in regard to the fact that the position was going to be vacated, so what we did was, because we needed to fill them in a hurry, we would put a person, an individual, in that position. Then what would happen is we would, once we had everything lined up and

the position was going to competition, they would be invited to apply.

So they could apply for the position just like anyone else can, but it goes to an open competition which is in line with all of the civil service guidelines in the Civil Service Commission, and the individual in the position could apply for it just like anyone else could in the civil service.

Mr. Lamoureux: Again, I'm not trying to imply anything in regard to that. I just want to highlight what I believe is a very important principle, and that is that, generally speaking, when we're hiring, it should be done through teams as opposed to an individual per se, and we should be going through the civil service. Whenever you hear, as the Member for Morris was able to pull out this afternoon, a large number, it does raise some concerns. I think we want to minimize that. So I just wanted to get on the record as saying that.

The question I had for the minister is, when did she hire Ms. Blaikie?

Ms. Allan: I beg to differ with the MLA for Inkster but I don't believe, out of 325 staff, that seven direct appointments, and one of them is political, is a lot of people. I think six direct appointments out of 325 people in a department is not an outrageous amount.

Every one of these people, every one of these positions, are short-term appointments and they're going to go to full competition. With those individuals that are in those spots, they will be allowed to apply for the position, but there is no guarantee they will get the position.

The special assistant that was hired in the minister's office was hired in my office last August after Sharon McLaughlin went to Ottawa.

Mr. Lamoureux: I guess I had misheard. I thought it was only 45 people that were actually hired this year, not 325.

Ms. Allan: We were talking about direct appointments and there were 45 hires; 29 of them were hired through competition, directly went to competition, and seven were hired by direct appointment. Of those seven, one was my special assistant. So there were only six people out of 325 staffpeople in my department that were hired by direct appointment. I read out every one of their names and read out every one of their positions in

every place in my department, so you can check the *Hansard* and you'll have that information.

Mr. Lamoureux: But what we're referring to, and I don't want to spend much time on it, was the 45 people in the last year, and seven out of 45 is a significant percentage.

Ms. Allan: I have no comment.

Mr. Lamoureux: The last question is that I understand that the minister did employ—or I was told—did she employ at one point Niki Ashton as a special assistant or employed in some capacity? I don't know.

Ms. Allan: No.

Mrs. Taillieu: Can the minister indicate if there are any staff within the department that have been seconded to another department at the present time?

Ms. Allan: Sixteen—oh, sorry, tab 16. I did it again. You've got to say tab in front of those. Tab 16 everybody, tab 16. Oh, two.

Mrs. Taillieu: And these two people, where have they been seconded? What departments have they been seconded to and who are they and when were they seconded?

Ms. Allan: Sue Barnsley, who was with the Status of Women branch, was seconded to Family Services and Housing, and Betty Brand, who was a policy analyst, was seconded to Seniors and Healthy Aging. That was probably—Betty Brand was in the last couple of weeks and Sue Barnsley was about two years ago, approximately.

Mrs. Taillieu: Does the Department of Labour and Immigration have staff on staff right now that have been seconded from other departments?

Ms. Allan: Judy Fraser, who is the Youth Prevention Education co-ordinator, and she was seconded from the WCB; she's with Workplace Safety and Health. And then three staff in the Immigration branch: one is Pam McConnell, a program co-ordinator; Denise Hanning, director of—oh they've all expired and gone home. Oh, well then, so just got two.

Mrs. Taillieu: The person that's the youth prevention co-ordinator seconded from the WCB, is that person then paid for by WCB or Department of Labour?

Ms. Allan: Well, the individual is in the Workplace Safety and Health branch. As the member knows,

monies are transferred from WCB to my department, but we pay for it.

Mrs. Taillieu: What are the duties of that person?

* (15:10)

Ms. Allan: It's all about getting awareness and programs into the schools with young people, and she co-ordinates a lot of those programs. She works with schools, and she does some programming as well with Red River College.

Mrs. Taillieu: Just a bit more clarification on what she does in the schools. What is the curriculum? What's the mandate here? What exactly, I guess, is the mandate of this person?

Ms. Allan: Well, we know that we have a serious challenge in regard to young people and getting the message out to young people that we have to reduce injuries. So we have really had a concerted effort in regard to trying to develop programs, so that we can get the message out to young people that they have the right, for instance, to refuse unsafe work.

It's important for young people to understand that there are Workplace Safety and Health regs that were approved 18 months ago, that they need knowledge about those. Sometimes they move from employer to employer, and they're not always in a work environment where the employer is providing them with that knowledge in regard to exactly what their rights are.

If you would like her exact job description, we'd be more than happy to provide it to the MLA.

Mrs. Taillieu: Thank you very much. That would be helpful.

I'm just curious, though, the minister mentioned that she talked about the Workplace Safety regs, regulations, and, I guess, legislation and regulations, so I'm wondering if the message that this person is taking into the schools bears any political pamphlets, any political signage or any political message.

Ms. Allan: No, we actually worked with the Department of Education, with the curriculum folks, and we developed some curriculum materials that were age-appropriate for the schools and the age groups that she was going into. So it's certainly not political. It's curriculum-based and has gone through a pedagogical process.

Mrs. Taillieu: I'm just curious as to what particular class in school would be teaching workplace safety?

Ms. Allan: The health and life skills classes.

Mrs. Taillieu: Is this a program that is accepted into all the schools?

Ms. Allan: Teachers make the decision in regard to what they want to teach in those particular classes, and then we provide the resources to the teachers.

Mrs. Taillieu: I wonder if the minister could indicate what the resources are. Perhaps there's a package of information that we might be able to see?

Ms. Allan: Yes, we could put some information together.

Mrs. Taillieu: Thank you. How does this overlap, then, with SAFE Workers of Tomorrow? Are they not doing the same thing?

Ms. Allan: They are independent from—well, we fund them, and they do work in schools as well. We fund them directly, and the deputy minister meets with them on a regular basis to get information from them about what they're doing with schools and the programming that they're providing. But we believe that it complements what this individual is doing in our department.

Mrs. Taillieu: So am I to understand, then, that the department funds the SAFE Workers of Tomorrow to deliver messages into the school about safe work, and there's also another person that delivers the same message, or is it different messages?

Ms. Allan: It's two target audiences. The individual in our department that is providing the curriculum resource materials is working directly with the teachers who are providing the materials and developing the classroom materials and teaching students. The work that is done by SAFE Workers of Tomorrow is that they provide speakers to schools.

Mrs. Taillieu: The SAFE Workers of Tomorrow, they provide speakers. Are these speakers a mix of employer-employee, or are they of a—belong to a specific group, or how do you choose who the speakers are?

Ms. Allan: Well, we don't choose them. The SAFE Workers of Tomorrow chooses them. But I do know that one of them that is a very high profile speaker is Cindy Skanderberg, who lost her 19-year-old son when he was an electrician, working unsupervised and untrained, before we changed The Electricians' Licence Act and helpers were allowed to work on job sites. She also has speakers—I know that I've met one of them this year at the Leaders' Walk, who is a

young man who was injured severely, burned on the job, who goes in and makes speeches to young people in schools. I think these are the kinds of speakers that can really make an impact in regard to talking to young people about making sure that they work in safe environments.

Mrs. Taillieu: Just for clarification, then, the Department of Labour funds the SAFE Workers of Tomorrow.

Ms. Allan: Yes, we provide a grant to SAFE Workers of Tomorrow. Yes. We have for years.

Mrs. Taillieu: Where are these SAFE Workers of Tomorrow offices located?

Ms. Allan: They are housed in the Manitoba Safety Council.

Mrs. Taillieu: And where is the Manitoba Safety Council?

Ms. Allan: I don't know. I think the address is probably in the phone book.

Mrs. Taillieu: Well, I just was, with interest, reading this publication called *Union*, and it says, SAFE Workers of Tomorrow moved to the main floor of the training centre on April 1. The training centre would be the training centre on Portage Avenue, the union centre?

Ms. Allan: Well, it may be. Is that the United Food & Commercial Workers magazine? Could be. Actually, a lot of the construction industry has also got programs that go into schools as well. The Winnipeg Construction Association that Ron Hambly is the director of, they have a very advanced program where they go into schools, as well, and talk to young people about keeping safe on the job. They're very involved in this as well. So I think this is a real priority area for those individuals that are interested in making sure that our young people stay safe at work, especially when we have so many people that are going to be going into our apprenticeship programs.

* (15:20)

Mrs. Taillieu: Can the minister indicate, then, that the SAFE Workers of Tomorrow has just moved into the union training centre on Portage Avenue?

Ms. Allan: I don't know. I have no idea where they moved. We can certainly check that out and get back to you on that. It doesn't worry me where they're housed.

Mrs. Taillieu: Well, I guess the point would be, if the department is funding the SAFE Workers of Tomorrow and the SAFE Workers of Tomorrow have moved into the Union Centre and are paying rent to the Union Centre, then the department is actually paying the rent, and that might be quite a convenient arrangement.

I'm wondering where they were before. Do you know where they moved from?

Ms. Allan: We told you that we thought they were in the Manitoba Safety Council. We said we would check it out, but I don't think it's a big deal who they pay their rent to. I think this is everybody's responsibility in regard to getting injury rates down.

Our government gives money to employers too. We don't just give money to organizations that are interested in giving money to unions. This particular issue is everybody's responsibility, and, quite frankly, it doesn't matter to me who they pay their rent to.

Mrs. Taillieu: If the minister is going to provide me with the last location of the SAFE Workers of Tomorrow and the present location, perhaps she could at the same time provide me with the rent that was paid at the previous location and the rent that's paid at this location.

Ms. Allan: We don't have that information in our department about where the SAFE Workers of Tomorrow pays their rent, so if the MLA for Morris would like to know that, I would suggest she get in touch with Ellen Oldford and ask her who she pays her rent to.

Mrs. Taillieu: I'd just like to ask some questions in regard to Workplace Safety and Health. I'm looking on page 37 in the Estimates book. I'm just looking at where it says: Reducing the time-loss injury rate to 3.5 percent per 100 workers by the year 2012, and so on, and further to that: Continue to implement the joint 2008-2012 injury and illness prevention strategy with the Workers Compensation Board.

I'm wondering if the minister can indicate if she is considering any further expansion of coverage under WCB.

Ms. Allan: When we announced the expansion of coverage, we had good meetings with the employer stakeholders, and we said that what we would do is roll out a voluntary campaign. We had planned to roll out a voluntary campaign in consultation with

employers, but what we did when there was a downturn in the economy was we decided to hold off on that campaign for some time until the economy bounced back.

So at this time there are no plans to expand coverage. The only plans I believe that we have is to roll out a voluntary campaign.

Mrs. Taillieu: I believe that that was the mandate originally, is to have a voluntary campaign before actually doing the expansion of coverage. I'm just curious—to my recollection, I didn't see much of a voluntary campaign rolled out from the WCB.

So I'm wondering if the minister can indicate when this voluntary campaign is coming, and what is the plan to do this voluntary campaign?

Ms. Allan: Well, it won't be my campaign; it will be the WCB's. So that is something that the WCB will determine. There's a tripartite board of directors that have employers—three employers, three special interest reps, and three labour reps. It will be them that will decide what that campaign looks like. I will bring to committee tomorrow the letter from Shannon Martin that I received from the head of the CFIB that congratulated me, as minister, and our government, in regard to how we proceeded with the expansion and coverage.

Mrs. Taillieu: I know that the expansion that was planned, Shannon Martin felt very good about it because the minister didn't go as far as she intended to go with that expansion of coverage. She had to pull back on that because the surveys done and sent into the WCB did not indicate that there was a large appetite for that to happen. So, even though she could have forced that expansion to go further, she didn't, and that is what Shannon was saying was a good thing.

I just wanted to also ask about the safety and health officers. Now I notice in the book here it says: hire five new safety and health officers as part of the 20 new FTEs announced on 2007. So, just to clarify then, there were 20 FTEs announced in April of 2007.

Are all of these new 20 people hired, or are we still not there yet?

Ms. Allan: We made a commitment that we would hire 20 new Workplace, Safety and Health officers; we made that commitment during the election campaign in 2007. We hired 10 last year and we're going to be hiring five this year.

Mrs. Taillieu: So of the election commitment of 20, two years later we have 10 with a commitment to go ahead with five more. Do we have those five more now then?

Ms. Allan: The first year after the election—because the promise was made in '07, but the budget year that you would be allowed to hire new staff in would be the '08-09 budget year. So that budget year, the first budget year after the election campaign, we hired 10. This is the second budget year, and we're hiring five more.

Mrs. Taillieu: Are the number of inspections, then, of the Workplace, Safety and Health people—are the number of inspections increased?

Ms. Allan: Yes. They've tripled.

Mrs. Taillieu: So the number of inspections has tripled. Does that mean that there are three times the number of workplaces investigated or that there are certain workplaces that are investigated more than once?

Ms. Allan: It's a bit of a mix.

Mrs. Taillieu: Are there, therefore, more workplace infractions then?

Ms. Allan: In 1999, when we were elected, the number of improvement orders were 1,697. In '08-09, the last full year that we have statistics for, there were 9,725 improvement orders.

* (15:30)

Mrs. Taillieu: Over 9,000 workplace improvement orders, and yet we still have a time-loss injury of, I think, it's 3.7 per 100. Even with expansion of coverage which is going to, in effect, lower that number just by the simple fact that you're incorporating people that are in lower risk situations, why aren't we seeing an improvement?

Ms. Allan: Well, we have seen an improvement. We just haven't eliminated it yet. One of the concerns that we have, obviously, is the number of people going into the construction industry and the way the construction industry is growing, as well as the manufacturing industry. Then the other sector that is a challenge for us is the agriculture sector. We rolled the agricultural sector in when we did the expansion of coverage.

Mrs. Taillieu: On the following page it does say right at the top under activity identification, develop and distribute occupational safety and health

publications. I'm wondering what these publications are and who do they go to?

Ms. Allan: We'll put a package of information together for you.

Mrs. Taillieu: Well, thank you then. Perhaps that could also include, if there is any difference, it says that, develop innovative methods of promoting safety and health in the workplace, establish partnerships to develop innovative methods of promoting.

If you could give me an example of what is an innovative method of promoting safety and health in the work force, and who does that?

Ms. Allan: The work that we do with industry around setting up industry safety associations. One of the really exciting events that we had just this week was the event at New Flyer. New Flyer is a company that is reputable in regard to getting their injury rate down. They were really excited this year to host the national NAOSH breakfast and kick-off to the NAOSH week. The Premier (Mr. Doer) actually went, and we believe it is the very first time in Canada that a premier has attended a national NAOSH event. It was a really exciting partnership where industry and the government were working together to raise awareness about injury prevention.

Mrs. Taillieu: I just want to clarify, then, the note at the bottom of the page does say the new hires in Workplace Safety and Health is going to have an impact on the number of inspections this year. Is it the intent then to do further inspections this year?

Ms. Allan: Well, yes, we want to do more inspections. In fact, that is something that employers have asked us to do. It is something that employer stakeholders have talked to me about. There are 40,000 workplaces in Manitoba, so more officers will help us to do more inspections.

Mrs. Taillieu: On the following page, it does talk about increased funding for prosecutions and that's in explanation note 1, just the very last sentence in there. So I'm wondering, when you're talking about prosecutions, what exactly are we talking about here?

Ms. Allan: The department can make the decision and the authority to prosecute a contravention of the act and that rests with the Attorney General of Manitoba. So Workplace Safety and Health forwards appropriate investigation reports to the Attorney General and then they decide whether or not a matter should be prosecuted. In 2007-2008, there were

11 prosecutions; in 2008-2009, our year-to-date prosecutions are 24.

Mrs. Taillieu: In the second note, it talks about increased legal fees for investigations, and I'm wondering what investigations that would refer to.

Ms. Allan: Sometimes when we do prosecutions, we will get Civil Legal Services involved, so we had more cost for our own lawyers. We have to make sure that we're getting involved appropriately, legally, so what we do is we get Civil Legal Services lawyers involved and those fees are up.

Mrs. Taillieu: I'm just kind of moving through the Estimates book here a bit, so under the Employment Standards on page 41, under activity identification, it says: Recover unpaid wages and fees illegally charged. I'm just curious as to what that exactly means: Recover unpaid wages and fees illegally charged, using statutory collection mechanisms.

Ms. Allan: The provisions in the Employment Standards Code allow for the branch to go after an employer for unpaid wages. These are situations—the Employment Standards branch works with individuals that are not covered by a collective agreement, so if someone was working with an employer and they didn't get paid wages that they should have been getting paid, they can make a complaint to the Employment Standards branch. The Employment Standards branch would investigate that complaint and then, if they believe that those wages were being withheld from the employee unlawfully, they can pursue the employer for those unpaid wages and get them on behalf of the worker.

The changes that we made in the Employment Standards Code, that an employee couldn't be charged for their Hooters uniform—or whatever, right—if they're charged for those, anything that is not a benefit to them, then we can, if the worker makes a complaint to the department, we can pursue that on their behalf.

*(15:40)

Mrs. Taillieu: I wanted to ask some questions about the Worker Advisor Office. Where is this office located?

Ms. Allan: In the Norquay Building in the Employment Standards branch.

Mrs. Taillieu: I'm just wondering, as my understanding is, that this would be the office where people that were unsuccessful or unsatisfied or dissatisfied, I guess, with Workers Compensation

Board adjudications, they would go to this office for assistance?

Ms. Allan: That is correct, but with the changes that we made with The Workplace, Safety and Health Act, that service is also available to employers. So employers and workers can both go to the Worker Advisor Office and seek help.

Mrs. Taillieu: Mr. Chairperson, I notice in here that there were 600 individuals who were assisted regarding processes and decisions; 400 given advice, 100 resolved claims; 200 through Workers Compensation Board—actually what I'm getting to is there seemed to be about 1,300 people that used this office, so is this an increased amount over last year or is this an average amount, the number of complaints from unsatisfied people?

Ms. Allan: In 2008-2009, the Worker Advisor Office provided services to over 1,411 individuals, and that is about the same as what was done in the previous year.

Mrs. Taillieu: I wanted to ask a few questions in regard to immigration, and I note on page 51 that one of the priorities is improving Manitoba's performance in attracting, settling, and integrating immigrants and achieving in the range of 12,000 to 13,000 landings in 2009. I'm just wondering if the minister can indicate what the numbers are to date.

Ms. Allan: In 2008 it was 11,230.

Mrs. Taillieu: And how many to date in 2009?

Ms. Allan: We usually gather those statistics at the end of the year, so we'll try to track that number down and see if we've got it. We're trying to find it, but those statistics are usually gathered over the course of a year.

As of February 28, which is the most recent statistics that we have, in comparison to the February date in '08, we have received 1,514 landings, and that is an increase of 37.5 percent.

Mrs. Taillieu: Just so I know that we're talking apples to apples here, you said by February 28 this year, so from January 1 to February 28, you had 1,514 and compared to the same time frame last year is a 37 percent increase. Is that what you said?

Ms. Allan: It's a 37.5 percent increase, Mr. Chair. In February '08 we had 1,101 landings. So it's a 37.5 percent increase at February 28, '09 this year over February 28, '08.

Mrs. Taillieu: Is there a particular time of the year that more immigrants come? Is there sort of a peak season I guess, if you will?

Ms. Allan: No.

Mrs. Taillieu: Can the minister indicate if the Employer Direct stream is still suspended?

Ms. Allan: Well, no. It never was suspended. The Employer Direct stream has always been there.

Mr. Lamoureux: I wouldn't mind getting some clarification. The Employer Direct stream, from what I understand, was in fact frozen for applications back in December. Is that not the case?

Ms. Allan: Well, what we did with the Employer Direct stream and, what's really important is to make a distinction between the employer application process. It was the employer application process that we put on hold. What we were doing was getting ready for the WRAPA legislation to come in. What we wanted to do was review our application process to make sure that it was in line with the new WRAPA legislation. We revised the criteria to ensure that our criteria were consistent with the WRAPA regulations. We wanted to do this to respond to concerns that the employer applications were largely being recruiter driven and submitted by third-party recruiters rather than directly from employers. So we wanted to make sure, we wanted to have a look at that process and make sure that it was in line with our new legislation. Anybody coming to Manitoba could still come through Employer Direct.

Mr. Lamoureux: I understand the difference between the employer application and getting the approval prior to actually getting processed through the Employer Direct stream. From what I understand the minister is saying now is that the application itself process is what was on hold so that people that were applying for Employer Direct stream could still do so.

Ms. Allan: I'm being informed by the assistant deputy minister of Immigration in my department that workers could always apply.

Mr. Lamoureux: That's not necessarily the same understanding we would have had several months ago, but I'm pleased to see that we're moving forward, then, on the employer stream.

As of today, there is no freeze whether it's application process for the employer or the employee?

* (15:50)

Ms. Allan: Workers could always apply, and when they applied, we could match them to employers, so there hasn't been a lot of change. I think what the confusion was—and you asked it in question period, and I tried to explain it to you—and so it really wasn't anybody in our department that ever, ever said that this stream had been cancelled, it was you that said it. What we said was we were reviewing our practices to make sure that they were legal and ethical in relationship to the WRAPA legislation.

Mrs. Taillieu: I have a letter dated November 19, 2008, from the Department of Labour, Promotion and Recruitment Branch, Immigration and Multicultural Division, which states, and I'm quoting: We are temporarily suspending the employer application process and will not be accepting any additional employer applications until further notice.

There also was mention of a review that was going to be taking place. Now, we actually asked for, through a Freedom of Information request, asked for a copy of the review that was done. First of all, we were informed that there was no review, and then we were provided with a summary of a review, but this review had no date on it, nothing to indicate who did the review or when the review was done.

I really would like to know again why this program was suspended and what is the review. What was found out through this review that was necessary to put this application process on hold?

Ms. Allan: I would really like the MLA for Morris and the MLA for Inkster to sit down with the assistant deputy minister of Immigration and walk through this piece. I'd like you to really understand this, and I really don't think I can explain it to you. I am being really honest with both of you. I really don't think that we could write you letters until the cows come home.

But this is very complicated and you're confusing the employer with the worker, the Employer Direct stream with a process and, for some reason, no matter how hard I try to explain it, I can't explain it. So I would love it if you would sit down with the wonderfully talented Ben Rempel, the assistant deputy minister of Immigration, who, I'm sure, would love to talk about this because he loves to talk about immigration, and I am sure he could explain it to you. He would be more than happy to talk to you about the one-page review that we did

that doesn't have a date on it. We can put a date on it, if you'd like, and explain it to you.

But at the end of the day, I can tell you that what was done in my department is going to be better for employers and better for workers because we're going to have an ethical recruitment process for temporary foreign workers, and we're going to have the Provincial Nominee Program. The two programs are going to run side-by-side and they're going to work really, really well.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chair, I thank the minister. It's always a good experience when I get the opportunity to meet with Mr. Rempel. I look forward to our next meeting, and we'll try to set something up in the next couple of weeks.

The essence of my understanding—and this way, Mr. Rempel can reflect on these words, but we'll maybe even broaden the discussion to include some of the other questions that we might have that we could, not necessarily have to put forward today, but we'll be able to include those discussions about the Provincial Nominee Program, the different streams and so forth.

Just so he knows where I'm going with the Employer Direct stream, my understanding of it is today, effective today, is that the employer application portion was on hold. It was on hold because of legislation that was passed by the Legislature, and until we felt comfortable with the regulations and so forth, it seemed to be content within the department to leave it on hold, whereas the employee, on the other hand, could still process through the Employer Direct stream. That's my understanding of it as of right now.

So then the question—and I say I look forward to the dialogue—is: Has all of that then been cleared up? Because Mr. Rempel would know, as I'm sure the minister does, in order for the employee to apply through the Employer Direct stream they have to have the okay from the employer. So, if the employer cannot put in for the application, it, in essence, freezes the employer stream. But, now, the minister is right. It can be fairly complicated. I look forward to having that dialogue, and we'll try to set something up in the next couple of weeks. I thank the minister.

Ms. Allan: But I can tell you, to give you a comfort level, that all systems are go. We're up and running. It was a very, very short—that one particular process

in the big picture—it was short and sweet and things are up and running again.

Mrs. Taillieu: Mr. Chairperson, I just have still some questions though in regard to the review, the summary of the review that was provided to us. I'm just wondering, it appears that the employers were to be involved in the direct recruitment of employees but there was an increasing use of recruiters, and it does say in here: it became evident that some recruiters and/or employers misused the MPNP employer pre-approval application for several reasons, and it goes on to state some of them. But it also says: workers were charged, not only for immigration services, but also for the job offer, which is illegal in Manitoba.

So, if there was illegal activity going on, were there any charges laid?

Ms. Allan: Well, no, because we had no legislative authority. What we discovered when we started looking at this was we had no legislative authority because The Employment Services Act was a very weak piece of legislation and had not been reviewed for over 20 years. So that's one reason why we brought in the WRAPA legislation.

The other piece of this is the temporary foreign workers were totally unregulated. We didn't know who the worker was. We didn't know who they were working for. So, because of that, a total unregulation of that whole movement, that's why it was really—one of the reasons that we've been very, very fortunate here in Manitoba to develop this legislation is for the simple reason that we have the Employment Standards branch and the Immigration branch both in the same department. So we were able to figure this out from the point of view of providing newcomers with the basic minimum rights in the code, just like any other domestic worker would have.

* (16:00)

Mrs. Taillieu: Mr. Chair, I note that this method of recruitment with hiring third-party recruiters was increasing starting in 2004, soon after this Employer Direct stream was created, all the way up through to 2008, but it wasn't until then that the legislation was proposed. So, if there was illegal activity going on for four years, what took so long to bring in the legislation?

Ms. Allan: Well, we are leading the country in this legislation. I just explained that the whole temporary foreign worker area is completely and totally unregulated. We didn't know who the employer was,

we didn't know who the worker was and the recruiters weren't licensed. So the only way that we could find out if there was a problem was if the nanny, who was living with someone, had the guts to pick up the phone and call the Employment Standards branch and say, I've got a problem. Imagine how difficult that would be for someone who is living in the home of their employer and also somebody who comes from another country. Sometimes, you know, getting in touch with the government isn't always a positive experience. So we had absolutely no ability to control it or manage it.

I just want you to know, that what we're doing here in Manitoba is going to change the Canadian landscape, and it's going to end modern-day slavery, Mr. Chairperson. Two days ago, in the House, the Honourable Jason Kenney, the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, said in the House: Mr. Speaker, we have launched consultations with live-in caregivers and those interested in this issue to seek ways we can better enforce regulations to protect the rights of caregivers. I encourage provincial ministers of Labour to do likewise, to follow the excellent lead of the government of Manitoba in this respect. So every jurisdiction in Canada right now, including the federal Tory Minister of Immigration, is looking at us and saying, way to go Manitoba, what you did is incredible.

I'd like to thank the officials in my department for this piece of legislation because it really is phenomenal, and it's going to end modern-day slavery in Canada, hopefully, some day.

Mrs. Taillieu: Mr. Chair, but I am looking before the legislation. I'm wondering, when did the minister first become aware that there was illegal activity going on?

Mr. Chairperson: Honourable Minister.

Ms. Allan: Did you say my name? Sorry, I'm waiting for you to say my name.

Well, it's a complaint-driven process, and we didn't have any complaints, and so what we did was we started to think about it. We knew what really broke it for us was two Septembers ago—or was it three—two Septembers ago, when Maple Leaf hired 200 workers from China. Those 200 workers were brought here by a recruitment agency in B.C. and they were charged \$10,000 apiece. They were charged that illegally by the B.C. recruitment company—and they can still do it—and when the

workers got here to Maple Leaf, Maple Leaf found out that those workers were living in Brandon, trying to send money home to their families, trying to pay rent and trying to pay an unscrupulous recruitment agency in British Columbia money.

I just got so angry and I was so disgusted, and we started talking about this. That's when we started to work on this legislation, and I bet you we're going to find out there's lots more of this going on. We've already had lots of phone calls in my office from individuals in this province who have been brought over by unscrupulous recruitment agencies. It's really something that as people learn more and more about it here in Manitoba, they're going to stand up for their rights.

Mrs. Taillieu: Can the minister tell me what show money is?

Ms. Allan: It's a requirement under the federal legislation. If they're immigrating through the federal immigration stream, they have to provide information to the federal government that they have a certain ability and a certain financial strength to move to Canada.

Mrs. Taillieu: I'm still concerned about the summary of this review. I know that there must be another review because this is a summary of the review. I'm wondering if we can have a copy of the review.

Ms. Allan: This is the review.

Mrs. Taillieu: Well, thank you very much. As I indicated before, there's no date or anything on this review to indicate who did it or when it was done. Perhaps the minister could indicate that.

Ms. Allan: It was an internal review that was done by and signed off on by the assistant deputy minister of Immigration.

Mrs. Taillieu: Exactly what is the illegal activity referred to in this?

Ms. Allan: That people were charging for job offers.

Mrs. Taillieu: How many people were charging for job offers, and if that was known to the minister, why were there no charges laid against these people?

Ms. Allan: It's obvious that we knew anecdotally when we heard what went on in Maple Leaf, that there were problems. We knew there were problems. I mean, all you have to do is read the *Toronto Star* and know what's going on in Ontario, and you know there are problems.

It wasn't that we had individuals coming to our department, and employers. We had no legislative authority to lay charges. We had no legislation. We do now. You can't prosecute somebody without legislative authority to do that and now we have legislative authority. We knew about it anecdotally, and what we had to do is set up a legislative framework so that we could manage this issue.

* (16:10)

Mrs. Taillieu: Can the minister indicate, within the last two years, how many people have left the Immigration Department not of their own volition?

Ms. Allan: No one.

Mrs. Taillieu: Can the minister indicate, within the last year, how many people have left the Immigration Department?

Ms. Allan: We can provide that information to the member.

Mrs. Taillieu: Well, thank you. Is the minister saying that she does not know, then, if people have left the Immigration Department?

Ms. Allan: People come and go all the time, and I am saying that we'll get that information to the member.

Mrs. Taillieu: Thank you very much. We have the assistant deputy minister of Immigration here, and I'm wondering if he might be able to provide that information in regard to the management staff at Immigration.

Ms. Allan: Well, the assistant deputy minister of Immigration is looking through his book and trying to find that information. When we have it, we'll provide it to you.

Mrs. Taillieu: I'm not going to dispute the fact that there may have been some unscrupulous recruiters. However, I think that there have been some recruiters that have done a decent job of bringing people into the province and now find themselves in a position where they feel that they're going to have to take their business elsewhere.

I'm not sure whether they will or not; how this will really impact them. But I'm wondering if the department has decided that the recruitment will all be done now by the department, and they will be the de facto recruiters now.

Ms. Allan: Well, recruitment can be done by any organization or any company, recruitment agency,

that is registered with CSIC. The only problem is they cannot charge the worker for a job. They cannot do that. That is, no domestic worker is charged for a job.

So we cannot have two standards, one for domestic workers and one for newcomers, new immigrants.

So, if a recruiter had a business and their business model was to make money by charging foreign workers for the privilege of coming to Manitoba and paying money for a job, they're going to have to redesign their business model.

We are totally supported by CSIC on this. We are totally supported by the Honourable Jason Kenney. We're totally supported by the Honourable Minister Diane Findlay, the former Minister of Immigration, and the Canada Migration Institute.

Mrs. Taillieu: Well, again, when did the minister become aware of this illegal activity going on?

Mr. Chairperson: Just before recognizing the honourable minister, I'll just remind all members that technically, we're dealing with Estimates from the department, so questions should be phrased in that context or in relation to a piece of the Estimates.

Ministers can choose to answer whatever question they want, but there is latitude given to ministers when a question is asked which does fall outside of the Estimates process.

Ms. Allan: Well, the answer is exactly the same as the last time I answered the question. It became apparent to me when I found out what happened with 200 Chinese workers that came in through a recruiter in British Columbia. They were unscrupulously charged \$10,000 per person, and I went, you know, I don't want that to happen in Manitoba.

So we need to look at this and figure out what we can do to stop unscrupulous recruiters from charging newcomers for the privilege of a job in our province. So we consulted with the federal government and the Employment Standards CEO, executive director Dave Dyson. Assistant Deputy Minister Rempel started to consult with a bevy of stakeholders about this legislation including the Canadian Border Services and the RCMP, and this legislation is supported by them as well.

Mrs. Taillieu: I believe that the Estimates process—we agreed to go about this in a global manner. I was referring to a letter that came from the Department of Labour and Immigration, Immigration branch, and

also a FIPPA about a summary and a review of the employer application process, and I was asking questions identified in that summary letter provided to me which there—it talks about illegal activity.

The minister has said there has been illegal activity. I want to know when she first found out about it. When did she first discover there was illegal activity going on? When was it?

Mr. Chairperson: Again, just to clarify, and I appreciate the Member for Morris's statements. Nothing of what I said was in relation to the documents that she says she has. A global discussion just means that we're not going one section of the Estimates book after the other. It means that it's open for any discussion on any particular line item in the Estimates book, but it is the Estimates book and budgetary matters which should be the focus of questions.

When questions fall—you know, questions can be asked outside of the purview of the Estimates book, but members should recognize that under parliamentary practice ministers have discretion on whether to answer those questions or not because it falls outside of the purview of Estimates.

So the discussion that's going on is fine. I was just making sure that people knew that we're getting a little bit close, and the clerks have advised me of this, we're getting close to the area where we're technically outside of the specific area. There's nothing wrong with the questions. There's nothing wrong with the answers. I'm just pointing out that the questions can continue and the answers might not, and that that is okay.

* (16:20)

Ms. Allan: Well, you know, I guess I don't know what to say anymore because I don't have an answer that's making my critic happy. I don't have a new answer. I've answered the question twice, honestly, as I would any question that I was asked, and I'm sorry, but I don't have an answer, obviously, for your question that you want to hear.

Mrs. Taillieu: I think we'll come back to that, then, tomorrow.

I want to just go on to the—I believe last year I talked about service purchase agreements with all the settlement services agencies, there are a number of them under the Immigration Department. I notice this year in the Estimates book, it's something new, it says: Establish contribution agreements with

200 service providers so that the delivery of a wide range of settlement, Adult EAL, and enhanced services through Manitoba Immigration.

I'm wondering then—I had asked for a package of information in regard to contribution agreements. We got into the issue of personal information and protection of privacy. I said I did not need any personal names or anything; I was looking for copies of the service purchase agreements or contribution agreements, didn't receive any of those, and now I see they're going to be established.

So can the minister indicate if these are done or they're just in the process of being done, and why haven't they been done to date, if not?

Ms. Allan: Well, no, it's nothing new in our department. Every year we have contribution agreements. We're actually bound, I believe, by federal government rules—[interjection]—guidelines, thank you. Not rules, guidelines. So we have very in-depth contribution agreements with our stakeholders, Mr. Chairperson. What happens is every year we review those contribution agreements and consult with the stakeholders and renew those contribution agreements with them in regard to the services they're providing. That's done on a yearly basis.

Mrs. Taillieu: How many actual agencies are there, then, that provide immigrant settlement services at the present time in Manitoba?

Ms. Allan: While Ben counts them, I'll give you the information you asked for in regard to the staff that left the department of the Immigration branch. In 2008-2009, a total of six staff left. One of them was Michael Scott. One of them was Mely Buenaventura, and the other one was Marsha Share, and they retired. Deb Fehr Barkman and Sophia Vong, left for another department. One of them resigned to move out of province and her name, or her name, is Chris McInnis.

The number of settlement providers we will fund is 200.

Mrs. Taillieu: Are there contribution agreements with all 200 of those?

Ms. Allan: Yes, there will be contribution agreements with all of them.

Mrs. Taillieu: The minister, I think, said will be. So there are some that aren't done yet?

Ms. Allan: It's early in the fiscal year, so we walk through those and we develop them as we go along.

Mrs. Taillieu: Just for clarification, I'd like to know how many are completed and how many are in progress.

Ms. Allan: We're not sure at this time, but I can just guarantee you that within the next few weeks, all 200 will be done.

Mrs. Taillieu: Perhaps then, in the next couple of weeks, the minister can provide a letter saying they have been completed.

Ms. Allan: Certainly.

Mrs. Taillieu: Thank you very much. I think there's quite a large amount of money that flows from the federal government to the Province for settlement services. I think it's something like \$10 million or \$12 million, and then that is distributed amongst the settlement service providers.

Are there criteria that the service providers must meet to be eligible for some of this funding?

Ms. Allan: We have funding criteria. They are that the service providers must demonstrate an effective service delivery model that will assist Manitoba immigrants and refugees towards economic and social integration, participatory citizenship and long-term residency in Manitoba. The proposal must give evidence that the services are needed and wanted. Unless otherwise agreed upon, funded services must be provided free of charge.

Mrs. Taillieu: I'm just trying to clarify here, but I believe that one of the important criteria for new immigrants to be accepted through the PNP program is that they have some competence in the English language. Is that correct?

Ms. Allan: It's one of the factors, depending on which stream they come through.

Mrs. Taillieu: I notice that a lot of the settlement and community supports are around assisting with English as an additional language. I'm wondering how that's measured. How do we know that the settlement service money is actually improving the English skills of new Manitobans. Is there a measurement how that works?

Ms. Allan: We have staff in the department that do assessments and they work, as well, with the service providers in regard to making sure that the delivery of services is making a difference in regard to newcomers' language abilities. We also have

programs in place with employers. One of the gentlemen that I met last night is the head of Bison Transport, and Bison Transport does language training on site. There is specific language training for employers; it's called Benchmark training, and that's how we assess their language capability.

Mrs. Taillieu: I'm looking through a list that I have here of settlement and community supports. Some of them, I understand, show that there are clients served and some of them do not. There's a very wide range of people that are recipients of monies made available for settlement services, so I just want to pick a few, maybe, and ask if the minister could indicate—just give me a minute here, I'm looking just to pick one. Okay, Rural Municipality of Bifrost. I'm only using this, picking it out as an example. They received \$26,000.

What would be the reason that they would be considered a settlement and community support? Can you give me just an example of what that would be for? I have no idea, so I'm just asking the question.

*(16:30)

Ms. Allan: Ben Rempel has said that what he will do is he would have to look at the agreement. Of the 200 agreements, he doesn't have all of them in his head in regard to what the services are that are provided by each one of them.

Mrs. Taillieu: Well, I do appreciate it might be difficult to sort of go individually like that, but I'm just wondering if a municipality, any municipality, was to apply for a settlement and community supports and, yet, didn't indicate over the last three years that they had served any clients, what would be the basis for them to receive funding?

Ms. Allan: Well, a perfect example is Winkler. We gave them \$600,000 for settlement supports. Obviously, some of it might be in language training. Some of the training that we provide is orientation to the job market. Sometimes they need help with resumes. Family members might. We started an entry program that's been very successful. Sometimes they want to just learn more about Canadian culture and learn more about what our systems are in regard to our education system and our health-care system. Sometimes those kinds of supports are important, as well, for newcomers who come from different cultures.

Mrs. Taillieu: I also note that there's a radio station, I don't know which one this is, CKUW, 95.5 FM

received some money from Manitoba Immigrant Integration Program for settlement and community supports. What would a radio station need money for settlement and community supports for? Can you give me an example?

Ms. Flor Marcelino, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Ms. Allan: We've done language training through the radio for new immigrants. We're not sure that that's exactly what this one is, but we're going to check into it, and we'll get back to you.

Mrs. Taillieu: I also noticed that there is a financial institution in here, Assiniboine Credit Union, who also received some money from Manitoba Immigrant Integration program. Would this be the only—it's the only one I noticed anyway. Oh, no, I'm sorry, there was TD Canada Trust, I see.

I'm just wondering what criteria would they have to meet, then, to get money through Manitoba Immigrant Integration program?

Ms. Allan: Well, this one is probably one of my favourites. It's one of the most exciting programs that we fund. It is a program that was started by Christina Semaniuk, who actually was on our Manitoba Immigration Council.

It's a program to train newcomers in how to become customer service reps. It has become such a success that now the Royal Bank came on board—or, sorry, Toronto-Dominion. It's very exciting because the credit union system identified that as Manitoba's demographics change, because we will depend solely on immigration for population growth by the year 2014, that we better have people behind the counters that can relate to the new demographics of Manitoba. So it was an exciting program that was started by Christina, and it's to train newcomers.

I remember it was one of the first events that I went to shortly after becoming minister, and I met these incredible women that had all just been trained—and I think they were all women, actually, I don't recall if there were any men or not—and they had lived in Manitoba for quite some time, some of them. One woman said she'd been in Manitoba for five years, and she had not been able to find employment. They enrolled her in this program and it was very, very exciting because now she was working and participating in the economy and gainfully employed. It's really a neat program.

Mrs. Taillieu: What I understand from that, then, anybody that—anybody—in any field that wanted to hire new Manitobans and train them would be eligible to apply for this?

Ms. Allan: Well, there's an application process that they would have to go through, and it would have to meet the strategic objectives of our settlement services and our immigration strategy. So if someone had an idea like this, and they wanted to sit down with my department and consult with them in regard to whether or not this is something that would be of benefit, that is something certainly that we would entertain.

You should know that the federal government applauds Manitoba's settlement services strategy. There are only three jurisdictions in Canada that deliver settlement services, and they consistently tell us how, when I'm at FPT meetings, in regard to what a remarkable job we do here in Manitoba in delivering settlement services that really make a difference for our newcomers.

Mrs. Taillieu: Madam Chair, can the minister indicate what are the current wait times for all of the streams in the Provincial Nominee Program?

Ms. Allan: Well, we have—I have told—I wrote the MLA a letter, and I told her what the wait times were in regard to the streams. I can't recall what I said in that letter, but I don't believe that much has changed in regard to that. I can tell you that we take a holistic approach in regard to our immigration program. We believe that, you know, the due diligence has to be done in regard to our applications, and that sometimes it varies in regard to exactly what those wait times are because, quite often, what will occur is not all of the information is there in regard to the application.

But we're certainly pleased with our immigration program in regard to—when you look the success of the program, 70 percent of all of the provincial nominees that come to Canada come to Manitoba. We're particularly pleased with the fact that 34 percent of those that come to Manitoba come to rural Manitoba, which is very, very, very exciting, you know, because we can't have an immigration strategy that just benefits our urban centres. We also have a retention rate that we're very proud of, around 84 percent. So we believe our immigration strategy is working for Manitoba.

* (16:40)

Mrs. Taillieu: The minister indicated that 70 percent of all newcomers to Canada come to Manitoba, and then she indicated a retention number. I'd asked through a Freedom of Information the number of Manitobans that had left within two years of settling here all years from 2000 to 2008. I was told that that record didn't exist. Is there, in fact, a record that exists to track the number of people that leave or stay in Manitoba every year—of the ones that come in through the PNP?

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

Ms. Allan: No, we're just not set up to track those kinds of statistics. The actual retention rate statistic is from an independent study that was done by an independent body.

Mrs. Taillieu: But, Mr. Chair, according to the Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement, section 7, in order to aid in the evaluation of the Provincial Nominee Program, the Province will track provincial nominees for a minimum of three years from their date of entry as a basis for assessing the retention of provincial nominees.

So in light of that, I'd like to again ask what the retention rate is of provincial nominees in Manitoba. If they don't have that information, are they not complying with the Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement?

Ms. Allan: We actually are working with the federal government on an information-sharing agreement because no jurisdiction in Canada can do this because of the simple fact that we're not able to share information with the federal government in regard to those landings. So we're actually working with the federal government. I actually had Monty Solberg here last year, and we announced that we were going to be working with the federal government on this in regard to how to implement that.

Mrs. Taillieu: But there's an agreement between Canada and Manitoba which says that the Province will track provincial nominees for a minimum of three years from their date of entry as a basis for assessing the retention of provincial nominees.

Is the minister saying they are not doing this and therefore breaking that agreement?

Ms. Allan: Our agreement with the federal government is a bilateral agreement, and it's signed off on by the federal minister and the provincial minister. We are in consultations with the federal

government in regard to how we can comply with what is in that agreement.

Mrs. Taillieu: From that answer, I take it that you're in violation of the agreement because you're not doing what the agreement says. So if you don't have the information, how can you measure the success of the program if people are coming to Manitoba and then you don't know where they're going? You really don't have a handle on how many people are staying or where they're going to. How can you measure the success of the program?

Ms. Allan: Well, what we do, we are in compliance with it. I know you'd just love to find something I wasn't in compliance with, but it's not going to happen.

What happens is we are in compliance because what we do is we provide the federal government with the newcomer's health registration number, and then they cross-reference it with their tax information. They're able to draw aggregate information from those two sets of data, and then that way, they can determine. That is the mechanism that we're using right now until we have an official information agreement with the federal government. So this process is in place for now until we have a better one.

I have the information for the member in regard to the radio station that received funding. CKUW was funded in 2007-2008 for \$2,500 to run a day camp for immigrant children to learn about the radio broadcast business.

Mrs. Taillieu: Well, if the minister is saying that they are tracking this information, perhaps she can tell me then, what is the retention rate of immigrant medical personnel, doctors and nurses, that are retained in Manitoba, or how many actually leave the province?

Ms. Allan: It's aggregate data. We can't pull that information from aggregate data.

Mrs. Taillieu: Again, I'm just quoting from the agreement. In order to aid in the evaluation of the PNP, the Province will track the nominees for a minimum of three years. That doesn't sound like aggregate data. That sounds like it will track the people that come through the PNP to see whether they stay in Manitoba or they leave Manitoba. That doesn't appear to have been done.

The next section in this Canada-Manitoba agreement says that every five years, this annex, the

whole annex, the whole agreement, will be reviewed, and I'm wondering if the Province has had discussions with the federal government in regard to this.

Ms. Allan: Well, we're actually in the process of negotiating a new bilateral agreement with the federal government, and we will be having discussions with the federal government about how we can better work together in regard to our immigration strategy.

Mrs. Taillieu: What is the nature of the new bilateral agreement?

Ms. Allan: Well, the old bilateral agreement was a five-year agreement, and that agreement is going to be up soon. We have been in negotiations with the federal government for six months on a new bilateral agreement.

The new bilateral agreement we have—without a bilateral agreement with the federal government, immigration is a federal responsibility. So, it is a shared jurisdiction. So, we have to have a bilateral agreement with the federal government for our immigration program.

I have the answers to your other question, the list of settlement services. We provide information referrals for community—and this is the Bifrost rural municipality—provide information referrals for community and regional supports in the areas of housing, health care and services, education, recreational activities, adult and family learning and literacy programs, instruction programs, finances, employment supports, support labour market preparations and entry for immigrants, organize and promote five community events to help immigrants feel more welcome.

Mrs. Taillieu: Well, thank you for that.

I'm just wondering, then, Mr. Chair, is this new bilateral agreement, is that going to replace the Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement or is it just a renegotiation of the same thing?

Ms. Allan: It is a renegotiation of the agreement that you're looking at right now. It will be a new agreement, and I will sign off on it with the new Minister of Immigration, Jason Kenney, if that's who's the minister when we sign off on it.

* (16:50)

Mrs. Taillieu: Does the Department of Immigration advertise abroad the Provincial Nominee Program?

Ms. Allan: Well, we don't have to. We have the most successful Web site of any Web site in government. It gets about 1.6 million hits a year.

Mr. Lamoureux: Toward the minister, in terms of just the wording, talk about the overall numbers with the Provincial Nominee Program, we have seen an increase. I know we have a target of 20,000. I suspect that it wouldn't take that much effort to really achieve the 20,000. I suspect that the demand has actually been growing within the Provincial Nominee Program and I'm wondering if the minister can give an indication—I think she said that we're at 3,000 in the first three months. When does she anticipate at this stage that we'll hit that 20,000?

Ms. Allan: Well, the commitment was to hit 20,000 by 2016, and we just take it year by year.

Mr. Lamoureux: Generally speaking, individuals that will qualify for the Provincial Nominee Program put in an application, and I'm just guesstimating here, but I suspect that the numbers of individuals and their families that are actually applying probably exceed 20,000 today in terms of the number of applications that are being put in. Is the minister aware, or is the department aware of what sort of numbers that were actually applying to come through the program?

Ms. Allan: Well, we're not really as concerned about numbers as the MLA for Inkster is. Our approach to our immigration strategy is holistic. We're concerned about them succeeding. We want them to participate in our economy. We want them to get here without being taken advantage of by unscrupulous recruiters. We want them to get here and have settlement services and support services and we want them to feel welcome, and it's a challenge.

We have newcomers that come to Manitoba, not just through the Provincial Nominee Program but from the refugee stream and the family support stream and it really is a balancing act in regard to getting those folks here and getting them into the right organizations and getting them jobs. So I know that the MLA for Inkster would just like to open up the doors and have them all arrive tomorrow and tally ho, they'll all do well, but, you know, I think slow but steady is our approach to immigration and make sure that, you know, we have a lot to be proud of here, and, once again, 70 percent of all of the provincial nominees that come to Canada come to Manitoba. It's a very, very successful program, but one of the things that you can do when you have success sometimes is grow too fast, and we want to

make sure that we don't make that mistake with this program that is so valuable to Manitoba and also valuable to the newcomers that want to live here and become Manitoba's newest citizens.

Mr. Lamoureux: You see, I would ultimately argue this is one of the greatest programs that the Province has, even if you go through all the many different departments, and that's why I think that we have to be thinking ahead in terms of how we're going to be able to meet those demands.

Does the minister have a graph that would show the number of applications that are coming into the PNP office for the last four years?

Ms. Allan: Well, you know, I would really ask the MLA for Inkster—I'm going to give you this data for 2008, but I don't want this to turn into a make-work project for my departmental staff, because every make-work project that I pull immigration staff onto means that less people are processing immigration applications and are providing services. So I think what you're asking me, and we have the numbers for 2008, the Provincial Nominee Program receives 6,922 skilled worker applications, 5,608 were accepted for assessment, 20 percent were complete and ready for assessment, and 60 percent were initially incomplete, and 1,314, 20 percent were returned as ineligible or incomplete. Now I think that's what you were asking me. Does that help?

Mr. Lamoureux: Yes, Madam Minister, that does help a lot. But, you see, if we just look at that 6,900, because the details in how the breakdown I'm not as much concerned about, at least for this particular argument or discussion, as that overall number. Let me explain. If it's 6,900 for 2008 and it was 6,000 for 2007, I suspect that we've been seeing year over year an increase, and that increase year over year will likely have an impact in terms of the number of arrivals that we would be getting at any given point in time of the year, the overall number on arrivals.

So what I'm concerned about is that we have the capability to be able to potentially, to the best of our abilities, meet the demand, which I believe is going to be increasing over the next number of years. I guess that's kind of like what I'm looking for, and that's why I think that there's some benefits in terms of understanding the increases that have been coming over the last few years. The last thing I would want to do is to tax the resources of the department, you know, to get them to do something when they could be helping out on case files.

Ms. Allan: Well, I totally agree with the MLA for Inkster in regard to the fact that, you know, we cannot do this work. We cannot make the mistake the federal government has made and not resource the Immigration branch, because this is a people business. This is all about applications and people. So, since 1999, the funding to the Immigration branch has increased by more than 260 percent and that's the settlements or that's funding, and the staffing levels have more than doubled to 77 FTEs.

We have made a consistent effort in my department to make sure that there are people and funding there to process applications, to do the assessments that are required to make sure that we're getting people in training and get them into jobs.

Mr. Lamoureux: I know. I've already written a note here that I'll pass on to Mr. Rempel before I leave in terms of suggesting some meeting times, and we'll get more into the processing times and so forth at that particular meeting.

The question that I would ask the minister—having said that, is that typically, and we'll talk about a family stream where all the paperwork is filled out correctly, there is no need to require additional information from the applicant. Let's just say they did a thorough good job in providing the paperwork. What could they expect to have to wait in order to go through the system in that situation?

Mr. Chairperson: The hour being 5 o'clock, committee rise.

An Honourable Member: Committee recess.

Mr. Chairperson: Oh, sorry. Committee recess, right. Sorry about that.

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

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENERGY AND MINES

*(14:30)

Madam Chairperson (Bonnie Korzeniowski): This section of the Committee of Supply has been dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Science, Technology, Energy and Mines.

Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber.

We are on page 148 of the Estimates book. As previously agreed, questioning for this department will proceed in a global manner.

The floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Carman): Through you to the minister, we've had various discussions over the last two years about low-speed vehicles, making regulations for them. I've offered Carman, the town of Carman, as a test case to set up regulations.

Can the minister advise me as to where his department is right now in co-ordination with the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transportation in terms of how soon these regulations will be developed?

Hon. Jim Rondeau (Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mines): The status of the low-speed vehicles, as far as that's concerned, the regulation is the responsibility of Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation. But we worked with them, we co-ordinate and discuss the issue with them. We understand the drafting instructions for the regulations are nearing completion, but the regulations will not be available for comment for several more weeks.

There are some concerns, and we are trying to deal with other provinces regarding safety concerns, how to integrate with regular traffic, et cetera, and the whole roll out of these vehicles in a safe and cautious manner.

We would like to ensure that there are no concerns on cold weather or integration in regular traffic flow issues. So we are working with MIT on (a) how to roll this out in a safe process, (b) talking to other provinces on how their rolling it out and looking at their experience, and (c) we want to do it in a plan that makes sense and can be communicated to the public.

Mr. Pedersen: In the next couple of weeks when these draft regulations are written up, and realizing that they are just draft, and there may be things that need to be tweaked in it, does the public have a chance for input on this or what is the procedure here as you develop the regulations?

Mr. Rondeau: We're trying to work with the industry to roll out these regulations. As the regulations are developed, there will be discussions with industry and other concerned partners on the roll out of this, which may involve different industry players, such as Westward Industries or the company

that's in your community, as well as other stakeholders which might be municipalities or other groups that may want to do a pilot project.

* (14:40)

Mr. Pedersen: So when you have your regulations, and I guess all I can do is ask: Will you, either through myself or directly to Northland Machinery, perhaps to the town of Carman, give us a copy of these regulations, draft regulations, so that we do have input? I would hate to see this opportunity pass and us not have any chance for input to them.

Mr. Rondeau: Madam Chair, we will meet with Northland, go through what we're planning to do with them and make sure the communications are open.

Mr. Pedersen: Mr. Nussey, at Northland Machinery, will certainly be waiting with bated breath for that.

Mr. Rondeau: If the member would give us the contact information of the people, phone number and stuff like that, we'll make sure that we contact the right person.

Mr. Pedersen: Madam Chair, that's good. I will do that. I will go down and get the pamphlet and I'll leave it with your staff here today so you have the contacts. Very much appreciated. Thank you.

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain): Just on the vehicle side of things. I know under the previous legislation, the minister had to set up a committee to investigate climate change as it relates to motor vehicles and that committee has put forward some recommendations. But the recommendations, to me, look like it's kind of a wait-and-see kind of an attitude. It looks to me like everybody's kind of waiting on what happens in California.

Is that where we're at? What's the next stage in the process here? I know there's some other—what they call complementary measures that are being recommended, but what's the role of this board going to be going forward? And then, what steps is the Province going to take from here on in based on these recommendations?

Mr. Rondeau: Thank you very much for the question. It's a good question because the board had a very important role, and I'd have to thank the board for completing it because it was a very tough job. They had a lot of public input. They went and did a job. They completed their role and I have received the report.

The report's very thorough and it was interesting because when I met first with the board, they sort of said, what's our role? Do you have any expectations? I said, well, I want you to look at the mandate and just do what you believe is appropriate.

The report is very thorough, it's very good, and they had a number of recommendations because they took a broad look at the subject and they looked at, you know, transit and looking at transit and they looked at other forms of alternative transportation. They looked at hybrid rebates and talking about maybe looking at how we can renew the fleet.

But one of the major things that they said was this is not just a Manitoba issue, Madam Chair. We need to work with others. Although we're working in the province on the new hydrogen buses that Flyer's developing for the Olympics, we're looking at hybrid buses which are using less fuel, although we're looking at integration of alternate vehicles or more fuel-efficient vehicles—those are all things we need to do—but one of the things they did say was that California is a huge market and we have to learn to work together in order to push demand or pull demand.

California has more people than Canada. We have about 0.03—less than one-third of 1 percent of the market for cars in North America, so we won't be driving the demand for cars. We have to work with others, California, other states, to sort of say, okay, here are the new rules, here's the reality, and have one standard that's understandable, that's acceptable for all North America, and it's one thing that all manufacturers can work towards. They said this well, and so that they said that if we can move towards a standard that's comprehensive, that's adopted by the vast majority of North America, that makes it much easier. That was another statement that they made.

I like the report. We're working towards addressing the issues and concerns—the recommendation report—and there will be future developments and, as the U.S. has said, they're moving towards things like this and they want to continue to move forward in that regard.

Mr. Cullen: I guess, specifically, there's reference to pre-1995 vehicles, and there's talk about those vehicles, I guess, that have been taken in by MPI. One of the recommendations is to use those vehicles for parts only. Is that something the government is going to be looking at? The other option, too, was there was some discussion about not being able to import into the province vehicles manufactured

before 1995. Is the Province thinking of moving ahead on that as well?

Mr. Rondeau: There are two parts to this. First, we will look at all the recommendations this board made. We'll see what we can do as far as retirement programs, and that's basically older vehicles that could consume more fuel and create more greenhouse gases. As I understand it, as a vehicle gets older, it generally uses more fuel, and pre-1995, in general, and not specific, pollute a little bit more—in general, not in every specific case. So we want to look at the recommendation from the committee on that regard, but there's also the part of legislation we've already added.

Part of the legislation we did in the climate change was that we were moving forward with preventing pre-1995 being imported into the province for resale. Now, that meant retailers couldn't bring in pre-1995 vehicles and resell them. Individuals could bring in vintage or collectible cars or vehicles. We weren't going to prevent people who are bringing in a 1935 car or a car that has very good value in here. We want to make sure people are allowed to import individual cars, especially if they're collectors, so the legislation has that provision. But we want to look at all the recommendations of the board and make sure that we see what we can implement to make change.

Mr. Cullen: Well, it sounds like things are still pretty vague. I guess there's going to be more to follow, I guess, and we'll just have to wait and see how that materializes.

The Province did have a rebate on hybrid vehicles. My understanding is that is no longer available. Is there anything the minister is considering on that side?

Mr. Rondeau: Currently, the hybrid rebate is in existence and is being paid.

Mr. Cullen: I'm sorry, you said the program is still in existence?

Mr. Rondeau: Yes, it's currently still in existence.

* (14:50)

Mr. Cullen: In reference to Bill 15 here, there was the—and maybe what the minister could do, I guess, first of all, is indicate—or at least some time in the near future, let me know which parts of The Climate Change and Emissions Reductions Act have been proclaimed or if there's anything in there that has not been proclaimed.

Mr. Rondeau: Sure, we'll get that to you with the package of materials.

Mr. Cullen: In the legislation there was, under coal phase out: after December 31, Manitoba Hydro must not use coal to generate power except to support emergency operations. Is that still on line as far as you're concerned?

The second part to that is there's no definition of emergency operation. So has your department put together a definition of emergency operations in respect to Manitoba Hydro?

Mr. Rondeau: Madam Chair, I'd like to inform the member opposite the process is unfolding as anticipated on schedule. We've been working with Manitoba Hydro to develop the regulations, the definitions and move this whole project forward.

Mr. Cullen: Okay. I appreciate the minister's response there.

The other issue that was discussed in the legislation was a coal tax, a tax on coal to try to limit the use. Has the Province implemented that or can you tell me if there's a time line for that potential coal tax to come into effect, and how much that particular tax would be?

Mr. Rondeau: The coal tax is anticipated to be \$10 a tonne. It will be effective in 2010-2011. It's part of that budget, and the Department of Finance will bring forward the regulations and all that in due course. So you could ask the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) next year on this.

Now, the purpose—we announced a 2010-11 tax last year, or this year, was because we wanted to make sure that people understood what was happening, and wanted to move forward on alternatives. So I can let the member know my department is working with people who currently use coal to come up with use of biomass or other sources. So what we're trying to do is look for alternatives. So we're trying to use green fuels. An example would be taking straw or flax sheaves, compressing them and being able to burn them instead of coal, which is a green fuel, and which would displace coal.

Just for the record, the tax would be effective in 2011. But we announced it early, and we announced it early so that people could take advantage of some of the incentives Hydro has put out there and, also, some of the things that we're trying to do so that people would be able to move off. It's hopeful that

we don't collect any money on this tax. We're, hopefully, looking at people coming up with biomass and other options. I know that we've been working with companies to bring densifiers to the province, and to do experiments with flax and other material that we could use—called biomass—to displace coal.

Mr. Cullen: So the tax, then, as you see it, would be a fee up front, like a point of sale. I guess the question I have—I know a lot of our coal is imported from Saskatchewan, so how is the minister going to be able to tax that?

Mr. Rondeau: Finance will determine the process as it goes on. It's going to be part of the 2011 budget. What we wanted to do is make sure that we were fair to people, to sort of say this is what's coming. We're going to provide incentives now to use more green alternatives so people can get into biomass or other sources. This is an interesting process because usually you announce a tax as it comes in and, then, it just comes in. What we wanted to do is say, listen, we want to help support people with alternatives now, to convert now. What we would do is put this tax in the future and, hopefully, by announcing a tax this year, for 2011, people can make the changes necessary and we don't have to collect the tax. But the details of the tax will be worked out through Finance and will be presented to this House.

Mr. Cullen: Another point in this legislation was the plan to mitigate landfill emissions. I know the City of Brandon is working with or has had tenders from a number of companies that were interested in capturing emissions from the landfill there. I think it certainly can be a very worthwhile project. I know a number of the American states are doing it, and they're generating electricity from their landfill and it's proven to be very effective.

Also, what a lot of companies are able to do, or cities are able to do, is generate carbon credits through that process. I'm wondering if the minister is aware if that particular process is going to be available here in Manitoba, where, say for instance, the City of Brandon, by working with a private company, if that private company or the City of Brandon would be able to participate in the carbon credit trading.

Mr. Rondeau: I can inform the member opposite that we've been working with Brandon, the City of Winnipeg and other major landfill centres to discuss the capture of landfill gases. Landfill gases have a huge effect on the greenhouse gases. They're 16 times more potent than regular. It has to do with

the methane gas. So what we want to do is work with the municipalities to capture and make sure that we're not letting this methane gas, which is 16 times more powerful than CO₂, actually get out into the atmosphere because it does make a big difference.

So, Madam Chair, we're working with Brandon, City of Winnipeg and other large landfills to do this. We want to capture entire credits. Because it's legislated, that's where we're going to go; we're going to capture, retire and meet our targets. After we've reached our targets, some companies, some groups, may look at ways of mitigating greenhouse gases and selling them. There will be a market in the future for some enterprises. I can't predict the future. I do know that as part of our strategy in the climate change bill, we want to move forward on capturing the greenhouse gases, retiring them, putting it against our target of three megatonnes. If we do this with Brandon, the City of Winnipeg, et cetera, on some of the major landfills, that's a huge component to our greenhouse gas reduction strategy.

* (15:00)

Mr. Cullen: My question was specific about carbon credits. My question is, does the legislation that you have in place now regarding greenhouse gas emissions on landfills, does that legislation preclude a company from now trading those carbon credits that have been captured from landfills?

Mr. Rondeau: It's our plan to capture and retire those credits against our greenhouse gas reduction targets, against the government's greenhouse gas targets.

Mr. Cullen: Well, I don't want to put words in the minister's mouth, but what I think he is saying is that this legislation now precludes companies from trading those credits. Is that what the minister's saying?

Mr. Rondeau: To achieve our targets, we would have to capture the greenhouse gases from these disposal sites and retire them and not trade them, put them on the market.

Mr. Cullen: So I am hearing you say that no, you can't trade those carbon credits on the market. Is that what the minister's telling me?

Mr. Rondeau: I'd offer the member a briefing on how you can capture and retire the credits. It's part of our plan to take these credits that are being decreased from the greenhouse gases from the refuse sites. It's

our plan to take those, capture them and retire the credits so that they're not part of the open market.

We also have got a Web site up and running which was developed by my branch, the Canadian Standards Association and other partners which is talking about how individuals can take action, where they can actually capture, record and then eventually maybe trade on the open market. It is the government's intention to capture the greenhouse gases from these sites and retire them against the climate change actions in our plan. Right now it's part of our plan to capture and retire them and not sell them on the open market.

Mr. Cullen: I will follow up directly with the minister on that just for clarification, but I think what he's done, or what the department has done with this legislation has precluded any private company that wants to come and do business in Manitoba the opportunity to do what's environmentally right, and, secondly of all, to actually generate some income from that by doing what's right. So by doing what's publicly perceived as doing the right thing in legislation, may not, in fact, in big picture, be helping the environment because we haven't seen any move on Brady Landfill in terms of catching gas. But if the opportunity was there to look at recovering some dollars with carbon credits, we know the carbon credits are going to increase in value. That's certainly the suggestion once everything comes into place. So I'm just wondering why the minister would preclude the opportunity for entrepreneurs to make money.

Mr. Rondeau: Madam Chair, one of the things we have is, we have a plan that is moving forward to reduce about three megatonnes. The things that are in our plan—it's a public document, it's on the Web site—it has lots of opportunity to reduce greenhouse gases.

There's a difference between the greenhouse gases that we're going to take. We're going to help work with different groups and put them and retire the credits and actually move forward and take the credits out because you don't want to take the credits and double count them. One of the things we found out is the whole greenhouse gas exchanges, we wanted to make sure that we have a process where we legitimately take, capture and retire three megatonnes. We don't want them to be double counted.

There are huge opportunities for entrepreneurs to come in and work in areas that we haven't prescribed in legislation or regulations, Madam Chair. There's

huge opportunities for entrepreneurs to work in sites that the government doesn't have in its specific plan. We want to have entrepreneurs come to us and look at options. We're very open to work a new partnership with people who have ideas on how to reduce greenhouse gases and make some money and create jobs, because, as we mentioned before, we believe that being environmentally green can create economic activity. So if an entrepreneur comes to us with an idea on (a) moving forward with a project and (b) making money on it and (c) cutting greenhouse gases, we would definitely listen to him or her and we would also try to work with them.

However, if we have as part of our plan or part of our legislation, that we're going to retire certain credits, because if we legislate it or regulate it, then we cannot sell it; we have to retire it. So that's part of the WCI, that's part of the agreements that are being developed nationally, that if we regulate it, then we own the credits and we retire the credits.

If, and there will be lots of areas for entrepreneurs to work in, they want to go in and do other areas that we haven't regulated or we haven't legislated, not only are we welcoming them to do that, we encourage them to do that. We will actually help facilitate some of their actions. So that's where we want to go.

An example of where we could go are wind farms. They're very, very green, and in the case of the wind farms, Hydro is open to use the credits in any way to allow the best deal on power.

*(15:10)

Another example is geothermal heat pumps. If I wanted to go and get all those people—in some cases, if they've gotten subsidies, they've sold the credits. In other cases, people have an opportunity to sell my credits. So, if I wanted to take the four tonnes of credit that I have in my house because of my geothermal heat pump and sell them on the open market, I could do that and get my \$16 this year.

But these are all opportunities in the future. I wanted to let the member know that we'd encourage third party entrepreneurs to come into areas that we haven't regulated or legislated.

Mr. Cullen: Well, this isn't a thing of the future; it's happening now. Just read one report here, the Chicago trading index traded 69.2 million metric tonnes of CO₂ emissions. That was in 2008. That's increased 363 percent from 2007.

Now, we've got people and companies involved in signing up agriculture producers for carbon credits. Quite frankly, it can be pretty substantial. I just read an article where one company paid \$20 million on contracts to 2,100 farmers between 2003 and 2006. So obviously those figures last year would certainly be more significant than that. Some of these farmers are Manitoba producers, and there's people out there now trying to sign up these producers for aggregators to turn around and do some carbon trading.

So, I think we, as a province certainly have to move this forward. I know we're involved with the Western Climate Initiative. How soon are we, as a group, going to be organized so that we can actually say, here's the process, here's the way we think it's going to work and Manitobans have a crystal clear market to go to?

Mr. Rondeau: I agree with the member opposite fully. I think that there's a huge opportunity for not only ag and forestry, but ag and forestry are two huge areas that they could get credits. There's others: energy efficiency. There's other companies, manufacturing companies that also may have huge opportunities here to produce offsets and be able to acquire credits and sell them.

Now, we've done one thing that's very, very interesting is because we know that this is an evolving industry. We know that at times, people weren't sure whether the credits were real, whether they were sold one time or 10 times. So, what we did is we worked with the Canadian Standards Association and other partners to develop a green registry. What this green registry does is it's—and I'd encourage the member opposite to go to it because it basically gives the person who has got this idea or what they want to do, they then can go to the Web site, sort of put in what they've done and get an example of how many tonnes of greenhouse gases they actually have.

It's the first step of understanding what you can do to mitigate your greenhouse gases. It's the first step that actually counts greenhouse gas reductions, verifies them and sort of says, okay, this is your number. This is how many greenhouse gases you are eliminating. Then, when you sell them, you're actually selling something that's counted and verified. Then, hopefully, down the road people will be able to aggregate these and sell them and these will have real value because it's no longer the wild, wild west.

We actually work with the Canadian Standards Association to make sure that these are real credits, they're sold once, they're counted once and they're verified. So, we've actually got that Web site up and running. I'd encourage you to go. If you have suggestions about it, we'd be happy to work with you on some of your suggestions.

But, yes, there will be huge opportunities to trade. The how and where and what and when is evolving. With Obama being the President of the United States, things have been moving very quickly. As part of the Western Climate Initiative, we've worked with a number of people, former governors, et cetera, that are moving forward on this file. So we believe that the rules on trading—we've been at the table for a few years, about five years now, and what we want to do is, we want to be there to talk about how the rules are established, what's counted, what can be retired, how they're retired. We've been there and we dealt with this. So we're happy that we've been at the table. We think it's a huge opportunity and I fully agree with the member opposite that this is a huge economic opportunity for Manitobans, because they get it. The first step is the green registry which is up and running and is available now.

Mr. Cullen: Okay, just so I'm kind of clear on where the minister is headed here, Manitobans will be signing up on the registry and this way the Province can monitor how many greenhouse gases are saved. Ultimately we're going to be able to put a figure on that, tonnage-wise. So then the Province will use that figure in terms of reducing—this is the amount of greenhouse gas that we've reduced as a province, and then will the Province take those numbers, whatever value that is, and then sell that on the market? Is that how this is going to work?

Mr. Rondeau: The registry is not meant to count what government's doing. We actually have a plan where we're going to actually take actions ourselves, capture greenhouse gases, like from landfills, and retire them. That's part of the government plan.

Separate from that, individuals can take actions. So what this Web site's done is it's allowing individuals to register, verify and sell on their own, their greenhouse gas reductions. Of course, it does affect the amount of greenhouse gases Manitoba emits but what we are going to do is we're going to reduce our greenhouse gases by 3.1 megatonnes to get down to Kyoto, which is 6 percent below 1990 levels, which we legislated.

Mr. Cullen: Bill 30, the bill that says we're not paying down our debt, part 14 of the bill relates to The Waste Reduction and Prevention Act and the wording is pretty vague here but maybe the minister can try to explain to me how he thinks this amendment to The Waste Reduction and Prevention Act is going to work so I have an understanding of—I understand we're going to be taxing garbage, if you will.

Could the minister fill me in on the process, how this is going to work and how it's going to improve the recycling in the province? I know we've got a long way to go in terms of improving our recycling here in the province. So if the minister can tell me how the process works and how it's going to improve—how it's going to get less garbage in the landfill, and how it may improve our recycling here in the province?

* (15:20)

Mr. Rondeau: This part of the bill is adding garbage tax of \$10 a tonne, details of which are being worked out through Finance and IGA, et cetera. It's the intention of this part of the bill to collect the tax and utilize or enhance recycling activities in the province, enhance waste recovery by using this fund to improve what's happening as far as recycling.

So we're going to charge tax on the garbage. The municipalities will continue to work with our government and my department and IGA to enhance recoveries. And so it's meant to help provide financial assistance to municipalities, to fund recycling activities and increase our numbers. Examples that we've done in the past are we want to continue to work with our partners as far as the e-waste recovery, and we did a very good job of collecting almost a million kilograms of e-waste in the last couple of years, getting more deposits, longer hours, et cetera. We just worked with our partners to do a phone and small electronics pick-up, but what we want to do is take this revenue and work to enhance recovery and thus have less unwanted items go into the landfill.

Mr. Cullen: Who's going to be paying the tax? Is it municipal corporations that are going to be paying the tax for how much garbage goes into their landfill? Is that how the system's going to work? The Province is going to bill the municipality for it and then collect the money and then turn around and give it back to the municipalities for a recycling program?

Mr. Rondeau: The departments of Finance and Intergovernmental Affairs are going to be working through the details with the municipalities, et cetera, to make it an effective system. As far as the usage of the revenue, we want to enhance the recyclable system and the amount that's recycled. Although we pay 80 percent of the bill for the recycling, which is the highest, I understand, in Canada, so our share is 80 percent, municipalities 20 percent, we think it's really important to divert unwanted products into the landfills, so we've gone out and worked previously on things like composting programs with the City of Winnipeg and others. We've worked on e-waste collection and other things, and we want to continue to enhance the recoveries.

I know that Conservation's been working on other printed paper and packaging regulations. That's part of their efforts. We want to continue to work on diverting waste into landfills, and we think by having this revenue source and working with the municipal governments, we can actually increase the amounts that are diverted from landfills.

Mr. Cullen: Well, I'm certainly interested to see how this is going to work. I guess time will tell how that plays itself out.

Just changing gears here, there's been very little discussion lately about wind farms in Manitoba, wind energy production. It sounds like it's kind of fallen off the radar, and I know the Province has made a commitment to increase wind energy production here in Manitoba, and, clearly, as the price of hydroelectricity goes up, I think the economics of wind farm production started looking better and better all the time. It was our understanding that there was going to be a wind farm in St. Joseph, but we haven't heard anything about that for several months. I just wonder if the minister can advise us where that particular wind farm development's at.

Mr. Rondeau: Madam Chair, the issues between Babcock & Brown and Hydro have been moving forward, and we have got the St. Leon wind farm up and running, the 99 meg wind farm. We have announced that Babcock & Brown and Hydro are working together to finalize all the issues.

One of the issues is a financial issue; trying to borrow money, move projects forward, and this economic time has been complex. It has been a large issue. But, so far, the project is on track for 2011 in-service date.

However, there are issues, as far as trying to get the project financed, move forward and get a very complex and, I understand, one of the largest wind farms in North America, up and running is an interesting complex issue.

I'd like to let the member know that our government is committed to wind, and we are committed to green energy projects. We will continue to build dams. I know that we believe in building dams. We believe in expanding hydro. We believe in wind farms. In fact, we just announced, just a little while ago, assistance for solar walls, and we have assistance for geothermal programs.

So, we do believe energy has a huge benefit, and we will continue to work with partners to try to develop all green energy sources that we can because we believe that it is truly a feather in our cap and a huge potential in the future.

Mr. Cullen: I know Obama is certainly making waves in the United States in terms of some of the announcements he's been making, Madam Chair. He seems to be keen on alternative fuel sources. I know he mentioned here, the last couple weeks, that wind power can generate 20 percent of the country's electricity needs by 2030 and would add 250,000 jobs. So he's certainly keen on the prospect of that.

Are the Province and Manitoba Hydro committed to the St. Joseph's project, or is there potential for another RFP process, or is that kind of where we're at right now?

Mr. Rondeau: I'll try to answer your question and refer the member to the standing committee for Hydro, if you have further questions.

But, I understand Babcock & Brown and Hydro are committed to the project and are working very much toward the 2011 in-service date. We've also made a commitment, public commitment, as a party, to 1,000 megs of wind, which would be about 20 percent of our current capacity.

The other thing I'm pleased is that President Obama is talking about green, meaning environment creating green, which is jobs. It was interesting, in his second speech, he talked about demand-energy projects, which is energy savings, as being a huge driver; like getting energy efficiency, insulation and home renovations. It was a wonderful speech. I was at the Y and I was cheering for him because I thought it was great, because he talked about ethanol and biodiesel being used as economic drivers and

green things. He talked about demand-side energy efficiency. Again, the same thing. He talked about new energy sources. He mentioned wind. I believe he also mentioned geothermal.

* (15:30)

I think that what he's doing is saying that by changing the economics, by changing green, you can create economic activity, and this government has been saying exactly the same thing for five years. It's interesting to note that some of the major names in the field have said that it's important to be early adopters, because if you're early adopters of technology, of green manufacturing, et cetera, like geothermal, then we can sell that production to the world.

By the way, we have two manufacturing plants. We have a training course. We have all that nailed, and we are exporting geothermal technology through many countries in the world. So, that's a perfect example. Now, we have a head start in the U.S., and we're working very hard to move some of these initiatives forward. I believe that it's the right strategy, and I'm glad that Obama is following Manitoba's lead.

Mr. Cullen: Madam Chair, I don't know if the minister has had any discussion with Elton Energy, a group just outside of Brandon. They were certainly interested in the concept of having community wind. I know they're certainly interested. I imagine they've had a proposal to the minister. They're looking at wind production on a relatively smaller scale, where the community can get involved and some of the profits could go back to the community. I'd just like to get the minister's comment on Elton Energy, in particular, and, I guess, in general terms, some of the other opportunities that might be there to generate power on a smaller community base.

Mr. Rondeau: Madam Chair, we've been in regular contact with Elton Energy and a number of other organizations or people who are interested in wind energy. The member might know that we—during the expression of interest, there were multiple people that expressed interest in participating in the wind RFP.

Not only that, but we've had many, many people and organizations contact my branch. They've been very busy in responding to different inquiries, and I anticipate because this is a growing industry, the inquiries will continue. Our dialogue will continue,

and we'll try to roll out further wind projects with Hydro in due course.

What's nice about it is that people are excited about this industry, as I am, as the member opposite is, and I think what we want to do is help facilitate that. I'd like to compliment the staff at the branch because, although it's a smaller part of the branch, they're very, very active and very responsive to the inquiries.

Mr. Cullen: I think we have to view this energy development in broad terms. I don't think we have to think narrowly that it has to be a wind necessarily. I think there are other opportunities out there. I've visited some hog barns where they're doing some innovative things where they can generate electricity from the gas and clean up the waste water, if you will. It's very effective, and I just think we should be doing more to try to get those types operations off the ground.

I think, you know, if there's a will by government to get the job done and there's a willingness by Hydro to purchase that electricity at a reasonable rate, I think we should be looking at that. It's a tremendous economic opportunity for rural Manitoba.

Mr. Rondeau: I agree with the member opposite. There are all sorts of opportunities in different sectors. An example was the solar air heating potential. We just announced the GTEC, which is basically a tax credit to have solar heat used in hog barns. There are other options, and what we want to do is, as more and more options come around, as the technology changes, we want to work with companies to utilize the technology and utilize things like tax credits.

An example was the GTEC applicable to geothermal—which is a good industry in Manitoba and very well adopted. So now, we have expanded just recently, we were talking about the solar air heating. I was at, I think it was Assiniboine Credit Union, and they had a great little solar wall and it worked great. We talked about the importance of the return on investment and the GTEC on that Manitoba technology, Manitoba utilized and manufactured. Parts of those components, they were in process and they are now utilized or can utilize the tax credit, the green energy tax credit.

So I agree with the member. There are lots of things coming down. We're going to continue to work with industries and individuals who come up

with ideas and there are lots of opportunities. We'll try things. We'll try to work forward to save energy and save money and reduce greenhouse gases.

Mr. Cullen: I appreciate where the minister's going here and I do know there are some tax credits for different things out there, but I think if the private sector is going to get involved in this, they would like to see some incentive financially besides just a tax credit. Like if they knew that they were going to generate electricity—by whatever means it is—and they knew they were going to get paid so much a kilowatt at the end of the day, it's pretty straightforward, pretty neat and tidy and clean. You just put it through the meter and the meter tells you how much electricity you're generating and, at the end of the day, here's your cheque for generating. Manitoba Hydro can take that electricity, turn around and sell it and hopefully everybody makes a little bit of money at the end of the day.

Mr. Rondeau: Actually, Hydro has a reverse metering policy, which means that people can eliminate their whole Hydro bill and actually get paid from Hydro if they have some projects that create electricity. That's in place now. It's in policy now. If a person wants to get a windmill, put it up on their farm, first they can eliminate their entire energy bill and then they get paid from Hydro.

There are some rules on connectivity, et cetera, but that policy is in place now and I would encourage people—I hope my neighbour doesn't put in a big wind tower, but beyond that, people can put in—they have to follow normal municipal by-laws; they have to follow normal practices. We hope that they work with others and Hydro to make sure that the connectivity is appropriate. What we want to do is encourage people to talk to our department and we will help facilitate these things with Hydro to see how they can integrate to the grid and get free electricity or maybe make some money.

Mr. Cullen: Other jurisdictions have gone so far as to implement feed-in tariffs so that there's an actual structure of what an individual or a company would get paid based on however they're producing it, so solar would be a certain rate, methane recovery could be a certain rate, wind energy would be a certain rate. Just wondering if the minister or the department has considered going so far as to establish a feed-in tariff and structure such as that.

Mr. Rondeau: If the member opposite would like to suggest one that the Conservative Party would adopt and like to suggest that we implement, I'd be open to

receiving a written copy of what your policy would be. Right now, we have a policy of net metering which means you pay off the bill and then sell at a specific prescribed price to Manitoba Hydro.

* (15:40)

Mr. Cullen: Well, talking about electricity, how about nuclear energy? We know there's certainly a demand for energy in Ontario and a growing demand in Saskatchewan. Those provinces are all talking about nuclear energy. It certainly sounds like Saskatchewan is really gung-ho and having some very positive discussions, I understand, looking at a fairly sizable facility somewhere in Saskatchewan.

So I just want to get the view from the minister. Is that an opportunity for us here in Manitoba or does he see that as a bit of a threat to Manitoba?

Mr. Rondeau: The member might know, right now, we're working on Keeyask, Conawapa and other dams, Wuskwatim. What we want to do is we want to develop those dams. Dams are very cost-effective because you build them. If the member has ever been to Norway House, I had the opportunity to live in Norway House for three years. You notice that these dams are rock, made of granite; they're miles long and they're there for a long time. So you make the investment; you get a huge return. So we believe in the hydro dams. We have three planned which, again, will be utilized for export sales, which is great revenue, which is wonderful.

We also have one wind farm. We're working on the second wind farm and others are going to be proceeding as time goes on, Madam Chair. We also have demand-side energy efficiency programs. So we are exporting a lot of electricity. We continue to build dams. We continue to work on wind farms. We want to do this. So that's where we want to go right now.

Other jurisdictions might not have the hydro potential we have. We have a huge hydro potential. I know when I talk to the energy ministers in Alberta and Saskatchewan, often, they comment on our huge potential and what we have. We're already exporting tonnes of electricity. Well, I guess it's not measured in tonnes. We export lots of electricity.

We believe that's a positive step. Already we are working to put strategic investments in that are paid back by export sales, that are paid back by consumers, generally, in other states or provinces. We're working with other states and provinces to improve connectivity and improve transmission

lines. What we want to do is actually have it so that we have opportunities in the future.

Now we have chosen to go solar and wind and energy efficiency. That's our choice. Other governments might choose to do other things. We believe that we have a very green energy plan, and it seems to be resonating with a lot of people because they're saying that our plan makes sense. So that's where we're headed right now.

Mr. Cullen: Well, the minister made reference to a grid. Obviously, Bipole III is certainly the next one on the radar. Where do we have to go next in terms of a grid, though? If we're going to be exporting, what has to happen next? Are we looking at a line south, east, west? From your department's perspective, what has to happen next?

Mr. Rondeau: Although that's a question for Hydro, I can say that we're always looking at export opportunities wherever we can get good money, I understand, from hydro.

Mr. Cullen: Okay, I see we're not going to get too far down the line on this one. Mr. Obama just announced some pretty major undertakings in the ethanol side of things. He's certainly hanging his hat on ethanol and possibly new ways to produce ethanol. Where are we at here in terms of our mandate, and is there room for expansion here in the province in terms of the ethanol industry?

Mr. Rondeau: Madam Chair, the ethanol mandate has been 8.5 percent of the pool average that's been implemented. So, right now, 8.5 percent of the pool average is ethanol.

We're working towards a biodiesel mandate. We have been very active on both files to (a) create economic activity, (b) greenhouse gases, and (c) to make sure that we actually have people employed in Manitoba here. So we have been working on those.

Of course, there are always opportunities for expansion, depending on people's cost benefit analysis, what they want to do to invest, et cetera. Again, the department has been very proactive and responsive to people's concerns and interests in this area. It's an area that does get good greenhouse gas reductions and does reduce the dependency on fossil fuels.

Mr. Cullen: So you're saying that we are meeting our mandate? If so, is there a report that the department puts out on an annual basis, just so we

know the facts and figures and the production and all that?

Mr. Rondeau: Madam Chair, I'd like to let the member know that we've been on 8.5 percent pool average for a while now. At first, it was just a 5 percent pool average working with the companies to implement it. We can get all the details together and send him the information on this, if you wish. Basically, we worked with the industry to do an 8.5 percent pool average because then it's easier for them to work with the mandate. As we put in the mandate, we wanted to make sure that we were working with the companies to do an achievable target and implement it in a very effective manner.

I'm pleased to say that the work of the staff with working with the companies did a very good implementation. In fact, it was so smooth no one took any notice of it, except we do have the report on how much ethanol is being used and we do have the 8.5 percent pool average now.

Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie): Madam Chairperson, I appreciate the opportunity to ask the minister a couple of questions as it pertains to recycling.

I know it was mentioned by the honourable minister that when I brought forward a private member's resolution regarding a deposit return system in Manitoba, being that Manitoba is the only jurisdiction in Canada that does not have that type of regime in place for beverage containers outside of that of beer bottles, and the minister's response said that it was coming and to just be patient. I'm wondering when that program is going to be coming forward and how the minister envisions the program working.

* (15:50)

Mr. Rondeau: I'd like to thank the member for the question. I'd like to let the member know, through you, Madam Chair, that the multimaterial product stewardship initiative is moving forward. The regulations have been approved and moving forward. It's taken from the current government-funded central system to an industry-led program that has targets for recovery rates and the government will continue to work with the industry to ensure that we are achieving these targets and moving forward on the whole recovery.

Letting the member know that this is an interesting topic because just yesterday or the day before the Minister for Conservation (Mr. Struthers)

was talking about an industry-led initiative to recycle and dispose of cellphones and BlackBerrys and other hand-held devices. So this is coming where more and more the industry is leading the retirement and the appropriate disposal of these commodities, whether it's bottles or whether it's cellphones or whatever. The printed paper and packaging regulations have been approved. They're moving out and discussions are happening with industry as we speak.

Mr. Faurshou: Well, then, is it the fact that the government is going to provide for enabling legislation whereby the industry can make a surcharge collection, if I'm using the correct terminology? There's an environmental levy currently collected by the government already on pop bottles. Is this money that is collected by government currently, is it going over to the industry organization that you speak of so that they can use those resources in order to facilitate the program of which he speaks?

Mr. Rondeau: Within the next six months the industry is building a business plan looking at the regulations that have been developed and published and are public now. The Minister of Conservation (Mr. Struthers) will review the business plan, work with the industry-led consortium on how the industry will fund it. There are some programs currently that don't have a fee. I just mentioned that there is the cellphone and personal electronic device, BlackBerry, et cetera, that is totally industry funded, so they have taken it upon themselves to be good stewards of the environment.

So they actually even have it where you can go to the Web site, which I did, and print off an address label that's prepaid that you can actually mail in at no cost and then your old cellphone gets disposed of appropriately and isn't landfilled. So there are a lot of models, but right now the industry-led consortium in each case will look after it, will develop a business plan, and develop a plan on how to dispose and collect these items, and then move it forward. They all have targets, and the Minister of Conservation will be dealing with the industry so he can go into more details with you on that.

Mr. Faurshou: Where I was going with this is just to have the minister's assurance that the monies collected by government currently that go into the Manitoba Product Stewardship Corporation at the present time, are they then still going to be collected and made available to the new entity? It's something that is always questionable with change as to whether or not the government's going to still keep

collecting the money and it won't pass the monies on. So I'm looking for the minister's assurance that whatever resources that are being paid into the government and currently passed on to the Manitoba Product Stewardship Corporation will continue to do so.

Mr. Rondeau: These regulations will be moving forward. They have moved forward as far as the printed paper and packaging. They will supersede what's currently there, and the business plan that the industry will come up with will have financial arrangements and suggestions and comments and then financial decisions will be made from there.

Again, it's not my purview to talk about the levy. We in Green Manitoba are responsible for trying to enhance the collection and diversion of items out of the waste stream, so we'd be involved in the electronic waste pickups; we'd be involved in other activities, but we really wouldn't be involved in the regulation of the industry. That's the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Struthers) and I'd have to respectfully say the business plan's approved by the Minister of Conservation, not this department, although we are in dialogue with them because Green Manitoba is trying to divert waste from landfills. So we have that as part of our mandate. The regulation is with the Minister of Conservation and the business plans are approved by the Minister of Conservation. I don't approve them.

Mr. Faurshou: Well for me it's confusing insofar as you're responsible for the regulation, then he's responsible for the implementation, a colleague of his, and you keep on going around this merry-go-round and ultimately nothing happens.

So, anyway, I do want to, as a—pardon the pun—wrap-up question on recycling: Is the department looking at contingency plans to be able to wrap up the operations that are currently under way in recycling? This current situation, and I'm sure the minister is appreciative of, is very grave. Much of what is being collected in the blue box, green box programs throughout the province is going directly into storage, and if the minister is not aware of that, he could call up any recycling corporation that is active in the province and he'll be well informed by that call. So if the minister is wanting this program to go over to industry, and right now the government is responsible for current activity, it is incumbent upon government to make sure that they're going to pick up the mess that is currently in building, and I would

like to ask the minister to give that assurance to the corporations engaged in recycling here in the province of Manitoba currently.

* (16:00)

Mr. Rondeau: Madam Chair, I'd like to thank the member for the question. Here's the transition. The current program is under the purview of the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Struthers) and the Conservation Department. The transition to the new program and writing the regulations, the discussion on the regulations, is the purview of the Minister of Conservation.

The current program and the new program are under the Minister of Conservation so that's that minister's area of responsibility. The plan, the new programs, as they're transferred from the current to the new system will now, and the implementation and some of that, now goes to the department, Green Manitoba, et cetera. The current program, Conservation, the transition, Conservation, when it goes to an industry-led model, which we're moving towards, it's going to go more to this department. It will be an industry-led operation. It will have specific targets. It will have specific collections, but that doesn't mean that things like the blue box system are automatically wiped out. They might add to the blue box. They might utilize the blue box in Winnipeg in other areas. The interesting part is that there's already a tire stewardship program, there's already an oil program collecting used oil, motor oil, there's printed packaging and paper regulations that are out now, and there's others.

I explained the member the telephones, et cetera, the electronic waste we have been running because it's a program that we believe that's important to divert from landfill. So, we're running it, and a million kilograms is a lot that we collected in the last two years. Last year, it was about 660,000, about 700,000 kilograms. I might be off by a little bit because I'm using my memory, but basically we're moving from the two-cent levy on pop bottles to a new industry-led model that will come up with a business plan to the Minister of Conservation, the transition to the Minister of Conservation and the industry-led model that we then become involved in.

Mr. Cullen: Madam Chair, I want to just take the opportunity to thank the minister and his staff for the last couple of days and thanks for attempting to answer most of the questions. Thank you very much.

Ready to go line by line, Madam Chairperson.

Madam Chairperson: Is the committee ready to starting passing resolutions? *[Agreed]*

Resolution 18.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$5,971,000 for Science, Technology, Energy and Mines, Energy, Climate Change and Green Strategy Initiatives, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 18.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$21,932,000 for Science, Technology, Energy and Mines, Science, Innovation and Business Development, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 18.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$33,286,000 for Science, Technology, Energy and Mines, Manitoba Information and Communication Technologies, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 18.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$12,055,000 for Science, Technology, Energy and Mines, Mineral Resources, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 18.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$8,555,000 for Science, Technology, Energy and Mines, Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 18.7: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$5,225,000 for Science, Technology, Energy and Mines, capital investment, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010.

Resolution agreed to.

The last item to be considered for the Estimates of the Department is item 1.(a) Minister's Salary, contained in Resolution 18.1.

The staff having left the Chamber, the floor is open for questions.

Resolution 18.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$761,000 for Science, Technology, Energy and Mines, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010.

Resolution agreed to.

This concludes the Estimates for this Department. The next set of Estimates that will be considered by this section of the committee are the Estimates of Intergovernmental Affairs.

Shall we recess briefly to allow the minister and critic the opportunity to prepare for the commencement of the next set of Estimates?
[Agreed]

Committee is in recess.

The committee recessed at 4:07 p.m.

The committee resumed at 4:15 p.m.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Madam Chairperson (Bonnie Korzeniowski): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will be considering the Estimates of the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs.

Does the honourable minister have an opening statement?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): First of all, I want to indicate that during the consideration of Estimates we will obviously be dealing with issues related to the department and also to EMO, and what I wanted to suggest for consideration is that, if in fact we are in the Chamber and it's a bit difficult to circulate staff in and out, it might be appropriate if we can get some sort of indication in advance and make sure that the appropriate staff are available for the different components.

I do want to indicate that, in terms of Intergovernmental Affairs, I'm very proud of being minister of a department that probably has far greater impact on the lives of average Manitobans than most people realize. I'm very proud to be working with 198 municipalities in the province, have a very good partnership with those municipalities and with the Assembly of Manitoba Municipalities representing them.

I've always said that we are leaders in the country in many ways, and that's something that I know is echoed by our municipal leaders. We certainly have had a significant support to municipalities over the years. I have the numbers available if the critic is interested. I think it's been very noticeable, the increase, for example, to the City of Winnipeg; it's increased 66 percent since we came into government in 1999. We had a further 5.2 percent increase this past year, which is very significant. The 2009 provincial funding support will increase \$4.5 million for other municipalities; that's 5.6 percent over 2008 levels.

The key element, of course, is the Building Manitoba Fund, the degree to which we share in growth revenues. I think that's been one of the most significant elements going back to the 1970s, the degree to which in Manitoba we do share with municipalities. That has had a very significant impact.

I do want to note the significance this past year of what we've been building on the last number of years in terms of transit funding. We reinstated the 50 percent share for transit funding for Winnipeg, Brandon, Thompson and Flin Flon. We also applied that both in legislation and in a direct funding announcement to rapid transit here in the city of Winnipeg. We consider that to be very significant.

We provide support for public safety, and I want to note this year the very significant new increase in funding for the Winnipeg ambulance services. I think it's important to note, by the way, that we are working toward the city's goal of having its share of EMS, cost 10 percent. I want to credit, by the way, the City of Winnipeg, also the firefighters. I met both with the fire chief, Jim Brennan, and with the firefighter union president, Alex Forrest, fairly early on in this, and met with Mayor Katz. They made a very compelling argument. I think it's important to note, by the way, the success of the combined fire-paramedic approach, which is providing excellent service to the city, and we are responding accordingly.

I want to note, by the way, the renewal of the Municipal Recreation Fund. We've already made a number of announcements in terms of municipal recreation and library facilities. That is extremely important, and we've worked with communities like Thompson, The Pas, Portage, Brandon and Arborg through the BMF funding.

We continue to focus in on infrastructure working with the Minister responsible for Infrastructure in the Department of MIT. I really want to say that we consider our investment in terms of municipal support to infrastructure to be very significant. There's almost \$40 million in capital support that will flow to Winnipeg and, in fact, flowed early part of this year. We've accelerated funding for roads and bridges, part of our five-year, \$125-million investment in transportation. That is very significant. If you combine that with a historic announcement of investment in rapid transit, you're seeing a tremendous commitment to infrastructure, and that's a commitment that's echoed throughout the province.

* (16:20)

We're very proud of our work with communities across the province through Neighbourhoods Alive! It was expanded recently to Flin Flon, The Pas, Dauphin, Portage la Prairie and Selkirk. I want to indicate that we are having a tremendous amount of success in those communities, and we're already seeing some significant community-driven projects adding to the communities in Winnipeg and also in Brandon and Thompson that have been part of Neighbourhoods Alive! since 2000. We have been very much part of working towards economic development through the Winnipeg Partnership Agreement. I want to particularly note the excellent work that's been done in terms of the Aboriginal component. We're working with Brandon in terms of Renaissance Brandon, an excellent project that I think is visionary and one again that we support directly.

We are there in terms of the funding side, but we provide many other services. We're also focussed, obviously, on the tax affordability side. I want to note that we have seen a significant reduction in the net effect of property tax across the province. We've moved on the public education side, which I know members of the House will be aware of. We've increased our education property tax levy to \$650 this year, and we'll be continuing to do that to \$700. Very significantly, home-owners no longer pay the ESL. We increased the Farmland School Tax Rebate this year, and we strengthened the tax incentive grant for school divisions. That's all important because obviously property taxes go to both municipal governments and to school boards, and we believe it's important to have a balanced approach.

We work with governments on their capacity. I want to note the excellent work that's been done by municipalities in terms of compliance with the PSAB, and I think it's very important to note the degree to which we are now working with municipalities on a review of provincial land use planning. We've seen some very significant challenges, but we think some significant progress in land use planning.

One of the key elements that we will be putting forward is redivision, particularly in rural and northern areas. I want to put on the record as minister that I believe that we have to ensure that our land use planning is helping ensure continued growth because there is growth in a number of areas in terms of rural population, but also to not only stop but to turn around the decline in other areas. So we have to make sure our land use policies are consistent with that.

We also have to ensure a sustainable land use planning. I want to note that there's been some significant progress there.

I just want to focus also very briefly on an area, and I'm sure that there'll be a number of questions during Estimates on, but obviously very much on people's minds, and that is in the EMO side. We did face some significant challenges this past year, particularly with the flooding that we have seen—I want to say, have seen—it's still receding in many parts of the province. We had a flood that was equivalent to the second highest in the last 100 years south of Winnipeg and north of Winnipeg. It was very much the flood of the century. I think it's important to note, by the way, that in 1950 a lesser flood resulted in a 107,000 Manitobans being evacuated and 10,000 homes being damaged. This year, much less damage, and it shows the value of our flood protection. We're going to be continuing to work on the flood protection at the recovery stage with the FA over the next period of time, and I would certainly welcome questions on that when we proceed to the question part of Estimates. Thank you.

Madam Chairperson: We thank the minister for those comments.

Does the official opposition critic, the honourable Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Briese), have any opening statements?

Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Just a few opening comments. Obviously, from my background with municipalities

and with the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, I have some understanding of how land use planning and any large number of the things that affect municipalities enter into this. I probably should do it at the end of the session, but I know the calibre of the staff that this minister has in his department and how good they are to work with over the years and still are. Even though I'm the critic here, I get very good co-operation out of them.

I heard the minister suggest that he would like somewhat of an indication of where we're going at certain times in this, and I would probably like to ask him what the breakdown is. That you want a separation of the EMO staff from the actual planning and municipal side of the staff, I presume, is what you're talking about, so I'll defer then. I know we're not going to have a great deal of time today, but EMO staff, then, I won't go with any questions on that today. Maybe at the end of the session we can take a look at where we may go with them. I do have a number of questions in that category. But, as for today, we won't touch on them. In fact, I think we'll only probably get through our openings.

I think that's all I need to say as an opening, so turn it back.

Madam Chairperson: We thank the critic for his remarks and, under Manitoba practice, debate on the minister's salary is traditionally the last item considered for a department in the Committee of Supply. Accordingly, we shall defer consideration of line item 1.(a) and proceed with consideration of the remaining items referenced in Resolution 1.

At this time, we invite the minister's staff to join us in the Chamber, and once they are seated, we will ask the minister to introduce the staff in attendance.

Mr. Ashton: Madam Chair, if I could introduce globally both the staff at the table and the staff that are available in the gallery and will be part of the Estimates consideration over the next whatever period of days. They are Linda McFadyen, Deputy Minister; Laurie Davidson, Assistant Deputy Minister, Provincial Municipal Support Services; Claudette Toupin, Assistant Deputy Minister, Community Planning and Development Division; Denise Carlyle, Executive Director, Municipal Finance and Advisory Services; Brian Johnston, Chief of Financial Services; Beverly Kachanoski, Manager, Human Resource Management Services; and Lee Spencer, Director of Recovery, Emergency Measures Organization.

Madam Chairperson: Does the committee wish to proceed through these Estimates in a chronological manner, or have a global discussion?

Mr. Ashton: I'm quite open to whatever suggestion the critic has, but we're certainly assuming that it will be global, with perhaps some separation between EMO and the department, just in terms of make sure we have the right staff available.

Mr. Briese: Yes, that's suitable for me.

Madam Chairperson: It is agreed to go global. The floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Briese: The first number of questions I'm going to ask are strictly, I think, basically internal questions and ones that we ask most years, I believe.

First off, I'd like to know how many staff actually work in the department and then, secondly, what your absence level is, like, what's the percentage of positions not filled?

Mr. Ashton: Full-time positions are 286.13, and in terms of current vacancies, that's if I could provide the information as of March 31—so as of March 31, 2009, the total vacancies were 18.3 FTs, that's a vacancy rate of 6.4 percent. Once again, the total FTs as of April 1, 2009, were 286.13 FTs. That includes regular and term, and if the member wishes a comparison, this compares total vacancies at March 31, 2008, of 19.2 regular FTs for a vacancy rate of 6.8 percent. So the vacancy rate is slightly lower than last year.

* (16:30)

Mr. Briese: Can you give me a description of any positions that have been reclassified in the past year?

Mr. Ashton: Just to indicate there were eight positions reclassified in 2008-2009. That's six existing positions and two new positions that were actually classified, and there was a senior policy adviser, an administrative secretary in the deputy minister's office. I don't think the member wants the specific recalculations, but I'll maybe provide just a description of positions, and I can explain any of the details. Director of Recovery and director of emergency operations, the EMO office; policy planner in the Provincial Planning Services; administrative officer in the Municipal Board, and two neighbourhood planning project officers—these are two new positions in urban development. So, once again, there were a total of eight positions that were reclassified to varying, different levels in 2008-2009.

Mr. Briese: Have there been any positions relocated in the last year, for instance, from rural or northern Manitoba into Winnipeg or relocated in other directions, and why were they relocated?

Mr. Ashton: No.

Mr. Briese: Next question and this is on the minister's out-of-province travel. Has the minister taken part in any out-of-province trips in the last year, and what are the details on such trips?

Mr. Ashton: I attended the FCM back in 2008; that's May 29 to May 30. I also have been to Ottawa. Actually, I initially went to Ottawa in March to meet with Minister Van Loan in advance of the spring flooding that took place. I have since then met with Minister Van Loan, Minister Toews, and also met with Minister Strahl in Ottawa as a—I shouldn't say post-flood because we were still dealing with some flooding, but on flood recovery. Those are the three names over the past year.

Mr. Briese: Does the Intergovernmental Affairs Department have an annual advertising budget, and, if so, what is it?

Mr. Ashton: There is not a specific item in terms of advertising. Obviously, there would be—there are on occasion advertisements that are done. I can maybe undertake to try and pull that together, but there's not a specific line item for an advertising budget. Perhaps maybe by tomorrow at 10 o'clock, I'll certainly get a bit of a summary.

We do have AMM publications, probably the main aspect that's consistent on the advertising side, but if the member wishes, I can try and pull something together tomorrow with a bit more detail.

Mr. Briese: I'm a little more interested in possibly similar campaigns that maybe kind of run by the department—something like the budget ads that were run by the Department of Finance. If you do any of that in your department, or specifically, what kind of advertising do you do? I was aware you did the AMM, but whether there's more that comes through your department.

Mr. Ashton: We have done some public education through EMO, which is consistent with EMO's role not only in terms of response to disasters, but also in terms of public education. Again, I'll get some of that detail for the member tomorrow. Outside of AMM, we really—other than the occasional ads maybe related to specific meetings and processes that we

have—don't have a specific advertising line item budget for the department per se.

Mr. Briese: I think I'll move on here. It appears to me that, when I go through the Estimates book, the budget for your department is down somewhat. I come up with about 11 percent. Is there a specific block of funding that was moved to another department, or am I accurate with that?

Mr. Ashton: The simple explanation is the fact that we advanced money to the City of Winnipeg as part of our funding commitment to the City of Winnipeg in the previous fiscal year. Of course, the City of Winnipeg has its own fiscal year, so whether it's transferred to the City in the previous or current fiscal year, it has the same net impact to the City and funding is up for the City. That was essentially the difference on the print over print, the degree to which we advanced funding to the City in the last fiscal year which will, of course, allow them to finance their activities through their fiscal year, which, I believe, is a different basis than ours.

Mr. Briese: So is that capital grants that are advanced, or what are the advances? What specifically are the advances?

Mr. Ashton: It was a mixture. Part of it was the roads funding, which is capital. There were some unconditional grants as well that were advanced to the City as well. Rapid transit was the other one again, which is capital, but it reflects accounting treatment that's similar to our 50 percent operating cost share that we have with the municipalities. So it was a combination of capital and regular grants that were cash-flowed to them. Of course, it won't impact their fiscal year, they have a different fiscal year. But that's the reason for the difference print over print. There's no actual difference in programming or level of support. It's just the year in which the support was spent, so it was actually advanced to the City in the previous fiscal year. That explains the difference in the print over print in the Estimates this year.

Mr. Briese: So that would translate, then, into the—financial assistance to municipalities appears to be down, but it's because of advances, then. Is that what I'm hearing?

Mr. Ashton: The total of advances to Winnipeg was \$45 million, and that included 25 million. I'll give the specific numbers here for the member: for roads capital, 15 million unconditional; and 5 million for rapid transit. So the member's quite correct.

There's no reduction of program, no reduction in funding. What this simply reflects is our fiscal year in which the money was transferred to the City, and again—the member knows this from his municipal background—that fiscal years don't necessarily coincide between the Province and the municipalities. So that's really all it is. It's a cash flow from on our budget side; not only no reduction for the City, but the City actually is going to be receiving additional funding support this year, as I mentioned earlier, of 5.2 percent. I mentioned some of the specific components where we've actually increased funding. But this is simply a reflection of the cash flow.

Mr. Briese: Another thing I thought I picked up in here, in the Estimates book, was there appeared to be less funding for Provincial Planning Services. Is that true, and, if so, what is the reduction?

* (16:40)

Mr. Ashton: Only difference year over year was a vacant position that was eliminated. The operating funding is the same. So there is no difference in actual provision of services; it really reflects a move on our part to indicate that vacant position was basically taken out of the FTE component. So nobody was laid off. There was no reduction in service, but that explains the difference.

Mr. Briese: I think I'm going to have to put in the earpiece here. I missed part of that answer.

It's a vacant position that's been cut. Is that what I was told?

Mr. Ashton: The dollar equivalent amount was taken out. The position was vacant to begin with. So that explains the difference in actual budgeted funding. It's a reflection of that vacant position that was basically eliminated.

Mr. Briese: Thank you for that answer. I have quite a number of questions I want to get in on the planning side, and I guess we'll probably start into some of them right now.

One of the curiosities I have is, how many of the municipal governments have actually filed their livestock operation policies?

Mr. Ashton: There are 28 that have been completed, and that means that they have livestock operation policies adopted in force. Under review, there are 38, and in that case that applies to municipalities that have drafted livestock operation policies. Some progress in another 27, but where the actual

operating policy has not been drafted by the board or council. That's for a total of 93.

Mr. Briese: So I'm to understand that there are 93 that have either implemented or partially implemented their livestock policies in their development plans?

Mr. Ashton: I will just add the qualification that that's correct in case of the first 28 and 38 that I mentioned. I would probably describe the situation, the other 27 part of the 93, is that they've made some progress. Either they don't have a formal policy drafted or adopted. So 93 have made some progress or full progress.

Mr. Briese: There were extensions to the deadlines several times on that process, and I'm wondering why it still seems to be dragging along rather than being completed.

Mr. Ashton: Well, first of all, I want to stress that we're talking about the planning authority. So there are 93 planning authorities. It puts in context the degree to which you have, out of that number, already 66 that have a policy either drafted or a policy drafted and implemented. We did have the authority through the act to extend the deadline, and most municipalities and planning districts have formally requested that we give an extension to either June 30 of 2009 or January 1, 2010. That was, I think, appropriate given some of the complexities and some of the recent developments the last couple years. I would say that we are seeing significant progress. I wouldn't classify the extension of the deadlines as indicating anything other than the fact that we do understand the complexities of what we're dealing with here and the degree to which this is a policy that can have long-term and far-reaching implications in terms of the overall municipal planning.

So I would say we're making significant progress, even though there have been some extensions on the deadlines. We've had progress in all of planning authorities, and I fully anticipate that we will soon be in position where all of the nine authorities have a livestock-operation policy adopted and in force.

Mr. Briese: I thank the minister for the answer. One of my concerns—it looks to me like there's some provision in the proposed new waste-water regulations for that to have to be implemented into municipal development plans. We also have the provincial land-use policies under review, which

once again will probably require fairly major changes to municipal planning.

I was chair of a planning district for probably 12 or 14 years—I'm not sure exactly how long—and I don't recall us ever having a series of major changes like we're seeing coming down the line now. It's very, very costly for the municipalities to implement and to do all the things necessary. I was involved in putting the livestock policy in place in our planning district; it took a lot of time and a lot of hearings and a lot of expense to get it into place. It almost seems like we're going to be in that kind of state of flux for quite some time coming where every time we get it rewritten, we're going to be opening up again and immediately rewriting it.

I'm wondering if the department is thinking of lending a little more assistance to planning districts with the major changes you're doing with legislation and with the provincial land-use policies or how—what's the expectation going to be on completion of all these additional things that are going to go in?

Mr. Ashton: I think it's important to know that, first of all, we already are providing assistance and we certainly recognize the many issues that municipalities are dealing with. Of course, it's important to note that many of the things the member was talking about are captured on the next review of the municipal plans. I think that's important notice.

I would actually argue that we—and the member, you know, I defer to his knowledge at the ground level, he has significant experience with a planning authority and his role and he's certainly seen some of the changes that are out there—but my concern as minister, quite frankly, and our concern as government is to ensure that we're not only developing state-of-the-art waste-water regulations—I think that's something that is a part of the overall vision of sustainable land-use planning—that we're not only dealing with state-of-the-art livestock operation policies, but that we're also dealing with some of the broader issues. That's where the review of provincial land-use policies is coming into place.

* (16:50)

One of the concerns that I have raised is there are many areas of the province—and the member knows this directly from his own constituency—where farms are now measured in sections, not quarter sections, that population—you know, on three, four sections of land, there might have been six, seven, eight farm families; you're down to one. I

really believe that we need to make sure our land-use policies are providing opportunities for both urban and rural municipalities to, yes, create sustainability; yes, to protect the integrity of agricultural land and green space—all the various factors that go into planning.

We also have to make sure, I believe, that we have a plan that is geared to recognizing that we do not want planning perversely to be accelerating depopulation in areas of the province where we're seeing some significant population reductions. I'm a great believer by the way, and I come from northern Manitoba, I really believe that one thing that northern and rural areas have to offer is a quality of life. I also recognize that in a lot of cases our planning principles often, while they may have been appropriate at a certain period of time, don't necessarily reflect what's happening now.

I can't stress enough how important the provincial land-use policy review is. I know the AMM has been very supportive of the review, and I think that is fairly critical. Now having said that, that's the broader vision, and I appreciate the member's also asking about the specific impact on the ground.

Under the community planning assistance grant program we have provided \$1,114,945 over the last 10 years to the various municipalities and planning districts. That is, I believe, been a significant part of why we have had significant development. We've got 20 new planning districts with 77 member municipalities and 12 municipalities which are preparing and adopting new development plans. There are 38 planning districts, and municipalities have received assistance to review and update their development plans and zoning by-laws, including livestock operation policies that the member talked about earlier.

We are not only putting forward the broader vision on the planning side, I believe. We are also providing real assistance on the ground because we recognize there is work involved, not the least of which is the significant amount of community consultation. I do want to say that one thing that I think is unique in Manitoba is the degree to which our municipalities and our planning districts do have a significant amount of public input. I know the member knows that from, certainly, his experience with his planning district. I think it's, quite frankly, it's money and time that's well invested.

Yes, significant changes, but we are there to help municipalities, as well. We do recognize some of the costs.

Mr. Briese: Thank you for that answer. That's one of the places I was going to go is the recognition of local knowledge out there. I know when we were doing the work on our development plan and implementing the livestock policy, we had a great deal of difficulty with—actually one of the departments in government. It caused us a lot of grief. They refused to recognize what we had on the ground out there. By the way, Mr. Minister, it was not your department. I find your planning department and your planning staff just excellent to work with, and I have for many years. They're very willing to listen to what's going on out in the country, and I just wish some of the people elsewhere were as willing.

Back to the waste-water regulations that I mentioned before. I don't want to go into a debate on the waste-water regulations or necessarily even on the provincial land-use policies. It certainly appears to be a case where there's somewhat of a, for lack of a better word, a download onto municipal planning to police what the province wants for the waste-water policies. I know that's not unique. I know that we do that in a lot of cases, but it might not be as easily recognized by local authorities that waste-water regulation is in their jurisdiction, and that's somewhat of what I think I'm seeing coming through this.

Mr. Ashton: Well, first of all, clearly the provision of water and waste-water services is one of the prime roles and responsibilities of municipal government. I think there's been significant progress there, by the way, not just in compliance with new regulations and updated regulations, which I think is something that is absolutely necessary. I point to the fact, for example, in the city of Winnipeg, it wasn't really until the City of Winnipeg waste-water facilities were referred to the Clean Environment Commission in 2002, I believe it was, that we actually saw licensing of the City of Winnipeg waste-water treatment plant. I was Minister of Conservation at the time that the report was received, and I think it was long overdue, that indeed not only was there licensing but there was a licence requirement to upgrade the waste-water treatment facilities. That is something that's happening across the province.

I do want to note, by the way, that both water and waste-water facilities received a high priority in the announcements under the Building Canada Fund

Communities Component this last Friday. I look at the largest grant in the announcement was to the City of Selkirk, more than \$9 million. I believe the second-largest grant was to the City of Flin Flon, and it ranges all the way through to some significant funding that was provided to Northern Affairs communities including Nelson House and the Island Lake community council and many others, all of them providing either water treatment or waste-water treatment. I do want to note, by the way, the additional funding support for the R.M. of Gimli, which has provided a real model in terms of regional facilities.

I want to stress that there is the funding side as well through Infrastructure and as well as funding through the Water Services Board. I'm no longer the Minister responsible for the Water Services Board, but I know the member's more than aware of some of the things that have been happening in that particular case.

I also think, by the way, what's important to note is the degree to which we're working on a regional vision for water and waste water. I really want to credit the municipalities that have been taking a leadership role. I mentioned the R.M. of Gimli, for example, but there are examples throughout the province of either water treatment or waste-water treatment where we see regional realities. I look at Portage as probably a good example in recent years, where you've seen a real extension of the kind of vision you have.

So I believe—and without getting into a long discussion, debate on this, I don't think that's the member's intent here—I think that we are not only moving forward, we are providing additional supports. I think there's not a single municipal elected official that doesn't realize, as we do, that it's something the public is demanding. Whether it's post-Walkerton on the drinking-water side or North Battleford, or in terms of the environmental pressures we're under, I find that Manitobans are expecting us to do exactly what we're doing, which is to improve water and waste water, but do it in partnership and that's very much our approach on the funding side.

Mr. Briese: Thank you once again for that answer, Mr. Minister.

Trying not to get into a debate, but in the case of the waste-water management—and I know it doesn't even totally fall into your department but—I realize there's probably some problems in certain areas,

probably in the capital region and some of the cottage country and some of the Red River Valley where it's a flood plain, but putting a blanket regulation across the province, I think, is counter-productive.

In my municipality, we have 800 people. There's probably—and I did the math—there's about four people per section, so there's about one per quarter section. I don't think waste water is a big problem out where I am. Now, there are some places where it would be a concern, you know, close to waterways and stuff like that, but we already have those

setbacks in our development plans and in our zoning by-laws, so they are covered. The exceptions out there probably should be zone by zone or case by case, and that's where I think they should be covered off.

I see the Chairperson's right in the—put the hammer down, and it's about five seconds to go, so I'll cut it off there.

Madam Chairperson: The hour being 5 p.m., this section of the Supply will now recess and reconvene at 10 a.m. tomorrow (Friday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

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