



Third Session - Thirty-Seventh Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

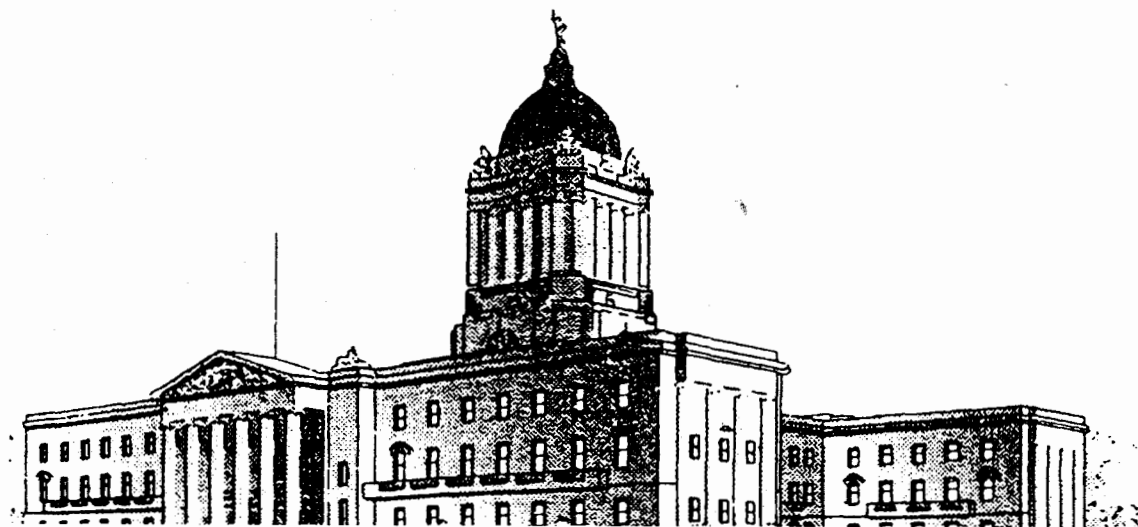
DEBATES

and

PROCEEDINGS

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Seventh Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
AGLUGUB, Cris	The Maples	N.D.P.
ALLAN, Nancy	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
ASPER, Linda	Riel	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky, Hon.	Inkster	N.D.P.
CALDWELL, Drew, Hon.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
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DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary, Hon.	Concordia	N.D.P.
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DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
FRIESEN, Jean, Hon.	Wolseley	N.D.P.
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GILLESHAMMER, Harold	Minnedosa	P.C.
HAWRANIK, Gerald	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
HELWER, Edward	Gimli	P.C.
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LATHLIN, Oscar, Hon.	The Pas	N.D.P.
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	P.C.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
LOEWEN, John	Fort Whyte	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
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MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McGIFFORD, Diane, Hon.	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
MIHYCHUK, MaryAnn, Hon.	Minto	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
MURRAY, Stuart	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PENNER, Jim	Steinbach	P.C.
PITURA, Frank	Morris	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
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ROCAN, Denis	Carman	P.C.
RONDEAU, Jim	Assiniboia	N.D.P.
SALE, Tim, Hon.	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
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SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	N.D.P.
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SMITH, Scott, Hon.	Brandon West	N.D.P.
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WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, July 2, 2002

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Transcona-Springfield School Division

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Diane Walker, Tracey Hawrysh, Verna Arnold and others praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request the Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell) to reverse the decision to split the Transcona-Springfield School Division and allow it to remain as a whole or to consider immediately convening the Board of Reference to decide the matter.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Transcona-Springfield School Division

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler), I have reviewed the petition and it complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: The Clerk please read.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth

THAT on November 8, 2001, the Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell) announced a split in the Transcona-Springfield School Division but despite repeated requests has been unable to identify any benefits of this decision to the students and taxpayers of said school division; and

THAT this decision was not preceded by adequate public consultation as outlined in section 7 of The Public Schools Act; and

THAT this decision would result in significant hardships for the students in both Transcona and Springfield that would affect the quality of their education; and

THAT the proposal by the Minister of Education on February 12, 2002, neither alleviates nor remedies these hardships; and

THAT this decision results in an increased financial burden on the taxpayers of both the Transcona-Springfield School Division and the province of Manitoba; and

THAT on March 13, 2002, the number of resident electors required by The Public Schools Act requested the Minister of Education to convene a Board of Reference to decide the matter.

WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY THAT the Legislative Assembly request the Minister of Education to reverse the decision to split the Transcona-Springfield School Division and allow it to remain as a whole or to consider immediately convening the Board of Reference to decide the matter.

**PRESENTING REPORTS BY
STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

**Standing Committee on Law Amendments
Fifth Report**

Mr. Doug Martindale (Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the Fifth Report of the Committee on Law Amendments.

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Law Amendments presents the following as its Fifth Report.

Meetings:

Your committee met on the following occasions:

Tuesday, June 25, 2002, at 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, June 26, 2002, at 6:30 p.m.

Both meetings were held in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matters Under Consideration:

Bill 14—The Public Schools Modernization Act (Public Schools Act Amended)/Loi sur la modernisation des écoles publiques (modification de la Loi sur les écoles publiques)

Membership Resignations / Elections:

At the June 25, 2002, meeting, your committee elected Ms. Korzeniowski as Vice-Chairperson.

At the June 26, 2002, meeting, your committee elected Mr. Rondeau as Vice-Chairperson.

Substitutions received prior to commencement of the meeting held on June 25, 2002:

Hon. Mr. Caldwell for Mr. Aglugub

Ms. Allan for Mr. Dewar

Hon. Ms. Barrett for Hon. Ms. Friesen

Mr. Struthers for Mr. Nevakshonoff

Hon. Mr. Smith (Brandon West) for Mr. Sshellenberg

Ms. Korzeniowski for Hon. Mr. Mackintosh

Mr. Gilleshammer for Mr. Hawranik

Mr. Tweed for Mr. Laurendeau

Mr. Loewen for Mr. Schuler

Substitutions received prior to commencement of the meeting held on June 26, 2002:

Mr. Jennissen for Ms. Allan

Mr. Nevakshonoff for Ms. Korzeniowski

Mr. Rondeau for Hon. Mr. Smith (Brandon West)

Mr. Laurendeau for Mr. Loewen

Mr. Cummings for Mr. Tweed

Public Presentations:

Your committee heard 39 presentations on Bill 14, The Public Schools Modernization Act (Public Schools Act Amended)/Loi sur la modernisation des écoles publiques (modification de la Loi sur les écoles publiques) from the following individuals and organizations:

Ruth Ann Furgala, Evergreen School Division

Malcolm Jolly, Brandon School Division No. 40
James Durston, Dauphin-Ochre School Area No. 1

Bobbi-Lynn Geekie, Birdtail River Teachers' Association

Peter Wohlgenut, Rhineland Teachers' Association

Craig Blagden, Prairie Rose Teachers' Association

Andrew Peters, Private Citizen

Lauren Andrushko, Private Citizen

Greg Andrushko, Private Citizen

Hilda Froese, Garden Valley School Division

Paul Wiebe, Private Citizen

Gladys Hayward Williams, Private Citizen

Diane Duma, Manitoba Association of Parent Councils

Karen Carey, Springfield Schools Parent Council

Peter Williams, Private Citizen

Maja Kathan, École Dugald School

Robin Glowacki, Private Citizen

Layna Penner, Private Citizen

Doraine Wachniak, Private Citizen

Diana Risbey, Private Citizen

Norah Bailey, Agassiz Teachers' Association

John Friesen, Private Citizen

Maria Kantyluk, Private Citizen

Linda Archer and Caroline Duhamel, Manitoba Association of School Trustees

Terry Egan and Sandra Oakley, CUPE Manitoba

Karen Velthuys, Craig Stahlke, and John Beaumont, Fort Garry School Division
Dennis Wishanski and Elizabeth Kozak, St. James Assiniboia School Division

Christopher Saunders, Springfield Parent Council

Otto Mehl, Private Citizen

Candace Daher, Private Citizen

Gloria James, Private Citizen

Brian Ardern, Manitoba Teachers Society

Kristine Barr and David Bell, Winnipeg School Division No. 1

Bob Land, Private Citizen

Anita Chapman, Louis Riel School Division

Murray Grafton, Louis Riel Teachers' Association

Roland Stankevicius, River East Teachers' Association

Marijka Spytkowski, Transcona-Springfield Teachers' Association

Virginia Larsson, Private Citizen

Written Submissions:

Your committee received eight written submissions on Bill 14, *The Public Schools Modernization Act (Public Schools Act Amended)/Loi sur la modernisation des écoles publiques (modification de la Loi sur les écoles publiques)* from the following individuals and organizations:

Monica Ptak, Private Citizen
 John Ehinger, Private Citizen
 Karen Lalonde, Private Citizen
 Kathy Andersson, Private Citizen
 Susan Choquette, Private Citizen
 Glen Anderson, Private Citizen
 Zeeba Loxley, Community Education and Development Association
 John Shebniski, Duck Mountain School Division

Bills Considered and Reported:

Bill 14 – The Public Schools Modernization Act (Public Schools Act Amended)

Your committee agreed to report this bill with the following amendments.

THAT the proposed section 12.2, as set out in section 10 of the Bill, be renumbered as subsection 12.2(1) and that the following be added as subsection 12.2(2):

Time for making subsequent regulations

12.2(2) The power to make regulations under subsection (1) may only be exercised on or before August 1, 2003.

THAT the proposed subclause 12.2(c)(i), as set out in section 10 of the Bill, be amended by adding "as a result of the formation, continuation, amalgamation, or dissolution of one or more new or former divisions" after "pupils".

THAT the proposed subclause 12.2(c)(ii), as set out in section 10 of the Bill, be amended by adding "or former" after "new".

THAT the subsection 22(2) of the Bill be amended by striking out "each of the next two years" and substituting "the next fiscal year".

THAT the French version of section 24(1) of the Bill be amended by striking out "Division

scolaire de Red River Valley" wherever it occurs and substituting "Division scolaire Vallée de la Rivière-Rouge".

THAT the French version of section 24(2) of the Bill be amended by striking out "Division scolaire de Red River Valley" and substituting "Division scolaire Vallée de la Rivière-Rouge".

Mr. Martindale: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

* (13:35)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**Bill 41—The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act**

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Transportation and Government Services (Mr. Ashton), that leave be given to introduce Bill 41, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Hydro-Manitoba, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Speaker: His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, having been advised of the contents of the bill, recommends it to the House and his message has been tabled.

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, having been advised of the contents of this bill, recommends it to the House. I would like to table the Lieutenant-Governor's message.

Mr. Speaker: I would just like to let the House know the message has been tabled.

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, this bill amends The Manitoba Hydro Act to require Manitoba Hydro to distribute up to \$288 million of its retained earnings to the Government by the end of the 2003-2004 fiscal year.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the motion, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed to the motion, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion, the Yeas have it. The motion is accordingly carried.

Bill 47—The Highways and Transportation Amendment Act

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Transportation and Government Services): I move, seconded by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Smith), that leave be given to introduce Bill 47, The Highways and Transportation Amendment Act (and that the same be now received and read a first time). His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, having been advised of the contents of this bill, recommends it to the House.

Mr. Speaker, I have also tabled the message from the Lieutenant-Governor.

Motion presented.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, this is another part of this Government's agenda of innovation in terms of highways and transportation in Manitoba.

Motion agreed to.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

**Gimli Rail Line
Status**

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the headline in the most recent *Selkirk Journal* reads: Deal to save Selkirk rail line dead.

In the article, Gord Peters, the president of Cando Contracting, which has been in negotiation to purchase the rail line which runs from

Winnipeg through Selkirk up to Gimli, has pulled out of the agreement because the Doer government would force their employee-owned company to unionize its workers.

Mr. Peters said, and I quote, Bill 18 is why we would not move ahead.

Mr. Speaker, why is the Doer government forcing an employee-owned company looking to expand in Manitoba to unionize?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Successor rights in contracts that are presented before the Labour Board I think have been around for a number of years.

Mr. Speaker, when members opposite were in government and brought in the new regional health act they required union votes in Steinbach, Winkler, Morden, a lot of votes, under the new health act that took place. The sky is not falling.

* (13:40)

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, the direct reference is to Bill 18, which was brought in by the Doer government.

It is no secret that Canadian Pacific Railway officials have expressed a desire to close the Winnipeg to Gimli short line. Central Manitoba Railway, which is owned by Cando Contracting, has been negotiating on that short line for a couple of years to make it viable, but last week Cando pulled out of that negotiation because the Doer government would not assure the employee-owned company that they would not have to unionize.

Is the Doer government simply willing to allow the CPR to shut down the rail line, which will affect a number of businesses and hundreds of jobs in the Interlake, because they do not want to unionize? Is that what the Doer government stands for?

Mr. Doer: What we stand for is a government that does not interfere with a quasi-judicial body called the Manitoba Labour Board.

Employee-Owned Businesses Labour Legislation

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the most disturbing situation is the fact this Government was warned two years ago about the effect Bill 18 would have on this jurisdiction. They were warned two years ago. At that time, I will quote what the Labour Minister said, and her quote was: We will be addressing your concerns or taking them under advisement for sure.

That is what the Labour Minister said when they were warned about the impact of Bill 18. Unfortunately, the Doer government has, once again, ignored the concerns of stakeholders who have expressed a real concern to the Doer government about this legislation. Why did the Doer government ignore warnings that Bill 18 would put an end to expansion of employee-owned businesses in Manitoba and put major Manitoba employers in jeopardy?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, this is a Leader of the Opposition who has a Finance critic who attacks the Crocus Fund, which was one of the engines for employee ownership across Manitoba. So let him not feign this new-found interest for employee ownership. They tried to kill employee ownership with their unwarranted attack on the Crocus Fund.

It is not—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There was conflicting advice between OmniTRAX and the other company, Cando, on the bill when it was brought before the Legislature. We note there are many strong parts of the transportation system which are continuing to expand. Mr. Peters is negotiating with CP and with the employees. We are concerned about the outcome of that, but we are also concerned that we not interfere with the Labour Board, which is a quasi-judicial body.

Gimli Rail Line Impact on Area Businesses

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Mr. Speaker, on June 26, shortly after learning the deal between

Central Manitoba Railway and the CPR was dead, the owners of the former Seagrams distillery in Gimli, Guinness UDV, announced they have reviewed their production and decided to consolidate the production of Crown Royal in Ontario instead of in Gimli.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a letter dated May 27 that was sent to the Minister of Labour (Ms. Barrett) and a copy to the Premier (Mr. Doer) from Roy Eyolfson who is the plant manager at Gimli. In the letter, Mr. Eyolfson states, and I quote, the potential to relocate production capacity currently in Gimli exists as an option. The threat is real.

I would like to ask the Premier why he completely ignored the warnings he received on May 27 from the plant manager in Gimli.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Transportation and Government Services): Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to note that the Minister of Labour has been working very actively on this. In fact—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

* (13:45)

Mr. Ashton: Well, members opposite do not agree with Gord Peters. In fact, the Member for Gimli might want to acknowledge that in the June 10 *Interlake Spectator* Gord Peters himself indicated the government of the day is still working hard to make this deal happen. I think, to be fair to the Minister of Labour, they are working very hard to make it happen. We are still working on it.

Mr. Speaker, we have indeed been working trying to save this line. Members opposite, I think, should be fully aware of the fact when the issues related to the Labour Board came to the attention of the Labour Minister, the Labour Minister has been very active in dealing with this, as has our Minister of Industry, Trade and Mines (Ms. Mihychuk).

Mr. Helwer: Mr. Speaker, can the Premier (Mr. Doer) explain to the workers in the distillery in

Gimli whose jobs have now been put in jeopardy why he would refuse to listen to their concerns?

Mr. Ashton: I think it is important for the member opposite to recognize what has happened. Obviously the first element here—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, if the members opposite want to make assumptions about the background here and not look at the fact that every Canadian jurisdiction has successor rights, this is not a unique situation. Instead of us relying on that, the Minister of Labour (Ms. Barrett) as confirmed by Gord Peters himself, and our Industry and Trade Minister have been working to try and resolve this. The solution to this is not howling in Question Period in the Legislature, it is taking a complex issue, working with all parties, and that is what we are doing.

Mr. Helwer: Mr. Speaker, can the Premier confirm he was fully aware that his labour legislation would have this effect on this rail line and for businesses that depend on it when Bill 18 was passed in the year 2000?

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite again is not looking at the facts in this situation. I indicated before on the record that every Canadian jurisdiction has successor rights. Successor rights were in place under similar circumstance—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, if members opposite wish to try and howl me down, that is fine, but the fact is this predates Bill 18 in terms of jurisdiction, and what we are dealing with is a complex situation involving CP and Cando and the various unions involved. The way to approach it is the way our Minister of Labour has, by the way, which is not to hide behind the rhetoric of members opposite but, as indicated by Gord Peters, to work for a solution.

Agriculture Aid Package Minister's Position

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): On June 29, 2001, the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), in Whitehorse, Yukon, I believe, signed

on to a negotiation agreement that would see a new farm policy developed in Canada. The framework would include food safety, environment, business risk management, renewal, science and innovation, and quality in management intention opportunities.

Last week the federal government announced a new program that includes food safety, environment, business risk management, renewal, science and innovation, quality and maximizing trade or market opportunities for agriculture products worldwide.

Can the Minister of Agriculture tell this House which aspect of the program that she has been negotiating for a year she cannot agree with now?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to correct the member. He says in Whitehorse I signed an agreement. There was no agreement signing in Whitehorse. It was an agreement to move forward in the agriculture policy framework, and that is what has been happening. There have been consultation meetings where the public has had, farmers have had the opportunity to have input. Under this agreement that is being now prepared and that was under discussion, there are going to be changes to the safety net program, to our Crop Insurance and to the NISA and CFIP program.

I met with farm organizations prior to going to Whitehorse and the farm organizations said that they were not adequate. They did not feel satisfied with information that was provided and asked that I not sign the agreement until such time as we had further information, Mr. Speaker. I will consult with producers and continue to work with them. Surely, the member would support that.

* (13:50)

Trade-Injury Compensation

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Agriculture then tell this House why she and her Premier (Mr. Doer) have been telling the people of Manitoba and the farmers of Manitoba that this is a trade compensation

package that has been announced and not the agreement that she agreed to in principle back in Yukon in 2001?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food): Mr. Speaker, I know that the member has been involved in agriculture for a long time. He knows that there is a part of the program that involves safety net protection. Our province and this Government have always been prepared and have paid 60-40 on the safety net portion and the portions that are in the agriculture policy framework.

The portion that we are opposed to putting provincial dollars into is the trade-injury part. Surely, the member is not going against his leader who said and put out letters in the newspaper and stood with our Premier here saying that the federal government had the responsibility of compensating for trade injury.

Mr. Speaker, we are prepared to support, when we get more information on the agriculture policy framework, the safety net portion of it, but on the trade injury, it is our view, farmers' view, and all people in this room, that trade injury is the responsibility of the federal government. Surely, he is not changing his mind now.

Mr. Jack Penner: A new question, Mr. Speaker. I find it interesting that the minister is reverting right back to her same comment.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the minister: What part of this program that was announced on June 20, would she deem as being trade compensatory actions by the federal government? What part of this program does she deem as trade-injury compensation?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and federal Minister of Agriculture announced \$1.2 billion over two years that was trade-injury money. They called it bridge financing. Mr. Vanclief, when the U.S. farm bill was signed, said we need bridge financing for our farmers because of the U.S. farm bill. Nobody talked about this money until the U.S. farm bill was announced. That is trade-injury money.

I hope that the Opposition is still standing with people on this side of the House and with farm organizations, saying that the federal government has the responsibility of trade injury. They signed the trade deal; they are responsible. George Bush pays the bill; Prime Minister Chrétien should pay the bill.

Mr. Jack Penner: Mr. Speaker, on a new question. I find it rather interesting that the document the federal government tabled, nowhere does it speak to trade injury in this document that we have had in our possession now for the past 10 days. I would like the minister to specifically identify in this program which area she states is trade-injury compensation. The \$600 million that the federal government indicated over the next two years is clearly stated as a drought-proofing program.

I would like to ask the minister where in this document that the federal government gave us does she read trade compensation in this package.

Ms. Wowchuk: Well, Mr. Speaker, again the member says that money is drought money. The drought money is in a completely different envelope than the \$600 million that we have been talking about. The \$600 million was leaked for two weeks before the announcement. It was recognized as transition money. Mr. Vanclief said we were going to have to have bridge money to help our farmers because of the consequences of the U.S. farm bill, and there is \$600 million for the next two years. Then our farmers will be left high and dry while the U.S. farmers get money for six years. That is the transition money, and the member can call it what he wants. We recognize all over, across the country, that the \$600 million or \$1.2 billion for two years is the federal government's attempt to help farmers because of the U.S. farm bill because they have not negotiated an end to the subsidies.

* (13:55)

Mr. Jack Penner: I thank the minister for that answer because obviously she is not reading from the same text that we are. I want to ask the minister whether the \$1.2 billion, \$600 million over each of the next two years to help farmers

make the transition to a new and more effective generation of programs dealing with risk, including drought, does that state to her a trade-injury compensation package, or does this clearly indicate that the federal government is attempting to help the people of Saskatchewan, Alberta and others in Ontario that were severely affected by the drought last year, amongst others? Maybe it could include under that same wording the flood protection and compensation that we need in this province.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, the member is again mixing different programs. Flood protection comes under the disaster assistance program. The \$600 million is additional transition funding, and the federal government can call it what they want, but we know that Mr. Vanclief said that there would have to be bridge financing to help our farmers because of the U.S. farm bill.

The federal government negotiated the trade deal. The federal government has a responsibility for trade injury. This is their weak attempt at helping farmers that are suffering because of the consequences of the U.S. farm bill. The federal government has to do much more. They have to ensure that those subsidies are reduced, and they have to take a strong position at the WTO and, until they get subsidies reduced, they have to put 100% dollars into our farmers to help them through it, not 60% dollars.

Mr. Jack Penner: I want to ask the Minister of Agriculture: When are she and her Premier (Mr. Doer) going to go to Ottawa, and we will join them in an all-party effort, to reinforce what we have said before, that there needs to be a comprehensive trade compensatory package developed by Ottawa? This bill certainly does not do that. Nowhere does it give any indication that there was any trade compensation in this package. When will the Premier keep his word and take an all-party committee to Ottawa to approach the Prime Minister on a trade compensation package?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, I do not know what the member wants. There was an all-party meeting in Regina. They was an all-party meeting in Saskatoon where the Opposition joined us, where farm organizations joined us. There was a meeting in Winnipeg. The Keystone Agricultural

Producers pulled together our farm organizations calling for the federal government to recognize their responsibility in trade injury.

The federal government has put \$600 million for each of the next few years for a total of \$1.2 billion. It is not adequate. The federal government should be doing a lot more, but that is all they are offering. They are only prepared to put 60 percent of what they should be putting on the table. Farm organizations have said this should be 100 percent funded by the federal government, Mr. Speaker.

If the member wants to go to Ottawa, I do not see the point. We have already had meetings, all-party meetings and organizations calling on the federal government to give their support.

Domestic Violence Trial Delays

Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry): Manitobans recently read about the Minister of Justice stating that domestic violence trial dates could be set within six weeks, six weeks of entering a plea to the charges against them. But, once again, reality is a stranger to the minister. Mr. Speaker, can the minister confirm that domestic violence trial dates are actually four to eleven months away as opposed to the six weeks he tried to spin last week?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): When the department looks to see how you measure the delay in dealing with court cases, there are a number of different measurements available. One is from the time of plea to the first available trial date and, Mr. Speaker, I understand that, in recent years, that is the figure that has been given publicly and that is the figure the department has given. You could also measure the delay by looking perhaps at when the bulk of the dates may be available or you could perhaps take the view of defence counsel and use the date that is first available to them. But I do not think that is what we are trying to measure, not the availability of defence counsel but rather the availability of trial dates.

* (14:00)

Justice System Court Delays

Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry): Part of the problem is inadequate judicial resources. Can the minister advise when he plans to address this issue considering there are currently 39 provincial judges on the bench today, the same number as there were in September, 1999?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I am pleased to confirm that for the first time to my knowledge in Manitoba there is now a backlog reduction strategy for court cases. We have a 10-point court speed-up strategy that is unfolding. It is a work in progress, Mr. Speaker, and that involves not simply the Manitoba government, but also the judges of the Provincial Court and the Winnipeg Police Service.

There are many people who have a stake in reducing the time it takes to process a trial in Manitoba. It is our expectation that cumulatively these changes, this comprehensive approach will make a difference. If members opposite think there is just a one-trick pony that is simply a matter of hiring another judge or two, they are welcome to their opinion. In our opinion, it is not a matter simply about more resources, it is about using the resources we have much more wisely and I think there is still great potential to do that.

Mrs. Joy Smith: Mr. Speaker, can the minister advise this House when he plans to stop misrepresenting trial dates, numbers of judges on the bench and various other factors and effectively start dealing with the court backlogs?

Mr. Mackintosh: It is ironic to hear members opposite who squeezed the prosecutors, who made reductions between 1995 and 1997. They underspent by 1.3 million, they cut another 800 000 when there were double-digit increases in the numbers of cases going to the prosecutors. Since coming into office, we have increased resources to our prosecutors by 29 percent.

In addition, we recognize it is not simply a matter of new resources. There has been a reorganization of the prosecution service. We have had an outside, independent review of the prosecution service. I prefer to rely on that

independent outside investigation, Mr. Speaker, than members opposite. They have no credibility when it comes to court backlogs in this province.

School Divisions Amalgamations—Cost Benefits

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): The Minister of Education has indicated publicly that Bill 14 will save \$10 million in administrative costs and the savings will be redirected to the classroom, but the minister, when asked directly at committee stage, failed to provide any breakdown of the expected savings and any basis for his conclusion \$10 million will be saved. Surely, it is irresponsible and disrespectful to the Legislature for the minister not to table these estimates of cost-savings after amalgamation.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Education today to table his analysis which suggests that \$10 million can be saved as a result of the amalgamations in Bill 14.

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Education, Training and Youth): Indeed, amalgamations in the provinces, as has been the case elsewhere in Canada, will save, in fact, not save but redirect money to the classroom, redirect from board rooms to classrooms. We have as provisions of this legislation administrative caps which will limit the amount of education dollars spent for non-educational purposes. If there is money being wasted today, it is because the Member for River Heights is denying leave to move this bill forward and costing the public school system dollars every day.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary: I ask the minister why he refuses to table information which should be public information. Is it because he has not in fact done the analysis and it does not exist?

Mr. Caldwell: Mr. Speaker, the administrative cost caps will redirect substantial resources from administrative purposes to educational purposes. Divisions, trustees and school divisions throughout the province are working assiduously to move this process forward.

Last week we were prepared in this House to move this bill forward. Leave has been denied by the Member for River Heights. That denial is

on the backs of children and is costing the public education system now.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, surely the Legislature—*[interjection]* proper cost accounting.

My supplementary to the Minister of Education. I ask the minister to provide a clear answer, either to table the information on the \$10-million savings or admit it does not exist and is purely a figment of his imagination.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, it is not a radical idea to go from nine school divisions in the city of Winnipeg for over 600 000 people to six school divisions in the city of Winnipeg. Some legislatures of Canada have dealt with the Voisey Bay bill while members opposite, this member opposite fiddles and puts administrative costs in his question.

There are caps in Bill 14. A cap prohibits the administrative cost going over 4 percent in an urban riding or an urban division, 4.5 percent in a rural constituency or school division, and 5 percent in the North. The member can do his homework with the administrative costs under these reports and find the \$10 million.

The people have spoken. Going from nine school divisions to six school divisions, as an example, in the city of Winnipeg is supported by the public. It is supported by the mayor. It is supported by the council. Let us get on with it.

School Divisions Amalgamations—Delays

Ms. Nancy Allan (St. Vital): My question is to the Minister of Education, Training and Youth. Amalgamating school divisions have been planning and preparing for mergers to be effective July 1, 2002, for many, many months. Because—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

An Honourable Member: We have trouble hearing.

Mr. Speaker: Yes, very, very hard to hear the question. I would ask the co-operation of all honourable members.

Ms. Allan: Because the member of the Liberal Party is holding children and this bill hostage by denying leave, could the minister explain to the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) how his irresponsible actions are affecting students, parents, divisions and trustees in amalgamating school divisions all across this province?

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Education, Training and Youth): The delay in the amalgamation date perpetrated by the Member for River Heights will require significantly more administrative work to be done by boards and trustees, significantly more accounting and financial work than if amalgamation was to take effect on July 1. The additional work involves maintaining two or more systems for individual school divisions until the merger, for example: payroll, auditing, financial reviews. There are insurance implications that the member is foisting upon amalgamated school divisions. There are issues around busing that need to be resolved; staffing decisions need to be resolved. The member is putting significantly more work on the shoulders of trustees throughout the province of Manitoba and wasting educational dollars.

* (14:10)

Gaming Advertising Guidelines

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): The Minister responsible for Lotteries in this province of Manitoba has now ignored all boundaries and all standards when it comes to advertising gambling in the province of Manitoba. Last Thursday, the *Winnipeg Sun* contained an advertising feature of the new casino in The Pas. On page 7 of that feature it shows clearly Manitobans gambling and playing the slot machines. I would like to table for the minister the copy of the advertisement that was run in that paper. I would also like to table a copy of a memo from the CEO and president of Manitoba Lotteries—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I cannot even hear the questions. There is too much disturbance back and forth here. I ask the co-operation of all honourable members, please.

Mr. Derkach: I would also like to table a memo from the CEO and president of Manitoba Lotteries to the minister with regard to the guidelines that were passed in the year 2000—

An Honourable Member: Oh, there are guidelines.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, the memo states, and I quote, the advertising guidelines were adopted in 2000.

The attached fact sheet also states, and I quote: The guidelines pertain to the use of media, newspapers, magazines, radio, television, signage to communicate a commercial message to a wider audience.

My question to the minister is this: Why is the minister who is responsible for Lotteries in Manitoba allowing for this kind of advertising in the province of Manitoba when in fact it is clear that this advertising transgresses the guidelines that were established by this Government?

Hon. Diane McGifford (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Lotteries Corporation Act): Of course, this member has asked many questions about advertising, and in this particular instance he is asking about the casino at The Pas. I will certainly contact officials at Lotteries and bring these photographs from the *Sun* to their attention. I have not seen them myself.

But generally the answer about advertising is the same one that I have given time and time again. I am speaking about the casinos, Winnipeg advertising, that there are 40 casinos within an 8-hour drive of Winnipeg.

When the members opposite, in 1989, began advertising there were three casinos within a day's drive of Winnipeg. So, every weekend, throughout the week, there are many, many advertisements in our Winnipeg newspapers advertising on the part of casinos—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Derkach: On a new question.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Russell, on a new question.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, the minister is responsible for the advertising that goes on in the province of Manitoba with regard to gambling. She is the one who is responsible for passing the guidelines, and now she is breaking those guidelines.

My question to her is: Why is she allowing the casinos in Manitoba to advertise gambling when her own guidelines prohibit it?

Ms. McGifford: Once again this member really does not know what he is talking about. *[interjection]* Oh, yes, he does not know what he is talking about. The casino—*[interjection]*

Mr. Speaker, if the Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) would stop bellowing, I might have an opportunity to answer the question.

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Turtle Mountain, on a point of order.

Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain): Yes, Mr. Speaker, *Beauchesne* 417: should not provoke debate. Obviously, the only person who does not know anything about this is the minister.

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

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker. The minister's responses have been interrupted, first by heckling on a very regrettable level, and now by a point of order. It is simply an interruption. It is not a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Member for Turtle Mountain, it

is not a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Speaker, as I was going to say, the casino at The Pas is responsible for its advertising. I am not the person who is responsible for their advertising. However—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Speaker, if I might continue. As I have already assured the member, I will bring these particular advertisements to the attention of Manitoba Lotteries.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, on a new question.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Russell, on a new question.

Mr. Derkach: The minister is responsible for the type of advertising that takes place in the province of Manitoba with respect to gambling. She is the one who signed the agreement that says those casinos must conform to the guidelines; those are her guidelines.

Why is this minister—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, *Beauchesne* 409(2): A question must be brief. A preamble need not exceed one carefully drawn sentence.

I believe we have two or three sentences, Mr. Speaker. Would you please remind the honourable member that rule 409 has a place in this House and has been respected?

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Russell, on the same point of order.

Mr. Derkach: Yes, Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order. I was careful to assure that the

minister understood what question I was asking, because obviously from her answers she has not understood a thing about the questions I have asked. So I tried to make it as brief as possible.

Mr. Speaker: Order. On the point of order raised by the honourable Government House Leader, I would like to take this opportunity to remind all honourable members 409(2): A preamble should not exceed one carefully drawn sentence.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: I would ask the honourable member to please put your question.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, will the Minister responsible for Manitoba Lotteries please explain, when she signed the agreement with The Pas casino which states they must follow the guidelines, why she is allowing that casino to break the guidelines and advertise gambling outright in the province of Manitoba?

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Speaker, it was clear some time ago that members opposite were not in favour of Aboriginal casinos. I can see that negative attitude is continuing.

I have assured this member three times that I am going to follow up. I do not know what part of that he does not get. I will follow up.

Deer Lodge Hospital Food Services

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, today the children of Manitoba have been totally removed from chiropractic coverage. Yet we see that the Doer government is willing to spend extra money to have a sandwich factory built within the public system.

I would like to ask the Minister of Health if he will confirm that the Deer Lodge hospital will be having the sandwich factory built at their site. Can he just confirm that?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, when the members opposite brought in their frozen food experiment that cost more than \$30 million, they closed the kitchens at Deer

Lodge, they closed the kitchen at Seven Oaks, they closed the kitchen at Grace Hospital, they closed the kitchen at Concordia Hospital. They closed kitchens that provided food to patients in those facilities. It was despicable then.

* (14:20)

Mrs. Driedger: I would like to ask this Minister of Health, who seems a little bit extra sensitive about this subject, if he could just tell us how much the capital costs for this project will be. How much is this going to cost taxpayers to build his sandwich factory at the Deer Lodge Hospital?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, there is this scenario that members opposite have whenever they do not have a question. They say: Why do we not ask a sandwich factory question?

Members opposite thought it was appropriate to close the kitchen for the veterans at Deer Lodge. They thought it was appropriate to feed the veterans frozen food from Toronto. We do not follow that scenario.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

William Hespeler

Mr. Jim Penner (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a very important person in the history of Manitoba, and, in particular, of Manitoba Mennonites, the honourable William Hespeler.

Earlier this year Culture and Heritage Minister Sheila Coppins designated Hespeler as a person of historic significance. Parks Canada now has plans to honour him with a 130-pound bronze trilingual plaque to be situated in the town of Niverville, located in my constituency of Steinbach. Hespeler is said to have registered the title for the land that Niverville now sits on and built the first grain elevator there in 1879. The town is already home to Hespeler Park and Hespeler Cemetery, with plans underway for a Hespeler museum exhibit.

While visiting Germany in 1872, Hespeler, a German immigrant to Canada, learned that large numbers of Mennonites living in southern Russia were considering immigration to North America. Soon after he had reported this to Canadian officials, they authorized him as a special immigration agent to proceed to Russia, there to assure the Mennonites of a welcome in Canada. After visiting some of the Mennonite settlements, his purposes were suspected by the Russian government, and he was forced to leave that country.

By 1873, upon Hespeler's advice, a delegation of Russian men came over to Canada to investigate the lands. From this time on Hespeler was the representative of the Canadian government in everything that was connected with the immigration and settlement of the Russian Mennonites in Canada. Hespeler is said to have helped about 7000 Russian Mennonites immigrate to Canada.

Mr. Speaker, William Hespeler performed tremendous works in his 91 years. His legacy continues to impact all Manitobans, especially those Manitoba Mennonites who are able to trace their lineage back to Russia. He is most deserving of this commemorative plaque. I look forward to the day it will be unveiled.

Seven Oaks Trail

Mr. Cris Aglugub (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, it was my great pleasure on Canada Day to be at the grand opening of the Seven Oaks Hearts in Motion Trail, held at the Garden City Shopping Centre, south lot. It was part of the official Canada Day celebrations for Winnipeg. The new urban walking path, located in north Winnipeg, goes through Garden City, West Kildonan, Old Kildonan and my constituency of The Maples.

Hearts in Motion is an international program started in 1996. It seeks to promote a physically active lifestyle. I was happy to learn that our local trail, at 42 kilometres, is the largest of its kind in Canada. Not only is this trail a great way to exercise but it can also be educational. There are almost 20 historical sites along the path which are highlighted as points of interest.

At the path's grand opening I was honoured to be among the guests and representatives of the three levels of government. The trail is the result of co-operation between the Heart and Stroke Foundation and the Seven Oaks Neighbourhood Resource Network. The network includes local businesses, seniors and youth groups, schools, health organizations and five residents' associations. Other sponsors of the trail include the City of Winnipeg, Manitoba Hydro, MTS and numerous others.

I would like to thank the Seven Oaks Hearts in Motion Trail subcommittee for their hard work and the countless local residents who committed their time to volunteer on this project. It is also this working together which helps build stronger communities. I hope that, by participating in this trail, people will be able to continue to get to know their neighbours.

I encourage all Winnipeg residents to come to Foxwarren Lake in The Maples and take a walk on the Seven Oaks Hearts in Motion Trail.

Mason School

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, June 30, Manitobans closed a chapter in the history of education in our province. On that day, past and present students and faculty joined together with family and friends to bid a fond farewell to Mason School.

Thanks to the contributions of students, staff, alumni, parents and officials, Mason School can proudly bear the title of last remaining one-room schoolhouse in the province. Sunday marked a celebration and remembrance of 76 years of excellence in the education. The end came when the school's 2001-2002 enrolment decreased to just 12 students. Sadly, this was not enough for Western School Division to allow it to remain open.

I had the privilege of participating in the Sunday ceremony. There I got to wish Mason School's final students all the best, as they will be attending elementary and junior high schools in Morden next year. I also had the opportunity to examine some of the memorabilia brought to the reunion and hear first-hand accounts from

alumni recalling their early years at Mason School.

The day began at 10 a.m. with a final ringing of the school's bell and ended later in the evening with a wiener roast. I would like to say a quick word of thanks to all those who organized and took part in this event, and especially John Loewen, the teacher, who looked after the school at that point.

Mr. Speaker, it was not hard to see that everyone who had the privilege of enjoying the close-knit community and academic excellence that was such an integral part of Mason School for so many years was very sad to see it go. I trust that the legacy it is leaving will be kept alive through shared memories, future reunions and a potential museum exhibit.

Bill Patmore

Mr. Harry Schellenberg (Rossmere): Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Bill Patmore, who retired this June as the executive director of the Concordia Hospital. Patmore has worked many years in hospital administration, which included some time at The Pas, North Battleford and 11 years at Concordia Hospital.

Patmore's work as a hospital administrator was appreciated by the community. As an administrator, he was very approachable. He was known for his open-door policy. He was always ready to listen to any suggestions from the community.

It was always easy for people to set up a meeting and discuss the issues of the day. Several MLAs from both sides of this Chamber have taken the opportunity to meet with him over the years. During his tenure as administrator, the Concordia Hospital was known to meet its budget. Patmore and the Concordia Hospital board also involved the community in many activities, which developed a sense of community towards the hospital. There was a strong focus on community fundraising and volunteering.

During Patmore's 11 years at the Concordia Hospital, he recalled many highlights and changes. He pointed out that the evolution of

regional health care brought about more co-operation in health care across the province, and hospitals were integrated into a provincial plan.

He also mentioned hallway medicine, while it still occurs sometimes when there is a peak demand, has become less of a problem. Patmore remembers the day when 60 patients overflowed into the hallways of the emergency department at Concordia Hospital.

Other accomplishments during his tenure were: the opening of the 60-bed wing; the construction of the Concordia Place Care Centre next to the hospital; the establishment of the new oncology department; and more recently, the hospital has been named as a site for hip and knee replacement.

Mr. Speaker, the community recognizes his leadership in the many changes at the Concordia Hospital in the last 11 years. In retirement, he plans to spend more time with his family and especially his grandchildren. He also plans to travel and improve his golf.

Mr. Speaker, I ask everyone in this Chamber to join in wishing him and his wife, Barb, a fine retirement.

Harness Racing

Mr. Denis Rocan (Carman): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to talk about the commencement of the harness racing season, and I would like to recognize the Government for reversing their funding decision and for recognizing the importance of this industry to the rural economy and the rural psyche.

Mr. Speaker, for more than a century, the Manitoba Great Western Harness Racing Circuit has provided entertainment and excitement to those who have come to witness its fast-pace action. It has also provided more than 500 jobs annually, ranging from breeders, drivers and judges to track maintenance people, farriers, food booth personnel and the people who build horse trailers.

* (14:30)

I would like to take this opportunity to make my colleagues and my fellow Manitobans aware

of the new harness racing schedule. The rescheduled racing dates are as follows: July 20 and 21 in Deloraine, July 27 and 28 in Killarney, August 3 and 4 in Killarney, August 10 and 11 in Miami, August 17 and 18 in Wawanesa, August 24 and 25 in Minnedosa, August 31 and September 1 in Holland, September 7 and 8 in Dauphin, September 14 and 15 in Glenboro, September 21 and 22 in Portage la Prairie.

I and my caucus colleagues, specifically the Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed), cannot stress enough how relieved and excited we are for rural Manitoba that the harness racing industry has been revived. The Government involvement in this industry is a small price to pay to give the people of rural Manitoba 23 days a summer to congregate, to share fellowship, to elevate community spirit, to cheer, to laugh, to enjoy, to take time out for family togetherness.

Thanks to this industry, people ventured beyond the boundaries of the city of Winnipeg and saw a corner of the province they might not have otherwise visited. I would like to thank the countless Manitobans who called, wrote, e-mailed and faxed their concerns on this issue to our caucus and to the Government. Your support was essential in getting this Government to restore funding to this valuable industry. The harness racing industry is an important part of the rural Manitoba economy, and I thank the Government for recognizing this and restoring partial funding to this important sector.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you canvass the House to determine if there is leave to deal with Bill 14 report stage this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to deal with Bill 14 for report stage this afternoon?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: Leave has been denied.

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, would you see if there is leave of the House to waive private members' hour today.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to waive private members' hour today? [*Agreed*]

Mr. Mackintosh: I move, seconded by the Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs (Ms. Friesen), that the House resolve into Committee of Supply.

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

LABOUR AND IMMIGRATION

* (14:40)

Mr. Chairperson (Harry Schellenberg): Good afternoon. This section of the Committee of Supply, meeting in Room 254, will resume consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Labour and Immigration.

We are on line 3. Immigration and Multiculturalism (a) Immigration (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,123,400 on page 127 of the main Estimates book. When this committee last sat, there had been agreement to discuss the section on Multiculturalism in 3. Immigration and Multiculturalism prior to consideration of Immigration. Is this still the will of the committee?

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): We are ready to pass through the lines on Multiculturalism and move on to the section on Immigration.

Mr. Chairperson: There is an agreement to start on Multiculturalism.

3. Immigration and Multiculturalism (a) Immigration (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,123,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$693,700—pass; (3) Financial Assistance and Grants \$6,407,700—pass.

3.(b) Multiculturalism (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$149,800—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$37,800—pass; (3) Grants \$107,500—pass.

Resolution 11.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$9,519,900 for Labour and Immigration, Immigration and Multiculturalism, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March 2003.

Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister of Labour and Immigration): Mr. Chair, we had by agreement done section 3.(b) Multiculturalism prior to 3.(a) Immigration. So we have only dealt with the one section. We still have the Immigration portion of 11.3 to do.

Mr. Chairperson: Is there agreement to now do line by line 3.(a) Immigration? [*Agreed*]

Mr. Schuler: I would ask the minister if we could be working on the orange book starting on page 46. I take it then we go all the way through to page 49.

Can the minister give us an overview on how the whole immigration issue has worked in Manitoba? Can she just give us a little bit of a report how immigration has worked for Manitoba in the last year?

Ms. Barrett: Generally speaking, the immigration program has worked very well in the province over the last year. I believe there were just over 4500 new immigrants to the province, which includes the people who have come through the Provincial Nominee Program, independent immigrants as well as refugees.

In specific, the Provincial Nominee Program in 2001-2002 resulted in 758 provincial nominees being approved in 2001. As the member knows, this is an increase from 200 principal nominees, which is either an individual or a head of family, to 750 for this last year. We now have approval from the federal government to bring in 1000 individuals or heads of family. The 758 provincial nominees, in some cases, it is an individual, but in most cases, it is the head of a family, the person who makes the application, and then there could be spouses and family members, children.

Specifically, there were 758 principal applicants, 522 spouses and 1144 children, dependent children; so 2423 individuals and families were approved under the Provincial

Nominee Program. They did not all come here, but they were approved. The pipeline sometimes takes a year or more, depending on, as the member knows, the federal government retains the right to look at the applications for medical purposes and security check. That takes some time, and depending on where they come from in the world and what backup there is in the visa office, that can take a fair bit of time. But 758 applications were approved. We, again, now are able, in this year, starting in March, to nominate 1000 families.

We also have a provincial nominee business component. That is in conjunction, working together with the Department of Industry, Trade and Mines to look at business applications being approved under the Provincial Nominee Program. What ITM does is they take a look at the business part of the proposal, because that is where their expertise lies, and then they work with us to finalize the regular provincial nominee part of the application.

We have issued certificates of nomination to 77 business applicants under the provincial nominee business part of the program. The total combined amount of the funds that would be invested by these 77 business applicants is approximately \$28.5 million. The details of this program would be more appropriately addressed to the Estimates of Industry, Trade and Mines, but, in general, the applicants have to provide a business plan. They have to be prepared to come to Manitoba and have their business located here in Manitoba. But approximately 30 percent of the provincial nominees are located outside of Winnipeg, and 70 percent inside the city, and that is a proportion that has remained fairly constant for most of the time of the program.

* (14:50)

One of the problems, one of the challenges we face is dealing with the visa officers overseas and figuring out ways to ensure that Manitoba is noticed, so that these officers will acknowledge that we have a good program, that we have a good set of settlement programs, and that we are a multicultural community, and we need immigrants. So we need to increase our communication with the officers abroad about what a good place it is to try and steer immigrants to.

We have our Provincial Nominee Program which does that, but, still, the majority of people who come to Canada come under the economic or independent class. It is a challenge to get Manitoba noticed by the immigration officers, and we are working with over 40 posts overseas to try and increase that, our visibility.

We sent a staff member to Italy to promote Manitoba as a good place to invest and come to live. This was part of the team that was put together by the Manitoba Italian Chamber of Commerce, and we will see what happens from that.

We worked with the Jewish community in the province, not just this year, but over other times, last year as well, sending a staffperson to Argentina to talk with people from that country about settling in Manitoba. We have a number of people who have actually come to visit Winnipeg, and who are in the process of making application through the Provincial Nominee Program from Argentina. So we are working with employers and community groups to try and increase our profile.

Again, we are talking with the federal government and reiterating our willingness to take our share, or even more than our share, of refugees, both government sponsored and privately sponsored refugees. As the member knows, the mayor has made immigration a big part of his push for vitalizing Winnipeg, and we believe that we can work with the City and with other communities throughout the province to increase that.

We hosted Canada-wide consultations of the Provincial Nominee Program, which included representatives from seven provinces, as well as local, regional and national Citizenship and Immigration staff. We are looking with other departments to increase our visibility, for example, working with the Department of Agriculture. I believe there was a delegation going with Agriculture and Food and other private-sector partners to the Netherlands to promote immigration of European farmers. There have been a number of Dutch farmers who have come to Manitoba to look and investigate what this is. We went to a national recruitment mission to London last year. We participated with other provinces in recruitment and promotion

activities in Venezuela, Colombia, Argentina and Brazil. We worked with Manitoba Health and the federal government in the recruitment of 65 registered nurses from the Philippines.

We have done a whole number of things with immigrants once they come into Manitoba. We have one of the best settlement programs in the country because we recognize that, if people are going to stay in Manitoba, if they are going to become successful, that they are going to have the kind of quality of life that they deserve and that will keep them here; that we need to provide them with the services they need once they come here to enable them to do that.

As the member will no doubt acknowledge, immigrants come from all over the world, and they come with varying needs. Some people come from countries where English is the first language and have jobs waiting for them. In many cases they have family, they have friends here, and the settlement requirements are minimal. Other people come, particularly refugees, they come from countries and situations that are absolutely, I cannot even begin to think about how horrible they must have been.

For example, I was at my community MLA Canada Day celebration yesterday. A teacher from one of the local schools was telling me how there was a student, a young girl who had come from Afghanistan, in Grade 4. She was put in Grade 4 because she was 10 years old. She had never attended school because she was a female from Afghanistan. So not only has she come from heaven only knows what kind of life in her home country, heaven only knows how long it has taken her, and what she and her family have had to go through to get to Winnipeg.

She is 10 years old, she has never attended school, she has no English. I am sure her family, I am assuming, has virtually no English. They are probably here as refugees coming from an unbelievable situation, and here she is in a school where she is placed in a school grade because that is the age she is, but she has no other skills that would allow her without an enormous amount of assistance for herself and her family to make a go of it. We are going to make a go of it with this young woman and her family. We just will because it is important for

us to do that. So we have a range of needs and of issues that we are working on.

We also had a good meeting with the new Minister of Immigration, Denis Coderre, shortly after his being put into that position. We have had a program evaluation of the Provincial Nominee Program which was very positive. It has been in place since '98. We feel that it has gone through its first stage with very positive evaluations. We have, as I stated, increased the level of provincial nominees to now where this year we will be able to bring in 1000 families.

We are going to be the location in the middle of October for the first, I believe it is the first, meeting of the ministers responsible for Immigration and the federal minister in six years here in Winnipeg. So we are quite excited about that. It will be a very good time. There are lots of challenges facing us. Here in Manitoba we know we have the best overall program and the most exciting things happening. We just want the world to know about it.

Mr. Schuler: I do have a slew of questions to ask in regard to what the minister has just spoken about, but my colleague would like to ask some very specific questions. So I will defer to him, and then I would like to get back to some of the comments that the minister made.

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): First of all, I guess I would like to thank the minister's staff for the assistance that they have given us over the last, oh, four or five years, whenever we started the program specifically with the German immigrants coming to southern Manitoba. They have worked out well; they are integrating well. It is not that there have not been some concerns out there, but I think that is to be recognized and expected from any groups that come.

Right now the town of Winkler alone is looking for 200 people just to fill jobs, the town of Morden not quite that many but about 100 that they need to fill jobs. I am glad to hear that we are continuing to aggressively try to attract people to the province, especially to our and my own local communities.

My question, though, is specific to those who have immigrated. The concern that I am

hearing time and time again is that we have received a number of well-educated people. They have got their certificates, they have got their degrees in Germany, specifically would-be mechanics, nurses, dental hygienists. The problem they have is that they are not allowed to even challenge an exam to determine whether the education they have received in Germany is one that would be acceptable out here. They are not allowed to do this. They are quite prepared to do it, but in fact in the last two weeks I talked to several of these people, and they have been told that the only way you are going to be able to get your degree or your certificate, whatever the designation is that they need, will be that if you go back to school and take the three, four years of training or whatever the years that are required.

My question is are we doing anything. Is the minister, through her department, doing anything to try to address some of these issues, or is this specific to southern Manitoba? I guess just before I let that question go; I did talk to businesses in Winnipeg, Art DeFehr, from Palliser. He says they are experiencing the same problems. So I would ask for an answer to that, if I could, please.

* (15:00)

Ms. Barrett: I appreciate that question. How much time do we have? This is a huge issue.

An Honourable Member: Just fix it.

Ms. Barrett: Just fix it, the member says. Oh, boy. We have been actually working on this. Well, I know many people have been. It is called the whole issue of credentials, and the current situation, and it is from coast to coast to coast, it is all over. It is not just in Canada. To one or more degrees, it is a phenomenon. In a brief sort of a snapshot, it is that the licensing bodies have been given by governments the authority to decide who shall be licensed to practise a profession or a skill. So it is the College of Physicians and Surgeons, the Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses, the certificate bodies for skilled workers. All of these bodies have been given this authority. I do not think anyone would deny that they have the right to do that because they are the ones who know what kinds of skills

you should have in order to be licensed in that particular area.

Where the challenge comes from, where the problem comes from, is how they determine what are the skills, that you do or do not have the skills. There are language components. There are a whole bunch of things. This is an oversimplification, but largely how they have done that in the past has been through a paper study. So you get a degree from X university or you get your training certificate from Y training college, the licensing body says, yes, that is good, we will accept that, or no, or they look at the actual course, the syllabus and the description of the course.

Well, that works real well if there is some comparability or you can determine if there is comparability, but there are cases where there are legitimate universities that do not exist any more. In eastern Europe, I am sure there are cases where those records are not available, et cetera, and how do you decide if they fit. So what we are trying to do, and we have had a group called the Blue Sky Group, which is—tell us how to fix this, if it was just blue sky, the issue—working on this, as well as people in our department and across the country too. It is a huge issue because we want trained, skilled people, but when we get them, we sometimes cannot use them, and you have identified that.

This is going to be on the agenda when the ministers meet in October, this issue. We are now working with some suggestions that this Blue Sky Group has come up with, trying to figure out how we can work with the licensing bodies to say no, we do not want to tell you what you licensed for. We just want to help work with you as to how you determine what the person's skills are. There is something called the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition program, PLAR, that we work with in our department, and I assume across the country it is the same. So, for individuals, we can work with them and do some of this assessment, but as a whole it is a challenge.

We are attempting to work our way through it. No province, nor the federal government, has yet been able to crack that moment shell, whatever, make a breakthrough, but we are working

on it, and we acknowledge that. We have very definitely skilled people here who are doing jobs that they were not trained for and not doing the jobs and the professions that they were trained for, so it is a critical issue.

Mr. Dyck: Mr. Chairman, I agree it is a very critical issue. In fact, what is happening is, in my discussion with—and these are not older people, these are young people who basically have graduated, I would say in the last four or five years, and they have the credentials out of Germany and are out here. What they are telling me now is that, in fact, they know of people who would like to come here, but they are cautioning them. They are saying, listen, you come out here and you think that you have the education that you need and that you would qualify out here. Consequently, I believe that this is something that is a deterrent for them.

Certainly, I would ask the minister, and I think she indicated she would, but also her colleagues across the country, to very aggressively work on this. That is one part of it, you know, the concern that I have.

I guess the other side of it, and this is specific to immigration. I think that we basically have taken that there are certain standards that we want when you go through the point system with immigrants coming. I think a lot of it has to do, as you indicated, with language, with education, et cetera. There is also a need for non-skilled people. I mean, we also need a lot of non-skilled. In fact, in the area I would suggest that the need is just as great for non-skilled people as it is for the skilled, those who have degrees of some sort.

So I am just wondering, is there a balance that you as minister are promoting in order to be able to get a good mix of the skilled and non-skilled people as immigrants within the province or within the country. What is the direction that is taking?

Ms. Barrett: Immigration remains a federal jurisdiction, by and large. The feds have worked out the arrangement. They worked it out in '98 with the province on the Provincial Nominee Program, which does devolve to the province the definition of who comes in. Then the feds do

their health check and the safety check. The Provincial Nominee Program is a skilled worker program. It is designed to address the skilled worker shortages.

The federal independent immigration stream as well; there has been a lot of talk about the new legislation, et cetera, some argument, discussion about whether it opens the doors wider or narrows the doors, but it is also focusing on skilled shortages. However, there are other people who get to Manitoba, in particular, who are potential workers in the lesser skilled areas. One category is refugees. The criteria for them is not their skills. It is their degree of risk, and whether they have been sponsored by private sponsor groups. So there is a grouping.

Also, there are family members of the Provincial Nominee people who come in who are not assessed. It is only the principal applicant who is assessed for the Provincial Nominee Program. So, for example, in, well, the last three years, '99, 2000 and 2001, the first full three years, Winkler had just under 26 percent of the provincial applicants and dependants. It went down to 22 percent in 2000, and back up to just under 25 percent in 2001. Again, if you add Steinbach and Winkler together, last year they had 37 percent of the total. In 1999, they had almost 50 percent of the total. That is principal applicants and dependants.

As you know, a vast majority of the families who come to that part of the province have large families. Some of their family members, their spouses and dependants are not as highly educated or as highly skilled as they are, the principal applicant, because they do not have to have the points.

I guess what I am saying, in a long-winded sort of a way, is that there is an opportunity for family members, too, through the Provincial Nominee Program to have access to some jobs that might be seen more as entry level jobs; in particular, for spouses and perhaps student members of the family. Another area is family reunification. That is, again, a federal program. That is not as dependent on the skills. It is saying we want to reunify families and bring family members together. So there is another opportunity, Mr. Chairman.

Finally, as we get closer to our 4 percent of the immigration pie, which would mirror what our actual population percentage is of the whole Canadian population; as we get to that point, which would be about doubling the numbers that we have today, just by definition, there will be larger numbers of people to draw from. Long-winded answer, but the two main immigration programs are skill-oriented.

* (15:10)

Mr. Dyck: Just to elaborate on that a little bit, I think that what you would find though is that, yes, they do have large families, absolutely right, but the majority of those are still school-aged children. I mean, we are not trying to promote the fact that they do not receive an education, that they can become a part of that unskilled category. So the problem still remains. You also mentioned the old part of those who emigrated. I forget the term you used. They are not immigrant status; they are refugees.

Okay, I think the other thing that you would find out if you started looking at our area specifically that really for some reason or another, and I am not sure how many refugees Manitoba attracts, by and large if they do come here they leave, again because I do not think they fit in as well, if I can use that term. I just know that in the southern Manitoba area it is the German families and also, of course, the Mexicans who have fitted in very well and are integrating very well into the communities. So we do not want to be specific to certain areas. I think that maybe culturally, maybe even because of climatic conditions or the type of work, we find it more difficult to attract some of the other nationalities, although they would be welcome to come.

So I think sort of through a process of what we deem being successful, the countries that we have been able to attract the immigrants from, they have worked out very well. So I guess my question further to that would be: How many do you see us being able to attract and integrate into our communities—I would be more specific with the Winkler-Morden area and the Pembina area that I represent—within the next year?

Ms. Barrett: Over the four years that the program has been in place, the division has

approximately been 70 percent to Winnipeg and 30 percent to other areas of the province. The vast majority of that 30 percent has gone into the Winkler-Steinbach area. So I think it would not be an overstatement to say that the Provincial Nominee Program has been Winnipeg and Winkler-Morden, by and large. There have been other communities that have had some people go to them. I think the Brandon area with the business component is going to come up there too. We are working with other communities to say, we know you have shortages. What are they? Let us work together.

It would be impossible for me to say what kind of percentage will happen. I cannot guarantee anything. I know that with 1000 families, what the federal government has given us; and with the fact that the Provincial Nominee Program is specifically designed for skilled workers who are filling positions, that are identified in Manitoba as skilled positions, that are going begging. That program, the Provincial Nominee Program, will remain a skilled program.

The federal government gives and the federal government takes away. So, while we have some nominal control, it would be a challenge to try and say to them, we want to bring in people who do not pass that 50-point mark. We have, literally, thousands and thousands and thousands of applications from across the world. Way more of those applications would be acceptable, would make the grade than we have space for.

We are trying to get more people here, but through the provincial nominee part of it. At this point, it is going to stay the very successful program it is. The shortages in other areas are going to have to be looked at through other immigration means or other recruitment strategies. The bottom line is, right now, because the Provincial Nominee Program is a joint program with the feds, because they are focussing and we have been focussing, and very successfully, on skilled workers, that is how it is going to stay for the foreseeable future.

Mr. Dyck: Okay, do you see this process then, through the nominee program, in fact, speeding up? That is the wrong term possibly, but it takes

a long time. For instance, in our area, we have got employers who have signed job opportunities as much as a year ago, who are still waiting for that position to be filled. As you have indicated, there are many people who would like to fill those job categories, yet, though, it just appears to take long in order to process these applicants. Do you see this in any way being expedited to be able to assist those employers who are possibly, in some cases, expanding their businesses, feeling confident that they are going to be able to fill those positions, but need to wait months and months and months in order to be able to fill them? Do you see this speeding up in any way?

Ms. Barrett: Again, because we are tied so closely to the federal system; there is a huge backlog of cases in many of the visa posts. I think Bonn would be the visa post and Berlin, and I am not sure specifically about Berlin, but I do know that the delays for, or the time between approval and landing, an independent immigrant can be upwards of three or more years.

We have a challenge facing us in administering the program at this end because of its success. We have literally thousands and thousands of applications coming in each year to try and sift through, to assess. Many of them are missing documents. Many of them are incomplete. So it is not just taking a look at it and checking down through the whole thing: Okay, you are okay; you are not. It is going back and working through a case for a number of times, maybe. So it is quite a time-intense and certainly labour-intense process at the front end, from our division's perspective. Then you multiply that by literally thousands, many of which are clearly not complete, but many of which are. You have to assess each of them individually.

Then, once that process has happened and concluded, and we have issued a certificate, then they have to go through the health check, the medical check and the security check by the federal government. That, in and of itself, is time consuming, if there were no other delays. Then the visa has to be issued, ta-da, ta-da, ta-da, and it goes on and on and on. There has not been the kind of staffing at the post level overseas to enable this situation to be ameliorated, in my personal view. It is made worse, worse in the

sense of the delays have not been narrowed or reduced. As a matter of fact, they have probably been exacerbated by the new legislation and working through several kinds of laws, et cetera, the old and the new. The transition is going to be difficult.

Even so, the provincial nominees come in much quicker than an independent immigrant would, in many cases, less than a year. It depends on the individual situation. Sometimes there is a problem getting all the material at this end. Sometimes there is a problem getting the security, blah, blah, blah, from the feds. Sometimes, there is a holdup in the pipeline. I do not know about individual situations, but sometimes families have tidying up to do in their home country. So they are delayed at that end. Again, a long-winded answer, but it is a multifaceted problem and challenge we are dealing with. We are working as fast we can at this end, but there is only so much to do when you have to shove every single one of these applications that have been approved through that very small, narrow pipeline from the feds.

* (15:20)

Mr. Dyck: Last week, I had a local employer approach me and basically one who said, if he had 30 of the right people that day, he would hire them. He was wondering what the opportunities would be, in fact he has a number of his employees that come from Mexico, what opportunities there would be and, in fact, what assistance he would be able to get from the department here in order to be able to get some of these people to come out to Manitoba, and specifically to the Winkler region and Morden region, in order to be able to gain employment there. Now, I think they would be able to make the contacts, but what process would they have to go through in order to be able to make these contacts?

Ms. Barrett: Basically, if you wanted to get the employer to connect with the division, with Gerry Clement, Assistant Deputy Minister, he can probably work through the process. There are a number of different avenues that can be followed, and I guess the best thing to do, rather than to try and talk about each of them, is to get the two of them together and try and see what can be done.

Mr. Dyck: Mr. Chairman, really, those are the questions that I had. Thank you.

Mr. Schuler: I thank my colleague for bringing up those important issues. Back to the minister's initial remarks, since the nominee program was introduced, approximately, each year, and from the year that it started, how many of the applicants were approved?

Ms. Barrett: Recognizing that the program began in late 1998, October 1998, so that was a truncated year, is the member asking how many applications were approved as a percentage of how many applications came in, or just how many were approved? The member is saying to me that he is asking simply for the number that were approved. Okay.

Recognizing that sometimes it can take upwards of a year for them actually to come here and to land; but the approvals in 1998, in three months, were 70. In 1999, there were 500, and we had an allocation of 450, but we carried over. So it is a rolling figure; it is hard to break it down. So 70 in '98, 500 in '99, 515 in 2000, 758 in 2001, of course, we are not finished with 2002. So, in the three-plus years, we have issued 1843 certificates. That would be principal applicants, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Schuler: For 2002, how many have been approved so far?

Ms. Barrett: We are averaging around a hundred a month approvals, so we would be approximately 500 to 600 approvals. Again, we have 1000 certificates that we are allocated for this year.

Mr. Schuler: Going back to '98, of those that have been approved, how many ended up coming in, whether they came in '98 or 2000?

I think there has to be an understanding. Obviously, you do not go out and you do not sell the business, the house, the car, the furniture, and then find out you are not approved. Surely people are more prudent than that. So what happens is you get your approval in the mail one day and that starts the whole process. You find the house, the business, the car and the furniture does not sell as well as you would like, or there

are a few things that happen in between there, but in the end, of those that were approved, 70 in '98, 500 in '99, 515 in 2000, and so on and so forth, how many actually have come over for each year?

Ms. Barrett: Well, as the member has recognized, it takes time to not only take care of your business in your homeland but also to get your visa applications and through the federal government and all of that kind of thing. So there were no landings in 1998, not surprising.

An Honourable Member: I have to ask again. Can I try again?

Ms. Barrett: I think if the member will let me finish I might be actually answering that.

In 1999, 418 people actually came to Manitoba as a result of the Provincial Nominee Program, which would have been people who had been approved in 1998 and into 1999 and their families. In the year 2000, 1088 people actually landed in Manitoba as a result of the Provincial Nominee Program. In 2001, 970 people landed, and a total for the three-plus years of landings is 2476 individuals.

Mr. Schuler: Okay, I guess what I am trying to get at is in 1998 there were 70 approvals of primary applicants, not of individuals who landed. Of those 70 that were approved, at some point in time does the approval expire? You have three years to get here. You have five years to get here. How many of those 70 have expired where the people actually never took us up on our generous offer? And a generous offer it is.

Ms. Barrett: An individual is sent a certificate from Manitoba. They have six months then to make application to the federal government, to go through the federal government's requirements, which is the security check and health check. So they have that six-month leeway to make that decision: Well, yes, I would like to come, but I have tried to sell my house, or I have tried to sell my business, or my mother is sick, to decide, yes, oh, my goodness, they have actually said yes to me, uh, oh, now I have to make a decision. So they have that six months to actually apply.

There is that six-month time. They can choose to start the process instantly if they want to, but they do have a six-month time there where their certificate is valid. Let us say they make the application and they get the process going for the visa from the feds. Once that visa is issued, which takes a number of months depending on the security check and the health care check. Then the visa is issued by the feds. They have a year to use that visa. We give them six months to make a decision to start with the feds. The feds give them a year after they have said yes to them for them to activate the visa to actually get here.

* (15:30)

Mr. Schuler: In 1998, the then-minister issued 70 certificates. How many of those expired without being used?

Ms. Barrett: We will have to come back with that information. As I said earlier, we have a wonderful staff. They have a lot of applications to go through, a lot of statistical monitoring to do to just get the current situation handled. We will have to endeavour going back through the files to see how many actually came. It could be that they have come in 1999-2000 or they could have come in the year 2001, theoretically, because the feds could have taken that long to issue them their medical certificate, et cetera. It is going to be a challenge to figure out which of any particular year's certificates were or were not used. The six months is one thing at our end but the visa issue thing at the other end is out of our control. I do not know quite how we would find out how many actually, we can do it but it is going to take some time.

Mr. Schuler: I guess the only reason why I think it is something that perhaps should be looked at—I am certainly not here to add more work onto the public service. My colleague across the way and I were talking, when it comes to immigration, it is one of the only real things that government does. There are a few other areas, but it is a real area. You are involving individuals. You are bringing them over. A lot of what we do in government is whatever, but this is a real thing. I think it is important to know how effective we are.

Out of 70 certificates, are half being used? How effective are we when we hand it out? Again, I think we have to keep in mind that the minister pointed out there will be those that are active. It might take a lot longer, for instance, in Afghanistan to get the proper documents as compared to somebody coming from Western Europe, where documents are much more readily available. I think it is important to keep that differentiation. I just think it is good to know how many of those are being utilized, how many are still in process as compared to how many have expired.

Ms. Barrett: Just a very rough estimate, looking at the number of people that were nominated and the number of people that were landed, the number of people that were nominated in 1998 and 1999 was approximately 2000 when you take the two years together. The number of people who landed in 1999 and 2000, the next year, which is pretty much how you have to do it—you are nominated one year, you often get in the next—was approximately 1500. That is a very rough assessment. Approximately 75 percent of those who were nominated in the first year and three months actually landed in the next two years. It may actually be more. We had a smaller number of landings in 2001 but we expect that to probably increase again in 2002. Just on that it would be about three-quarters, but I think it is a bit higher.

It has been pointed out to me that when we got our numbers extended from 200 to 450 to 500 to 750 to 1000, that always happened at the end of the calendar year, when we went to the feds and said, look, how successful we are being, we are really up against it, can we have some more, please, please, please, can we have some more? That happened at the end of the calendar year. You have a bump at the end of the calendar year of the nominations. So it is going to take into the second year for those numbers to show. We will do what we can to get a sense of that.

Mr. Schuler: Again, the numbers are very helpful. The only thing is, the number of people are not the number of certificates because one individual is issued and that can mean two people, one person, ten people, twelve. I mean, who knows, right?

The next question that I would like to ask, and I do not know if the department tracks this, of the 70 or 98, 599, so on and so forth, of those that came, do we track how many have actually stayed in Manitoba?

* (15:40)

Ms. Barrett: We undertook an evaluation in 2001 and sent out a questionnaire to the provincial nominees that had come to Manitoba. Ninety percent of those who initially came to Manitoba continue to live here; 77 percent plan to stay in the town or city where they are living for at least the next five years. About 34 percent of those arriving by October 2001, which is three years into the program, settle outside of Winnipeg compared to 15 percent of other recent non-program-related immigrants, i.e., the PNP has more than twice as many of its applicants settling outside the city than do the other immigration streams.

About 94 percent of the principal applicants and 44 percent of adult dependents who came to Manitoba through the PNP are employed. The overall employment rate is 71 percent, similar to that of all Manitobans. Sixty percent are working in their intended occupations. At least 59 percent are working in the high demand occupations. The longer they live in Manitoba, the higher their employment rate, which is atypical for immigration and actually refugees as well. None reported receiving any social assistance. In the longer term, they hope to move into more highly skilled occupations, which also, I think, is something that non-immigrants would aspire to as well.

Now, it is important to keep in mind that we sent out the questionnaire to those provincial nominees whose addresses we knew, but they are not required to tell us where they live or if they are even in the province. Particularly that is true of non-provincial nominee immigrants who we may not even know about. Independent economic immigrants do not have to use the Province for anything.

So, with that caveat, we think that this evaluation, and I must say the federal government was very pleased with these figures because it says that the program is doing what it

was intended to do, which is to bring in skilled people to fill skilled occupations that are in short supply in the province and to keep them here. We believe that that recruitment and retention situation has been very successful in the first three and a half years or would have been three years when the evaluation was done.

Mr. Schuler: If I can just jump in my sheet of questions here, correct me if I am wrong, but did the federal minister not muse, I wonder if he was musing out loud one day when he said one of the things they were thinking of doing was, they would bring in a bill, or maybe it is in front of the House, I heard it briefly, that you have to stay for a certain while to the area or designate areas where immigrants cannot immigrate to and would stay, and I can remember, it was roundly condemned. Does the provincial government have a position on that kind of a bill?

Ms. Barrett: Yes. I know very little more than the member knows on this situation, hard though that may be for people to believe, from either end, but the federal minister has not communicated with the province or myself on this issue at all. I am not sure if I would use the word "musing," but I could see where someone might use that.

A couple of things that were reported that the minister said, one was sort of a social contract that you would sign saying you would come here and you would stay a certain number of years in a certain location, and he was talking about it in terms of the provinces that have and the communities that do not have their proportional share of immigrants, of which Manitoba is one. Then I also heard that he was talking in terms of giving more points to people who would agree to go somewhere. We will be discussing this, I understand, although the federal government will be making the agenda, but I would assume, since the minister will be getting all of his provincial counterparts together in mid-October, that he will be discussing this issue.

The thing about it is I think that our Provincial Nominee Program addresses that kind of concern, which is a legitimate concern, that the vast majority of immigrants in Canada are going to three places. They are going to three provinces. They are going to Toronto, Vancouver and

Montréal, Ontario, B.C. and Québec. No other province comes anywhere close to that, to the numbers or the percentages. Alberta is next in line, and then Manitoba is probably fifth, but way, way down the list.

The PNP is designed to try and address that recruitment and retention issue by ensuring as much as possible that the nominees have a connection to Manitoba that is going to stay, that is going to be remaining. That is why we place emphasis on the skills. We place emphasis on skills that are in short supply in Manitoba. We place emphasis on a job offer in Manitoba. We talk about community. We give points for is there a community that is going to help this individual stay here, deal with the settlement issues, deal with the challenges facing anyone who comes new to a new country or a new community. We have been very successful in that without dealing with or addressing issues of mobility and Charter implications, but we still are not where we need to be as far as levels of immigration.

Our PNP does not deal at all with the economic immigrants or the refugees. That is where, I think, the federal minister is finding the challenge, that currently people can come into Canada and, if they meet the points, no one can tell them where they can live. I mean, rural Ontario has challenges too, as has Manitoba. So he is musing, if that is what he is doing, about a very, very critical issue and one that is going to be very difficult I think to address.

Mr. Schuler: The minister mentioned that visa offices overseas are or can be a problem. Could you elaborate on that, like, wherein lie the problems?

Ms. Barrett: Basically, as is in many instances, it is a matter of resources. We Canadians have, I would say, and I would suspect that the federal minister would agree with this, a shortage of the optimum number of visa officers in many visa posts. We also have things like visitor visas, student visas, a range of reasons why people come to the visa offices, so they are dealing with a whole range of kinds of issues.

* (15:50)

We also have to deal with the issue of globalization, where more and more people

know about Canada and other countries. More and more people see the streets being paved with gold and wanting to come to a country, to a different country to improve their lot in life, to send money back to their families. As you get more and more people in a country, they send money and information back to their homeland saying try and get here because it is much better.

So it is a factor of success. It is a factor of globalization. It is a factor of heightened security after 9-11, all of those factors. So it is a real challenge for the visa officers to deal with their daily load, and sometimes, for example, with the Provincial Nominee Program, we would like them to bump it up a little higher. They are pretty good about saying, okay, here is a provincial nominee. Most of the work has been done. Manitoba has decided they want him. We will not do the whole process. We may even waive the interview requirement and just go straight in.

So our challenge is to ensure that all of those officers in the visa posts understand the Manitoba program, acknowledge it and actually use and recognize that we have done a lot of the work and they do not have to replicate it, and also just to make people aware that we are here. It is not only the community at large that thinks of Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver, but sometimes it is the visa officers who just say, you know, who do not have time to say, well, are you maybe interested in a smaller community like Winnipeg or Winkler or Morden or Thompson.

Mr. Schuler: That was actually one of the questions I had of the minister. Is there a large-centre, centric view of Canada, where you do not sell the finer points of a Winnipeg or a Brandon or Thompson or where it might be in Manitoba or Saskatchewan or Alberta. It tends to be the big centres. Vancouver is an immigrant hot spot. So is Toronto.

The minister would have the numbers in front of her. I am sure Toronto consumes if not 50 percent then certainly the bulk of immigrants, and that is a problem because what happens then is the services tend to congregate there. That tends to be where you have your communities, your churches, that kind of thing. It becomes one

of these self-fulfilling prophecies, right? I mean, that is where they end up going.

So I guess my question to the minister is: How do we overcome that kind of Toronto-centric viewpoint of immigration?

Ms. Barrett: I think the member has raised a good question. What we are doing now is we are becoming more proactive. I think given the reality of the elephant and the mosquito, actually in 2001 Ontario had almost 60 percent of the immigrants. The next was B.C. which had just over 15 percent. So you can see just between Ontario and British Columbia the distinction.

Then comes Québec with just 15 percent, then Alberta with 6.5 percent. So you can see the top three are 60 percent, a little over 15 percent, just under 15 percent. Then you jump down to Alberta which is 6.5 percent. Manitoba is next with 1.82 percent, and then everybody else is down. Saskatchewan is next with .68 percent. It is imbalanced. That is the word to use.

That is the reality. When people think about Canada, they think about Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal. Obviously, they think about Toronto. That is why we have become proactive. That is why we began the Provincial Nominee Program in the first place. It is why it has been so successful. It is why this program is going to be a major catalyst towards getting our fair share of the immigration pie.

We have currently about 80 percent of the provincial nominees in the country who come to Manitoba. So we are the Ontario, if you will, of the Provincial Nominee Program. We are the big kid on the block. Now, it is small numbers, but it has expanded rapidly over the last four years. We are retaining the people we get under the PNP. They are staying here. They are enjoying it. They are going to get word of mouth back to their homes. The applications are going to come. We expect to increase as we have the resources, not only immigration resources but settlement resources to do that.

We go to the fairs and we go to visa posts overseas every once in awhile, but really it is going to have to be kind of guerilla warfare, if you will, where we take what we have and we

expand on it. So we try and do the economic immigrants and get them to bring their families and other people from their communities, et cetera.

It is a challenge, and it is not going to happen from the top. We are going to have to do the pushing from here.

Mr. Schuler: Does the department track where the applicants come from? I am not talking about the initial certificates but those who actually do accept our generous offer, as my colleague said, our most generous offer. Those who come over, where do they actually come from?

Ms. Barrett: We have in our database all of the applicants, whether they have been approved, are still in the system or have been denied. When they land here, the federal government tracks that, and they give that information to us. So that is the information we have.

Again, as we talked about earlier, it is much more difficult to track them after they land. It is much more difficult to track where they all are in the system, and it is difficult to identify, although we will do our best to identify the slippage between those that have been approved and those who actually come. We do have the source areas and then we have source countries.

The source areas are Asia and the Pacific in 2001—now this is just for provincial nominees—just over 31 percent; Europe and the United Kingdom is 60 percent, almost 61 percent, but that is Europe and the United Kingdom, so that takes in a lot; and then Africa and the Middle East is 4.75 percent; South and Central America, 2.5; and United States, 0.31.

Now, Mr. Chairman, the top countries, and these are the people who landed. The top countries are Germany, Philippines, Bosnia-Herzegovina, United Kingdom, Ukraine, Korea, Israel, China, Vietnam and India. The top two are Germany and the Philippines by a long margin.

In 2001, Germany, 42 percent and the Philippines, just under 21 percent. Those figures have stayed fairly stable. The next is Bosnia-Herzegovina, and that is 6 percent. So, again,

that is way down. The total for the top 10 countries is about 89 percent of the provincial nominees, and then the rest take up the other. That would be the United States as well. The big three provincial nominees in 2001.

* (16:00)

Mr. Schuler: We spoke a little bit about the federal government, an area where the minister might have a better idea of where the federal government is going, but from what I can see, it seems to be that they are floundering. They have had some change in the department. Certainly the ministers have changed, and there does not seem to be a cohesive approach. Is that a fair reflection?

I guess why I say that is it seems to be a little chaotic. Tougher security has to be the main issue. We need more immigration, but the latest thing coming out now is the agreement on safe third country. Clearly, as the government of Manitoba's point person on immigration, what kind of concern is there in regard to how there seems to not be a real clear idea or clear direction coming from the federal government when it comes to immigration?

Ms. Barrett: I think I would take exception to the word "floundering." Immigration, as I have stated earlier, is the responsibility of the federal government. They have an enormous challenge to face. I may agree or disagree with some of their specific policies and what they do, but I think it is critical that we recognize the challenge that the federal government faces, because they are responsible for immigration in all of the provinces and territories and in all the communities within those provinces and territories.

On the one hand, they have provinces, the largest number of provinces, who are dying for more immigration because we all have skilled labour shortages and we all have population issues that we have to deal with. We have urban versus rural in Winnipeg and the rest of Manitoba, as you know. I mean, there is that kind of a challenge that they have to look at.

Seven provinces with—I do not know how much percentage of the population—quite a small percentage of population versus three provinces,

well, really one province with a huge percentage of the population and the immigration, and three major centres, Vancouver, Toronto and Montréal who have diametrically the opposite challenge facing them or they perceive it to be: We have too many people coming into Toronto. We do not have the resources. They are overwhelming our English as a second language programs. We do not have housing for them. We have a huge homeless problem in Ontario, certainly compared to Manitoba. Do something, Mr. Minister.

At the same time, here we are in Manitoba, saying: We do not have enough. We cannot get them to come here. Do something, Mr. Minister. Exactly the opposite issue. It is a huge, huge challenge, and that is why both Eleanor Caplan and Denis Coderre following her have been so pleased with the Provincial Nominee Program because, on a small scale, it is addressing that imbalance. It is bringing people here. It is allowing people to choose, helping them to choose Manitoba. Yea, we say in Manitoba, those people, when they stay here, they are helping the Canadian numbers go up. They are helping the Canadian economy, and they are not in Toronto, Vancouver and Montréal raising perception of more challenges.

The issue of the safe third country, it is a federal issue. I do not know any more about it than what we read in the newspaper. As has been pointed out to me, this new immigration act is the first major change since 1978, and it made more of a challenge as any act that has not been changed for that length of time, but because of what has happened in the world since then and most recently in the last year. So while, on the one hand, you want to protect refugees, we always have had, as a society, a principle and a standard of protecting and helping refugees come to Canada and supporting them, legitimate refugees. You want to do that, but you want to make sure they are legitimate refugees, and that whole issue has been made more and more complicated by the fallout from September 11 and other terrorist situations. Our whole mindset is changing.

On the other side, we recognize that, as a country, we want skilled workers, so we have two parts to this. Well, there are many more parts, but two kind of antithetical elements to

this whole process, and it is in the act, too. It is almost like you are schizophrenic in a way. No, I should not say that. It is almost like you are, because that is not what it is either. It is like you have two sides almost diametrically opposite to each other, two very important principles that are living uneasily together or in co-existence. One is we want to recruit immigrants; we want to recruit skilled immigrants. There is an argument, and the Member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck) was raising this issue before, about, well, do we not need unskilled immigrants as well, and we used to bring them in, et cetera. That is an argument that could be made, but the principle is right now that the federal government is saying we want skilled immigrants. We want to recruit them, and, at the same time, we want to protect our principle of support for refugees while ensuring that our borders are safe, and I think that is where the safe third country thing comes in. It is enormously complicated. I do not know how it can possibly be tidily worked out.

We are, in Manitoba, a very, very, very, very small player in this whole process because we have a small population. We do not have a lot of impact, but we do have more impact than our size would suggest because we have been proactive in our recruitment and retention issues with our Provincial Nominee Program. We have, arguably, the best settlement services in the country. I would argue, because we are a smaller province, we are able to do more with individual families. They do not get lost in the hugeness of a Vancouver or a Toronto.

I cannot imagine living in Toronto or anywhere in that area anyway ever, and I have the language most of the time. Coming from a country that is very different in all kinds of ways must be just enormously difficult. Then you are there in this huge city where you do not know anyone, where you can have 100 000 people from your home country, and you never see any of them because they are spread all over. This is one thing I have talked about with counterparts and have talked about with community people who come from Toronto or Vancouver to bring greetings for annual celebrations for various community groups, and they recognize and acknowledge that Manitoba, in particular

Winnipeg, scale works for a building of community.

We have 40 000 to 45 000 Philippinos largely in Winnipeg. They have been able to do what no other Filipino group has been able to do in this country, and that is successfully work together to put in place a stand-alone, state-of-the-art, brand-new Philippine-Canadian cultural centre. Other communities may have a larger number of Filipinos in them, but they have not been able to work together. I am just using that community. I could use any one of a number of communities. They all are able to function, I think, partly because of the scale of the city and the province. So big is not necessarily better, but to get "please, Mr. Elephant, federal government, Ontario, hear our concerns and our challenges," is a challenge because we are so small. But we are recognized, on the other side of it, on the federal scene as being very successful at what we do.

* (16:10)

Mr. Schuler: The safe third country, I guess the concern I have that about a year ago it was considered by the federal government, the whole issue was a racist issue, and now is something that is being adopted. I guess I am a little bit concerned that, with 9-11, what is taking place is that we are doing policy on the fly, and I am sure the minister will agree that the worst action is a reaction. Certainly, that is the concern coming out of a lot of the immigrant groups, a lot of the immigrant lawyers. They are concerned about where the Government is going.

In part, people are not quite sure where the Government is going, and when it does move, what used to be racist six months ago is now embraced and just welcomed as being good management. I think that is where our concern comes from and will that affect our nominee program, because certainly I do not think I am going out on a limb if I say there is a degree of xenophobia running through the United States, and 9-11 just preys on that kind of feeling.

Just on a personal note, I have suffered terribly in my business because Americans do not want to travel to Canada because of all the bin Ladens waiting for them. It is easy to buy

into that xenophobia that outsiders are a danger, and I think there is a concern in the communities, and I am sure the minister has heard it and is dealing with it, that the federal government is not immune from that, as well. I appreciate that they have absolute constitutional authority over immigration, but I just wanted to know from the Manitoba government's position, because there is going to be this meeting, that we be careful that we not buy into a xenophobic kind of position.

Frankly, the United States does not need the immigration as much as we do in Canada. They do not have the same kind of difficulties that we have. I love to hear American politicians get up and talk about our poor immigration system when the U.S.-Mexican border is a sieve. I mean, good heavens, you could have millions of terrorists coming across the border there, and they have no way to stop it. Yet all the finger pointing tends to be towards Canada and our few nominees that they want to deny us.

So, what I would like, if the minister wanted to sort of reflect on that to make sure that that kind of xenophobic attitude that anybody who is an immigrant or an outsider is a threat to our national security, that that not be part of the October discussions and frankly we have seen some of that at the federal level.

Ms. Barrett: Let me start by saying I do not disagree with what the member is saying. I think that the United States is challenged in its views of immigrants at some time, although, again, a country like Canada, perhaps older in some ways but similar, the immigrants, the American dream was fueled, once they got rid of the pesky little First Nations, by immigrants, and, in many cases, felons. The state of Georgia was first settled as a penal colony. The Mayflower, those who came over on the Mayflower, those who settled Pennsylvania were in their home countries seen as felons and traitors and bizarre individuals—good, leave, let us get rid of you. Perception is based on perspective.

I do not disagree with the member that there are differences in how the two countries view immigration at this point in time. I think by and large we are more open as a country to immigration. I state every chance I get, I much prefer

the mosaic to the melting pot. I think there is an enormous amount of xenophobia. I think it is really hard for the United States to see itself to be the only power in the world. I am not being charitable. I think having that view, whether it is real or not, just colours everything. There is the sense that it is our way or the highway. I have challenges when I go back to the States to visit my family, lots of things we do not talk about.

The safe third-country issue, as I am informed, is slightly different than that. It is a convention that has been in place between Canada and Europe for a number of years, and is now in place or has been or is being changed or clarified between Canada and United States that deals with refugees who come to a country, they come to the United States, they are given refugee status in the United States or they are allowed into the United States. However they get to the States, for example, if they claim refugee status, they should claim refugee status in the country to which they enter and which gave them permission to enter rather than deciding, no, I came into the United States but I would prefer to be a refugee in Canada because it takes longer to go through the process so I can stay there longer or for whatever reasons or I have family there or whatever. It is not denying refugee status. It is saying where you came to land is where you should declare your refugee status rather than hopping to another country from there. That is my understanding of the safe third country.

Mr. Schuler: Would the minister agree to a five-minute recess?

Mr. Chairperson: Is there leave for a recess?
[Agreed]

The committee recessed at 4:20 p.m.

The committee resumed at 4:26 p.m.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. We will continue with our questioning.

Mr. Schuler: The minister mentioned that there was a staffperson or staffpersons that were going to Italy to try to get more visibility.

Ms. Barrett: As I mentioned, the Manitoba Italian Chamber of Commerce put together a mission. I guess you could call it a trade mission, but it was a mission designed to speak up about the Manitoba advantages in a variety of areas. A number of departments of Government were invited to go along, as were we, because one of the most frequently asked questions in all of these trips are questions dealing with immigration. So we had a staffperson attend this mission. It was held some time in early spring of this year.

Mr. Schuler: Who went along?

* (16:30)

Ms. Barrett: There were representatives from: the Department of Agriculture and Food; Industry, Trade and Mines; Labour and Immigration; Manitoba Chamber; Winnipeg Chamber; and the Italian Chamber; and our representative was a staffperson, Vijay Sharma.

Mr. Schuler: The minister also mentioned that the Jewish community was sending a person, did I understand correctly, to Argentina.

Ms. Barrett: Yes. Last fall the Winnipeg Jewish foundation and the Business Council of Manitoba put together the third trip over the last five years to Buenos Aires, to talk with the Jewish community there, to urge them to consider Winnipeg and Manitoba as a new home for themselves.

Deb Zehr of our staff went along with them. Deb and others interviewed; between personal interviews and two fairly large seminars that were held in Buenos Aires, approximately 250 people were interviewed. There have been upwards of 75 exploratory visits that have been made to Manitoba by the community members from Argentina. We are starting now to get applications from that community through the Provincial Nominee Program.

It is an interesting thing because the Jewish community in Manitoba, and particularly in Winnipeg, while it has had a long and very outstanding history, the numbers are declining. The community is getting older. They are not having the waves of immigrants come forward

as they did in the past, so they are being proactive. This is good. They are being proactive in saying here is a community in Buenos Aires, well-educated, professional people. The Argentinian economy is just, it is a disaster. These are people that we know would stay here.

We have a vital and vibrant Jewish community here in Manitoba, places for people to work, et cetera, et cetera. So it is a nice, it is kind of an example of how we can make a difference in smaller areas. So we are very hopeful about what is going on. Since May of last year, 37 provincial nominee certificates have been issued, and about 84 individual visitors have come. So there are things happening there.

Again, it is early days yet because of the process and having to make sure that the visas and everything are correct. But to have 37 certificates in the last year, that is very good, and we expect to have, I would expect to have more as the people come through the pipeline.

Mr. Schuler: On the Italian side, what was the response as far as the nominee program is concerned?

Ms. Barrett: We have not had the same kind of intensity of follow-up from the Italian trip as we did with last fall's trip to Argentina. I think a number of factors may be at play. One is this trip just happened a couple of months ago. Another one, again, I do not want to be overgeneralizing here, but the economic situation in Italy is not in the same category as the economic situation in Argentina.

If you take a look at where immigrants come from over the decades and generations, they come in large numbers from stressed economies and stressed social problems. They were, as I mentioned earlier about some of the earliest immigrants to the United States or the American colonies at that time, people who were disenfranchised in their homelands. That might be a factor as well. The Italian community probably is a little newer at connecting with their communities in Italy, saying you really should look at this. So this is a good first step.

The Jewish community, as I said, this is the third trip in a little over five years they have

taken to Argentina. So they are really aggressive and they are putting in a lot of effort. That may or may not be the case with the Italian community. We will have to wait and see. It is early days yet.

Mr. Schuler: I guess what is really strange with that, I can understand people wanting to get out of economically depressed areas, but what is interesting is 60 percent of the nominee program recipients come out of Germany. Is that right? Is it 60 percent? It was fairly high, yet Germany is not an economically depressed area.

Ms. Barrett: Well, there are other factors.

Mr. Schuler: What would be the factors for that?

Ms. Barrett: As the Member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck) talked about, actually, one of the instigators of the Provincial Nominee Program in the first place was the communities of Winkler and Morden, particularly Winkler, in the late nineties, who saw in the expansion of their economic basin the need for workers. They had a community initiative program that has evolved into the Provincial Nominee Program.

On the one hand you have people coming from economically depressed or socially repressive parts of the world. You on the other hand also have communities that need people. They can be proactive at that end. While the Germany economy as a whole may be doing well, there has been a concerted effort on the part of those communities in southeastern Manitoba to go into a particular region in Germany, as I understand it.

My understanding is that many of these individuals from Germany who are now settling here in Manitoba are originally from eastern Europe or Russia. They came to Germany at the end of the cold war, and then they have since found it was not perhaps as advantageous for them as it had been for others. That is a combination of factors: a proactive, aggressive recruitment campaign from the Winkler-Morden area into a particular area in Germany where there is a similar kind of configuration, the cultural Mennonite tradition, language similarities, so there each scenario is different in it is a result

of different factors. One of the fascinating things about this whole area is you cannot make a broad generalization with any degree of certitude. Sure, go ahead and make a broad generalization, but it is going to be just that.

* (16:40)

Mr. Schuler: The whole situation with what is happening in southwestern Manitoba is very interesting. The minister sort of touched on it. The reason why you are having the immigration take place, there was one individual who has emigrated from Germany and what he had indicated to a group of us was the model with the Soviet Union, now Russia, was, and I think it is an incredible model: no money, no problem; no hope, big problem. What is happening in Russia right now is just hopelessness. They are getting nowhere. Religious freedom, as we understand it, does not exist. So they have some kind of freedom but that does not really exist, and with all the changes—before you could not leave, you did not have a choice anyway. Now you have the choice of going and nothing is really changing. There is really no prospect.

The first place they can get into without any problem is they get to Germany. If I have heard this once, I have now heard it a thousand times. When they arrive in Germany, the first thing that strikes them is that when they left Russia, they are not Russian; they come to Germany, and they are not viewed as being German. So they come here, and I have had incredibly interesting conversations with these individuals, and they say they just cannot believe Canada in that nobody here really cares where you come from. That is actually what they are looking for. The other analogy that they make—I do not know if we want to tie ourselves too tightly to it—is that they find that Canada or Manitoba has a lot of the same climatic elements as Siberia. They have no problem with that, with Canada. They love the cold, the heat. They like the climate; they have no problem with it. It is funny, when you talk to them: Oh, it is minus 35; no, that is refreshing. It is clean air and they always have this positive side to it.

I think we are very fortunate to have these individuals because they are looking for a place where they can establish roots again because

they did not feel that they could ever establish roots in Russia. In Europe, Europe is fairly closed. You get into the towns, and it is not one country. It tends to be a European thing. You really do not fit in as an outsider and gasp, they actually have children. I mean, not a child or two children. They come with four or five or six children, and that is totally against the European norm.

They come here, and everything is fine. They are accepted here, and I think that is why they have had a success. I guess, when we look at immigration, we have to look at those kinds of individuals who view Canada as the opportunity that it is. I think that is where that one community has been very successful in offering an opportunity where nobody cares if you were born in Moscow or if you were born in Kazakhstan. None of that really matters to us. They just love how friendly Manitoba is and how friendly Canada is. I think that is one of the best selling points we have. I think the kinds of things that the Italian community, the Jewish community are doing are excellent. That has to be encouraged.

The minister spoke earlier on about upping our profile. She mentioned that we go to fairs. Could the minister tell us which fairs and who is "we"? Who is actually going?

Ms. Barrett: I must comment on a couple of the things that the member said in his statement before his question, to add to it. I think what the member was talking about in the context of the individuals who have come directly from Germany, wherever they originated, can be replicated and expanded upon in many, many, many of the communities that are represented by people who come here through the Provincial Nominee Program and also just generally, as I stated earlier, using the example of the Filipino community. But that is the kind of attitude that is shown by virtually every group or individual who comes here. It is quite remarkable. I think it is a statement to those individuals' and families' tenacity to come to a community that could be as totally different in every respect as they have come from as it is possible to be or be one that is fairly similar but still has some differences.

I think the whole issue of the climate—I am amazed at how people who have grown up in

very warm climates, whether it is in the Caribbean or in Africa or the Far East, very quickly acclimatize themselves. I think that is a testimony to the human spirit, the flexibility of all of us to be able to do that and to establish roots. I think these things are the sorts of things that make Winnipeg and Manitoba such a positive place. I think more and more people are recognizing that and are working in that regard. The more communities that work with us in expanding that knowledge, the better.

On the specifics of the fairs, there are two main fair-type events that we go to. One is the emigrant fair, not immigrant, but emigrant fair, for those who are thinking of leaving and emigrating. It is held in London. The other is two agricultural fairs that are held just outside Amsterdam in the Netherlands, fairs in the sense that you have booths. It is a fair in that context. While staff goes there, a couple of staff would go. In the England fair there are 15 000 people who come in over two days or three days, so we send two staff. The ag fair, we send one person. Those people would be, to the emigrant fair in London last spring was Lou Fernandez and Alice Kirkland. Michael Scott went to the agricultural fair. At the same time, they just do not staff the tables; they also make visits to the visa office and try to do some networking while they are there as well.

Mr. Schuler: The minister told the story of the Afghani girl who came and probably never cracked a book open. I had the joy and pleasure of attending an Afghani wedding. The young man had come here when he was probably about five or six. He was basically educated here in Winnipeg. His young bride had been here for about three months, and, shock of shocks, it was just a fascinating thing to see. My father-in-law is quite involved in the Afghani community. I got to drive the bride and groom and I was the official videotaper. It was really an interesting wedding. She was just shell-shocked. They decided to do a combination, because he wanted to have more of a Canadian kind of a wedding. It was just one of the most interesting things to see how the culture tries to meld in. She wore the whole white outfit.

As we were driving, because until that point in time she actually was not allowed to look at

him, though they had officially been married in October or something, but this summer they finally got married by the laws of the land, finally he said to her, why do you not look at me? He was saying something to her, and I said, what did you say? You know, you are just driving and he says, well, I finally asked her if she would please look at me. I mean, she is going to find that this is just the most incredible place to live because until that point in time, no, she was not allowed to look at, I take it probably any man, certainly not her husband. My daughter just took a real liking to her, and they had the traditional where they sit up on the stage and everybody visits and my daughter went up and sat up with her for probably about two hours just giving her some comfort because this poor girl had no idea where she was.

These stories I think really show the greatness of our nation. You can come as an Afghani and you can have an Afghani wedding, and I thought it was really good because back in Afghanistan if you have a traditional wedding the men attend the wedding and there are no women there. I still have not quite figured that one out. That one I thought was really unique.

So, in this instant, the father decided that they were really going to go for broke and they invited men and women to the wedding, but the dudes all made sure they sat on one side of the gym and the women and children on the other side, and it is like my goodness. But you can see the cultures are, you know, things are changing and also, not that I want to tell any secrets out of school, I noticed the men tend to go in the parking lot and spend a lot of time looking into the trunks of the cars. They came back and they always smiled more and more as the evening went on. I have no idea what they all had in the trunk of the car, but that is another tradition they seem to have picked up. I think, tailgating, is that the—*[interjection]* tailgate party. Yes, they give it a new meaning. Anyway, I just share that. It was just really fascinating. I was glad to have been part of that.

The minister is having a meeting in October and it is going to be hosted here, and I congratulate her. I think that is most appropriate that it be hosted here. What is the date of the meeting?

* (16:50)

Ms. Barrett: The 15th and 16th of October.

Mr. Schuler: Where is it going to be held?

Ms. Barrett: At the Radisson.

Mr. Schuler: Are any of the sessions open, or is this planned on being a closed session?

Ms. Barrett: This is going to be, I think it is being planned and I am hoping it will be a very work-related meeting, so they will be closed sessions. I may be going out on a limb here, but I know that what has happened with other ministerial meetings in the Department of Labour when Labour ministers have gotten together is the sessions were closed but there was a communique or a press conference, a press release issued at the end of the session which I expect to have happen here, too.

But it is an opportunity. As I said, there has not been such a get-together of ministers for six years. It is a good opportunity, given everything that has happened recently, for us all to get together to meet each other to talk about the issues, and as we have discussed earlier today the differences in perception as to what is a problem and what is not a problem across the country will be very, I think it will be helpful for everyone to hear others' stories.

Mr. Schuler: Have all provinces agreed to attend, or confirmed their attendance?

Ms. Barrett: Yes.

Mr. Schuler: The minister also mentioned a Blue Sky Group, and they are working on the credentials for professionals. This whole issue and this whole problem predates the minister's time. It has been one that has been grappled with. I remember when I was chairman of MIC, Manitoba Intercultural Council, oh, we did so much work on this and it really is a tough, tough area. I will say I think we make it tougher than perhaps it need be, and it does have to be addressed.

Can the minister tell us who is on the blue skies program? Who is part of the group?

Ms. Barrett: It is called the Blue Sky Group, and it was I think the fall of '99, it is a long time ago, this whole issue of credentials came to my attention. I mean, as the member has said, it has been an issue for a number of years, but as a new minister, I was made aware of it in its more specifics. So we called together a group of people and organizations who represented groups and agencies and organizations that serve the immigrant community once they are here, who deal, on a day-to-day basis, either through volunteer work or their jobs, with settlement issues, and basically this is a settlement issue. When you are credentialing, you are here; the issue is credentials. How do you get recognition for the work that you have done and the education you have achieved and your professional work status? I said to them, here, we all know this is a challenge. I am throwing the challenge back to you. Come up with some ideas, please. If you had blue sky, you know just go, do not have any parameters around it, just come up with your best ideas as to how to address this issue because it has been so intractable so far.

* (17:00)

So this group has evolved over time. The composition of it changes. There are currently about seven individuals who again represent a number of these organizations. It is a totally volunteer group. It is an ad hoc group. They are not given a per diem or an honourarium or anything. They work on this on their own. They have the staff. There is a staffperson from our department that works with them regularly. They are in the process of looking at and are coming up with a suggested way of addressing this issue which we are going to be looking at and seeing how that fits with what we want to do. So that is kind of who they are.

Mr. Schuler: Could the minister tell us who the individuals are currently?

Ms. Barrett: At this point, because they are not an official part of government, there is no Order-in-Council appointing them, there is nothing public that has been stated, I would like to check with them, if they feel it is okay for them to have their names or their organizations acknowledged. I do not think there will be a problem, but I would just feel more comfortable because they

are not an official part of government. They are sort of an ad hoc advisory group with no official status at all. If we are finished with Estimates, I will make sure I get this information and give it to the member as quickly as I can. I just want to do a little check just for politeness' sake.

Mr. Schuler: Okay, and that is fine if the minister then could just send it.

I guess one of the things that I find, I will choose my word carefully here, I find it strange that, as the United States and Canada, we tend to focus very little on Mexico, whether it is our foreign aid, whether it is immigration. It is almost a great place to holiday, but other than that, there is not really a lot of focus. One of the hopes I had for the new administration that came in under George Bush was that he was going to focus a lot more on Mexico. There was talk about an immigration amnesty. Certainly, something that is terribly needed in the United States is an amnesty right now, so they can actually get out of the underground economy, those individuals who have gotten across the border and are working and are participating in the economy, yet not building a pension, not taking care of their future. Sure, they are working and all the rest of it, but there is more than that. What happens when they get older? You know, they have got no social security. They have got no access to health care and so on and so forth. Unfortunately, 9-11 definitely derailed that whole thing.

The minister and I discussed the whole xenophobic. I do not think any president right now would probably find a lot of domestic support for an amnesty, and just the amount of politics I know about the United States, I do not think now would be the time to be proposing one. I was surprised, from the numbers that the minister presented, that Mexico actually does not really even register in as far as the nominee program. Has there been any focus? Is there any attention? You know, I see we have targeted Argentina, Italy. I mean, there are other places where we do very well. Why nothing on Mexico, which is one of our North American partners?

Ms. Barrett: There is not a large number of people under the Provincial Nominee Program from Mexico nor from the rest of South and

Central America. In 2001, there were 25 individuals who came, who were nominated from the entire South and Central America, which includes Mexico.

We have had temporary farm workers who have come from Mexico regularly over a large number of years. We have had this program with HRDC to bring in workers to the Maple Leaf plant in Brandon. Those workers, they are on a two-year work visa. They can make application prior to the end of that work visa to be accepted permanently in Manitoba under the Provincial Nominee Program. We also have some Kanadiers, people who were from here originally, went to Mexico several generations ago, and now some of them are coming back.

But the member is correct that it is not a large mass at this point, and I think one of the reasons why under the Provincial Nominee, I imagine, is that there are not a number of people here to talk up the program, just to say to their families: Manitoba is a great place to come; you should come here.

Also, there is the skill, the job requirements that you have a skill, that you have either a job offer or a pretty good guarantee that given your skill level and your education, et cetera, you will have a job offer, because we want to ensure that people stay here, that they do not just use Manitoba or the Nominee Program as a gateway to somewhere else; say, Toronto.

So that is why we emphasize the skills that are required here, the community links that are here and also the job that is either offered or there is a very good chance of one being offered, so people will develop those links and they will stay here.

So I guess the Central and South American community is one that is there, and it has not been as utilized or recognized as some other groups have been.

Again, let us remember that this program, the Provincial Nominee Program, is very young. It is, like, three years old really, three and a half. In government time lines, that is a very, very young program. I think the first thing is to get a critical mass here. For example, in a couple of

years, if we get a number of Mexican workers staying in Brandon bringing their families, we are going to have the beginnings of a critical mass. [*interjection*]

An Honourable Member: Mexican restaurants. That is what I want in Brandon.

Ms. Barrett: The Member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell) has just participated in the discussion by saying we need and want Mexican restaurants in Brandon. I would suggest that we could use some of them here in Winnipeg as well.

But, seriously, that is a challenge facing a number of groups, is how do you get that link back to the home country, and how do you get that link to the jobs here? How do you provide that? Some communities have been more successful than others. There is no question that that whole Central, South American area has a lot of potential. There are certainly a lot of people who would I think like to come to Canada and Manitoba. Another area is Africa and the Middle East.

But the communities that are here, many of them are recognizing that they have to be proactive in working through this, and so we will work with them in that regard. But we have no ability or resources with the exception of the fairs that we have mentioned and a couple of trade missions that we have been on. We do not have the staff to be able to be proactive in going to countries or even going out and meeting with the business community here in Manitoba.

* (17:10)

We could be more proactive in that regard if we had more resources, but we are trying to work with what is there, to say to communities in Manitoba, outside Winnipeg and outside the Winkler-Morden-Steinbach area, surely to goodness, your community could benefit. What kinds of skills do you need? We will see if we cannot put the things together. That is how we worked on the Maple Leaf situation. There have been a number of people coming from Korea under the business nominee program. So it is happening, but it is not uniform across the various countries or regions.

Mr. Schuler: How many temporary visas are there for Maple Leaf for individuals from Mexico?

Ms. Barrett: The original number was 49 temporary visas.

Mr. Schuler: And what would the number be about right now?

Ms. Barrett: As the member is probably aware, Maple Leaf has been attempting to hire enough people to put on a second shift, and we understand that they feel they need 1000 workers for the second shift. They have gone to Ottawa to make a request for additional temporary workers. Now, I do not think they expect to get 1000 from the temporary worker program, nor is there any guarantee that they would come from only one country, but there has been a request made to Ottawa for more than that 49 number that was agreed to in the first go-round.

Mr. Schuler: I could spend the rest of the summer with the minister discussing immigration. I think it is an important aspect. I am sure the departmental staff would love to spend all summer in the committee rooms answering all these questions. I think it is important that we do move on, and at this time we are willing to pass the Immigration and move on to the Office of the Fire Commissioner.

Mr. Chairperson: We will go on to 11.3. Immigration and Multiculturalism (a) Immigration (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,123,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$693,700—pass; (3) Financial Assistance and Grants \$6,407,700—pass.

Resolution 11.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$9,519,900 for Labour and Immigration, Immigration and Multiculturalism, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2003.

Resolution agreed to.

Mr. Chairperson: The resolution is accordingly passed.

I would like to draw your attention to the Office of the Fire Commissioner. On June 5 it

had been agreed to leave that for the time being and that we would go back to the Office of the Fire Commissioner and have it open for questions.

Mr. Schuler: Of course, the Office of the Fire Commissioner has a particular meaning to myself. The minister and I have spent a lot of time dealing with the office. I understand that there has been a change at the head of the Office of the Fire Commissioner. Perhaps the minister can tell us what kind of changes have taken place.

Ms. Barrett: Yes. Before I answer this specific question I would like to introduce Brenda Hollier, who is the executive administrative officer for the Office of the Fire Commissioner; and Brian Hodge, who is the comptroller. There has been a change. The deputy fire commissioner, Chuck Sanderson, has moved over to be head of the Emergency Measures Organization. We now have two people who are acting as acting deputy fire commissioner. Currently, the acting deputy fire commissioner is Ken Swan. On August 1, Roger Gillis will be acting deputy fire commissioner. They are both members of the Arson Strike Force.

Mr. Schuler: Certainly, we wish Chuck Sanderson well. I have gotten to know him through the Estimates process. He was very professional and always answered our questions forthright. We certainly appreciated the time that we spent with him and wish him all the best at EMO. I have seen him in the news as of late. He seems to really love jumping from the pan into the fire. He has really got a lot of issues to deal with and he does it very well.

The minister and I have spent many a warm summer's day dealing with the Esso tank farm. I know it is one of those places the minister thinks of fondly. Some time ago the City of Winnipeg in its shortsighted fashion decided to cut, there were two places, but the Esso tank farm is of particular concern. There used to be an agreement between the Esso tank farm and the City of Winnipeg. I believe it was a \$50,000 retainer that the City stuck into its pocket, because they were actually never called out. That was cancelled by the City of Winnipeg, which left the Esso tank farm basically without round-the-clock service.

The East St. Paul Fire Department, which has upgraded considerably and has got very good equipment, I believe more than 50 percent of the firefighters on the volunteer force in East St. Paul come from the city of Winnipeg, so they are qualified. But the point is that you do not have the kinds of resources if the first call goes to the City of Winnipeg, that having been removed.

Now, I understand that there has been some movement insofar as a joint services agreement with DND or the Winnipeg Airport Authority. Perhaps the minister could tell us what the current status is.

* (17:20)

Ms. Barrett: I do not have details on the contract between the tank farm and the City. That would be a question more appropriately asked of the City. I do know that the tank farm has established a very good working relationship with the East St. Paul Fire Department, as the member has referenced. A large number of the East St. Paul Fire Department are City of Winnipeg firefighters, so there is a high degree of professionalism in the East St. Paul Fire Department.

The City of Winnipeg is, of course, a second call, should something happen. My understanding is that the tank farm has a very good plan in place, and they are a self-contained unit. Should the City be called, they could be there, even as a backup, even without the retainer, they would be there as quickly or virtually at the same time as the East St. Paul Fire Department.

Again, the backup from DND and the Winnipeg Airport Authority would be there if needed. So that is my understanding of the situation as it exists right now.

Mr. Schuler: To the minister, that answer disappoints me greatly because for three years now, we have been dealing with this issue, and it all comes down to foam-making capability. That is the whole reason why the City of Winnipeg cut it in the first place.

Yes, East St. Paul has great equipment. They have added to it and they have upgraded, but

they have a very limited foam-making capability as well. If you ever get one of those storage tanks going, it is going to take a lot more than water, and, in fact, the pumphouse that is on the Red River that brings water to the tank farm and the spouts, that is only to keep the other tanks cold, so that they do not also ignite. They are actually not meant to fight the fire because if you have a fuel or an oil fire, you cannot pour water on that. It just makes the situation far worse than it is. Also, if you pour water on it, what happens is it vapourizes and it goes into the air with the oil, and later on you have little tar droplets dropping on residences, which is a secondary damage to a fire like that.

I thought the minister was making some headway, but by the sounds of it, either she is not being informed or maybe the ball has been dropped. I mention to the minister that this is as much a concern for the Member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) because the prevailing winds that come across the tank farm would blow all that over Transcona, and then we would hear the Member for Transcona griping again about how the Capital Region always beats up on Transcona, because if anything is going to come down in a droplet form, it is going to be on Transcona.

You must put foam on that kind of fire to contain it and I was under the impression that it was either DND, who have foam-making capability, or the Winnipeg Airport Authority, which also has a foam-making capability, but they were going to make a joint services agreement. Is the minister saying that is now not the case?

Ms. Barrett: When the OFC first went in to talk with the Esso tank farm more than a year ago now, one of the recommendations of the OFC was that the tank farm invest and acquire a supply of foam, and another recommendation is that they work very closely with the East St. Paul Fire Department. Both of those recommendations are in the process of being followed up on. The tank farm and the East St. Paul Fire Department are working very closely on a plan to work through any potential problems that might arise. The tank farm is getting a supply of foam themselves, and as I have stated before, the City and the Winnipeg Airport Authority and the Department of National Defence all are on backup, sort of, as an automatic should anything

happen, but the recommendations that the OFC came up with are being followed.

Mr. Schuler: I am sure the Esso tank farm has some supply of foam. Can that be quantified? Is it 15 minutes' worth? Is it three hours' worth of foam? To get a piece of equipment from DND or the WAO takes time. They still have to get the equipment there. How long can they hold off a fire with the equipment they have?

Ms. Barrett: My understanding is that the Esso tank farm, in its acquisition of foam and its accessibility to foam from the City of Winnipeg, the airport and DND, meets or exceeds the National Fire Protection Association requirements at this point. My understanding is that what they have now is a level 4 fail-safe. They have a containment process that will deal with a level 4 fail-safe. I think that is probably one below the absolute catastrophic. I am not sure exactly, but level 4 meets or exceeds the NFPA requirements.

* (17:30)

Mr. Schuler: Is the minister sure about this? The East St. Paul Fire Department has a very limited foam-producing capability. The reason why the City of Winnipeg scrapped the agreement with the Esso tank farm is because I believe they mothballed or have completely gotten away from a foam-making-capability fire truck. Every fire truck has some foam-making capability, whether that is in the form of a fire extinguisher, because basically they use that when they come to a car fire. But there is another storage facility in the city and that particular facility has its own foam-making capability. Esso tank farm does not have that. The problem is if you do have an incident, and I believe it was last year we raised an incident with the minister, and she kind of got that one wrong. It takes a while to get a foam-making instrument to the Esso tank farm seeing as the airport is southwest and the Esso tank farm is up north.

Where does this level 4 protection come from? Who assigned the level 4 protection, four out of five, to the Esso tank farm? Again, I ask this for the residents of East St. Paul and for the residents of Transcona who share our concern

with what could one day happen. Might I point out there were 15 000 gallons of gasoline that were spilled last year, and no one was called for hours on end. In fact, I do not believe the Office of the Fire Commissioner was even notified. It was only when this member raised it in Question Period that actually something was looked into.

Ms. Barrett: Again, I would like to begin my answer with a question of the member. Has he met with the Esso tank farm? Is he responding to an issue that has been raised with him by the Esso tank farm? If so, we would really like to have the specifics of it.

My understanding is that the Esso tank farm has foam capabilities themselves. The City of Winnipeg has foam capability. The Winnipeg Airport Authority and the Department of National Defence do, sufficient to meet or exceed in the National Fire Protection Association requirements; that the Esso tank farm in the East St. Paul Fire Department is working on a process, working very well together and the containment process meets or exceeds National Fire Protection Association standards and requirements.

If the member has some specific information that he would like to share with us that we are not aware of, I would be happy to hear that from him. But it is our understanding that this is functioning, that all parties are working together, that there is a sufficient supply of foam on-site and close enough that the NFPA requirements are met or exceeded.

We will be glad to investigate again, but I certainly hope that this is not just a fishing expedition or a chance to trash the OFC yet again, because the member has to wait until six o'clock for the Estimates to be over. If there is a serious issue here that we are not aware of, I would be glad to hear about it.

Mr. Schuler: No, I do not believe it is in the Esso tank farm's best interest to be dealing with me. I mean, they are not looking at adding on any extra costs, any more than they were willing to call in any fire department when they spilled 15 000 gallons of gasoline, and nobody was notified. Somebody actually tipped off the East St. Paul Fire Department, and they stood outside

the gates, and that is my concern, Minister. I am not trashing anybody here. This is not about trashing people. It is about raising a concern, and I think it is a concern for all of those who are in that wind path.

If you get a fire going in one of those containers, or holding tanks, and somebody has the bright idea to pump water on, and you get it up in the air and it starts to turn into tar pellets, I can tell you, first of all, I know my constituents will not be overly excited, and certainly not those individuals who will be washing their houses in Transcona because the droplets come down. No, it is not a fishing expedition either, because I think there is cause to be concerned. It is out of that, and I have asked this minister for three years running the same questions. It is not as if this is something new. All that I am asking for are some real assurances. Who has looked into it? We gave it a level 4. Well, now I am just absolutely at ease, and I am happy with that answer. Is that what is expected? I mean, who gave it a level 4, Esso? That gives me a lot of comfort. *[interjection]* No, I am not done yet.

First and foremost, we like Esso in our community. They have been good citizens, but, you know what? In the end we have to stand up for those individuals who reside nearby, and they have a right to reside there in a healthy and safe environment, as do the people who are downwind have a right to have their homes and their gardens and not have a fear of having their homes contaminated by oil or tar droplets.

It is a simple question. Who is on first and what is on second is the question here. What kind of assurances can we get that the situation is in hand?

* (17:40)

Ms. Barrett: As I have stated before in questions today, the Office of the Fire Commissioner went on site with representatives from the East St. Paul Fire Department, over half of whom, as the member has said, are members of the Winnipeg Fire Department. It is a very professional fire department. They went on site with the East St. Paul Fire Department and the site manager, people from the tank farm. They came up with recommendations to ensure that NFPA

requirements were met or exceeded, that safety was paramount. Those recommendations have been met.

I must tell the member, as well, that when the tank farm was built some 20 years ago, the containment portion of the tank farm, that part of the plan of the farm, was built to well over the standards of the day, and the plan that has been devised between the OFC, the East St. Paul Fire Department and the tank farm itself meets or exceeds all of the containment requirements of the NFPA.

More than that, assurances, I am not sure what anyone can give. The reason I suggested that people or organizations were being maligned here is because this is the same answer I gave half an hour ago. I am assured by the professionals, the people who have a worldwide reputation. The Manitoba Office of the Fire Commissioner has an international reputation as being leaders. The member is raising this issue not because he has heard from or spoken with the tank farm, not because, I understand, he has heard from or spoken with representatives of the East St. Paul Fire Department, not because of any concern that has been raised by anyone as to the plan that is in place.

If I am incorrect, if the member is reflecting concerns that have been raised, that is another issue and we are prepared to deal with it, but I am telling the member that the Office of the Fire Commissioner has determined that the Esso tank farm meets or exceeds every single containment requirement of the National Fire Protection Association. I do not know what other security I can give to the member.

Mr. Schuler: The minister mentions recommendations and that they have been met and that there is a plan in place. Is she willing to table those?

Ms. Barrett: The Office of the Fire Commissioner has looked at and reviewed the plan. The plan is under the ownership of the Esso tank farm and is located on site there. It is the property of the Esso tank farm. If they are prepared to share it, then we are prepared to make a request, but I again will iterate and reiterate for the member that the Office of the

Fire Commissioner has looked at the plan, has said this plan fits and meets or exceeds the requirements and has done this, not just in and of itself, but in consultation and in conjunction with the East St. Paul Fire Department.

Mr. Schuler: This is the most incredible thing I have heard. We were just going through Bill 27, which talks about all kinds of safety plans and safety committees and all the rest of it. All of a sudden now, we have a company, and their plan for safety is now top secret. It belongs to them.

No, it does not belong to them. If the Office of the Fire Commissioner has looked at it, and the minister said it was the East St. Paul Fire Department, it was departmental staff from the OFC, and it was Esso that got together, there were recommendations made, they have even met and a plan has been set up, that is not Esso's plan. It belongs to everybody involved. It also belongs to the fire department.

What? We have to now FOI this kind of stuff if we want something? I mean, the community has a right to know what the plan is. You know what? The minister somehow always wants to throw muck at these meetings. There was a spill of 15 000 gallons of gas, and nobody was called. Yeah, people are a little skittish. They are sitting on \$300,000 and \$400,000 and \$500,000 and \$600,000 homes and just want to be assured that there is something there. Yes, and the Government approved it, minister. So the Government cannot wash its hands of it and say it is Esso's plan.

All we are asking for, and it is very simple: There is a plan in place; please table it. There is no such thing as it belongs to Esso or it belongs to so and so. If it is a safety plan, let us have it. Let us have a look at it.

Ms. Barrett: I find it incredible that this is coming from a member of the Legislature who has no problem yelling across the room about the Albanian communists that are sitting on the government benches, who talks about the socialist hordes taking over everything, and now he is the one, this free-enterpriser is the one who wants the Government to control and take ownership over things that no government has ever owned before.

In the workplace safety and health legislation, which the member is referencing inaccurately, I might say, the workplace safety and health plans that are required of workplaces to be put into place are not the ownership, they are not the property of the Department of Labour. They are the property, they belong, as they should belong and be housed, in the company for which they are meant. The same thing is this plan belongs to, as it should, the Esso tank farm.

It is government's responsibility to ensure that plan is safe, that it will protect the people that it is designed to protect, and I am telling the member that plan does that, that the Office of the Fire Commissioner has been in there. They have seen the plan. They have looked at the plan. The East St. Paul Fire Department has done the same. They all say this plan meets or exceeds every NFPA requirement.

I have offered to ask the owner of this plan, which is the same, there is no difference here between the health and safety plan or an evacuation plan of any company, and this is a company. It belongs to the company. It is the government's responsibility to ensure that plan does what it is designed to do. That is what this Government, through the Office of the Fire Commissioner, has undertaken to do and has done. That plan meets or exceeds any requirements of the NFPA in this regard. I am prepared to ask the Office of the Fire Commissioner to ask the Esso tank farm if they are prepared to share that plan. I would suggest to the member that he might want to talk to the East St. Paul Fire Department, who has looked at the plan, and see if they have any concerns.

* (17:50)

Mr. Schuler: Certainly, when the minister presents the plan, and I look forward to the minister doing that, yes, then it is appropriate to go forward with the plan and sit down with the fire department and sit down with the vested interest groups and say this is what has been designed, this is the plan that has been laid out, are you comfortable with that? They should be. There should not be a problem with it.

I point out to the minister it is, after all, this minister who got up in the House and said the

City of Winnipeg Fire Department was on standby. They were waiting for the call to come out to the Esso tank farm when the minister knows, now she knows that there is no such a thing. I think it is important with any company.

She prefaces something about Albania. Minister, when it comes to safety, whether it is speed control on a highway or whether it is safety with an airport, safety is still a purview of the Government. I do not think that there is any citizen or any government or any individual who would like to see that right for a government to ensure that things are being done in a safe fashion and a safe manner be taken away from the purview of government. For the Government to say to a business, clearly there was a problem, because for some reason Esso thought that they could handle this spill on their own and felt that neither Environment nor the Office of the Fire Commissioner or that a fire department even had to be called, I think that is a really good time to step in and say we would like to see the plan. We want to review it. It should be a public document. There is no reason for safety to be a secret item.

I appreciate that the minister is willing to call the company for the plan. I look forward to it being tabled.

I know there is a love for secrecy. I would ask the minister, if we are done Estimates, would she be prepared to either send it to myself or present it in the House. It does not matter to me in either case, because certainly this member would like to see the plan.

Ms. Barrett: As I have stated in my earlier response, workplace safety and health plans or containment plans are not under the ownership of the Government. They are the property of the company. The Government's responsibility is to ensure that that plan meets or exceeds the guidelines. The Government, in the role of the Office of the Fire Commissioner, has made that assurance, has done what it needed to do. I have undertaken to request that the Esso tank farm make available that plan, but it is not my plan to make available.

There is no workplace safety and health plan in the province, nor has there ever been,

that was the property of the Government. The Government's role is to monitor and to ensure that the plans are in place and that they are being followed. It is not the Government's role, nor should it be, to own the plan. This is the plan that has been devised by people who know, who are most expert, who are on the scene, in conjunction with the East St. Paul Fire Department and the Office of the Fire Commissioner, who are all saying this plan is functional and this plan meets or exceeds all the requirements. I will undertake to see if Esso is prepared to share that plan with the member.

Mr. Schuler: Can the minister tell us what is all stored on site at the Esso tank farm?

Ms. Barrett: No. That information is not here today, but we can call and find out what is stored at the Esso tank farm. I am sure the member could do the same thing.

Mr. Schuler: I believe there was a list handed out about two years ago during Estimates. It was a fairly dated list. I was just wondering if the Office of the Fire Commissioner, does the office get updates on what is being stored there. Is that all part of the plan? Who is notified on what is stored there? Again, it gets back to the plan. If it is oil stored there, you deal with it differently. If it is rocket fuel stored there, you would obviously deal with that differently. Is there spent fuel stored there? You know, that brings in other concerns. Is that part of the plan, or who has that kind of information?

Ms. Barrett: As I said before, we do not have that information here, but I will endeavour to get that information for the member.

Mr. Schuler: I know for a fact that an Esso tank farm in East St. Paul is not the only storage facility. The other storage facilities around the province, do they have their own? I know the one from the City of Winnipeg had its own foam-making capability. Has the Office of the Fire Commissioner gone and checked their plans? Have they worked with them? How have they dealt with those particular tank farms?

Ms. Barrett: Well, my understanding is that it is the municipalities who have the responsibility to monitor these. We will endeavour to find out,

get specific information on where these farms are located and what the status is of all of those tank farms.

Mr. Schuler: Another one of the concerns is that I believe the Esso tank farm also supplies jet fuel to a lot of different locations, not just in the province but also to North Dakota, and in the last couple of years, we have seen trucks have accidents on the Perimeter Highway, and it happens. The R.M.s of the respective areas where the Perimeter goes through, how are they able to handle a spill of that magnitude?

Mr. Chairperson: The hour being 6 p.m., committee rise.

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

* (14:40)

Madam Chairperson (Bonnie Korzeniowski): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 255 will now resume consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Agriculture and Food. We are currently considering item 3.1.(b) Executive Support. The floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): I forgot where we were, Madam Chairperson.

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food): I thought I would just take a moment while the member finds the area that he wants to question on. We are on Executive Support, and if I recall correctly when we left the member was talking about staff salaries.

I just want to put on the record that there is a tremendous amount of experience in the staff that we had. I think at that time we had four of the people here at this table and there was some eighty years of experience. The member asks the level of salary. Certainly if these people were to go to the private sector they could make a much higher salary, but I also know that there is a tremendous amount of dedication to the department and to the industry within the people on staff. I just wanted to put that on the record.

As well, the member asked the question about the flood-proofing program. The total

loans approved were 616 for a total of \$35.3 million. Out of 639 applications, 613 were approved.

Mr. Jack Penner: The question I have for the minister is: Which of the executive would the minister have had involved in developing her response to the vision for agricultural statement and your reaction to the federal aid package or the federal agricultural package that was announced last week by Ottawa?

Ms. Wowchuk: The member is asking which Executive Support staff was involved in the response to the agriculture policy framework, that worked on the agriculture policy framework and the response. It would be the Deputy Minister, Mr. Don Zasada; Mr. Craig Lee, who is the ADM; and Mr. Dave Donaghy, who is also an ADM.

The response, I have to tell the member, was developed in close consultation with people in the industry. When the federal government was holding the consultations, we had discussion with people in the industry who were making presentations and participating in the consultation. There were many drafts of this paper, and it continued to change along the way. In each case, the industry was involved in it. The industry was the one who had a lot of input and had the opportunity to offer advice, raise concerns and raise issues that they wanted me to raise when I was at the meeting in Halifax. There were a lot of other staff also involved in it on the environmental side, on the research side, on the food safety there are many, many people involved in food safety, and on the safety net.

As the member indicated in the House and indicates now, there are different pillars to this agreement and they are all important to agriculture. There were a lot of people involved, but I want the member to be fully aware that it was in very close consultation with the industry that we developed our statement.

Mr. Jack Penner: Well, that is interesting to note. Could the minister name the people that were involved after the federal government made its announcement, the people that she contacted or was in conversation with from the industry that helped her develop the response to the APF package?

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chairperson, I think the member is very familiar with KAP, and knows that KAP is an umbrella group for many agriculture organizations here in Manitoba. We had consultation with the executive and chairperson of the Keystone Agricultural Producers, as well as the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, who expressed some real concerns with some aspects of the bill and were not satisfied with the wording in the document, and in fact asked us not to sign the agreement at this time until there was more information available as to what the impacts of the changes would be and what the costs of those would be. I told those organizations that would be the position that we would take, that we would want additional information.

Those people as well, Keystone Agricultural Producers and other organizations that recently met in Winnipeg, were also very firm that the trade-injury funding should be funded 100 per cent by the federal government.

Mr. Jack Penner: So you said you talked directly to the chairman of KAP, which would be Weldon Newton. Is that correct?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Weldon Newton was in my office, and we had a conversation about this document. Mr. Weldon Newton, on behalf of all of the groups represented in KAP, I would assume, expressed concerns with the document and said that he would ask that we get more information and some clarification before we sign on to the package.

Mr. Jack Penner: You mentioned CFA. Did you talk to Mr. Friesen, the president of CFA?

Ms. Wowchuk: I most certainly have had many discussions with Mr. Bob Friesen with respect to the agriculture policy framework and the funding for it, and on the trade-injury package as well.

* (14:50)

Mr. Jack Penner: I asked very specifically, did Mr. Friesen help you devise and Mr. Newton help you devise your statement in reaction to the bill and the wording that you have used to describe the bill. Were they the people that gave you the advice as to what to say about the bill?

Ms. Wowchuk: I said to the member that all along as the agriculture policy framework was being developed I have had many conversations with the president of Keystone Agricultural Producers and with Mr. Bob Friesen of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture on the agriculture policy framework, and they had input. Their input was included and influenced the position that we took on the agriculture policy framework.

Mr. Jack Penner: I want to remind the minister that she indicated when I asked the first question who was involved, which of the executive of her department was involved in devising the statement in reaction to this bill. You mentioned the chairperson of KAP was involved and the president of CFA was involved in devising that statement.

Is the minister now saying that they were not involved in helping her devise the statement or is she maintaining that they were there helping her draft the statement that she would use to define the bill or the program that was announced by the federal government, the agriculture policy framework? Were they part of helping you design your reaction to this policy framework?

Ms. Wowchuk: I am not quite sure what the member is trying to get at. I told the member that we had discussions. They had input. If the member is asking if they were part of drafting a response, I can tell the member that there is no written response that is out. I have made comment on the bill. I always seek input from producers no matter what program is being developed, because I think that that is very important. After all, these programs do have to work for producers. If we look at the agriculture policy framework and see that there are going to be changes made to safety net programs, I want input.

The member may operate differently than I do, but I very much respect the producers and want their input into what kind of programs we are going to have. I am always open to hear their suggestions. I am always open to hear their ideas on what the programs could be. I am interested when they talk about additional cost to farmers. Those are the kinds of things that I am interested in.

If the member is asking did somebody sit down at the table with me and draft a response to the agriculture policy framework, what I can tell the member is I consulted with them and their advice was something that I took very seriously when I responded to the document that was presented.

Mr. Jack Penner: I wonder whether the minister could indicate to this committee whether the drafting of the statement that the minister came out with was done by her political staff. Was it done by her departmental staff, or was it in conjunction with the president of the Keystone Agricultural Producers and the president of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, Madam Chairperson?

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chairperson, I do not think much has changed in that area from when the member opposite was on the government side and to our Government being inside. Department staff always prepares advisory notes and responses to issues. Then the minister looks at that; it is sent back to the department for changes. Ultimately, as under his administration, as with ours, political staff also has input into it. We take very seriously the comments that are made by the industry, because no matter what we view here, it is the industry, the farming community that is going to be affected.

So it is a balance of the comments and advice that the department gives. It is the comments and advice that the political staff gives. It is the comments and advice that come from the industry. But ultimately, I, as minister, have to make a decision, and based on the advice given from the various groups, I made a decision and made a statement on what my views were, reflecting what I have heard from the industry and from other people as to the impact of what I saw as the impact of this bill. Again, Madam Chairperson, it is not a bill. I refer to it as a bill. It is a document. It is a framework agreement. It is not a bill.

Mr. Jack Penner: The Government of Canada announcement on the new agriculture policy framework which was announced by the Prime Minister is unusual because the Prime Minister must have placed some significant importance on this announcement for him to do the

announcement, and was accompanied by Agriculture Minister Lyle Vanclief. The other thing that I thought was interesting was that they actually did it on a farm in Spencerville, Ontario. What I found even more interesting was that the comments made by the Canadian Federation of Agriculture president were very supportive of the federal announcement, and now the minister is saying to me that the Canadian Federation of Agriculture has voiced some significant concerns to her about some of the aspects of this bill.

Could the minister share with this committee what exactly was said when she had that discussion with the president of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, what his response was and what his concerns were about this bill?

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chairperson, I would tell the member that I did have lengthy discussions with Mr. Bob Friesen, and one of the major issues that the CFA had concerns with is the lack of flexibility that was in the original document, lack of analysis of what the changes in programs would be. We had asked, and I had asked at our last fed-prov meeting that, if we were making changes, we do an analysis of the existing program and the new program and see what the benefits would be and how Manitoba's farmers would fare with that, because if you are changing programs, ultimately you want to ensure that the programs are better. To know if the programs are better, you have to have some analysis done on it.

* (15:00)

Mr. Friesen also expressed and has always expressed concern that the trade injuries suffered by farmers across Canada is \$1.3 billion and that the federal government has to recognize their responsibility in trade. They negotiate their agreements, they have the responsibility for the injury, and those are three of the issues that Mr. Friesen outlined as concerns that I can share with the member.

Mr. Jack Penner: What you are telling me, Madam Minister, is almost in contradiction to what Mr. Friesen's response was at the news conference that was done, part of it on TV, in response to the agriculture policy framework

announcement. It appeared to me that the Canadian Federation of Agriculture was very much in support of the announcement that was being made.

Are you telling me now that in private Mr. Friesen has said something significantly different than that and that he is contradicting or that you are contradicting what was actually said in public?

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chairperson, I am not contradicting Mr. Friesen. The member has asked what kind of consultation I did, who I had discussions with. I have shared with him the concerns expressed by the CFA and by Keystone Agricultural Producers and other groups from other provinces who have expressed similar. If the member is doubting my word as to the conversations I have had with Mr. Friesen, I would encourage him to call Mr. Friesen and ask him what his concerns were with the package when it was first announced.

Mr. Jack Penner: The minister just said: and a number of other organizations. Can the minister identify for me which the other organizations were?

Ms. Wowchuk: Well, if the member has been in communication with his leader, and I believe he has, he will recall that we were in Saskatoon where we had a meeting with the three provinces, the Ag ministers and leaders from three provinces, farm organizations from Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba. At that time there was representation made expressing the concerns with the U.S. farm bill and the impacts of the trade and the importance of safety net programs.

There was another meeting the following month, I cannot remember the exact date of it, where I met with the president of Keystone Agricultural Producers, a representative from the Ontario farm organization, Saskatchewan. Alberta farmers were not there, but they sent their support via letter, I guess. They communicated with Keystone Agricultural Producers. So it was the organizations from other provinces I was referring to when I said I had heard from other organizations.

I would encourage the member to talk to his leader, because it was very clear when we were in Saskatoon and there were a variety of organizations, from chambers of commerce to municipal leaders to farm organizations who had expressed concerns.

Mr. Jack Penner: Madam Chairperson, the minister is either not concentrating or not listening. I asked who she consulted with after the announcement. I know that she has not consulted with my leader after the announcement of the agriculture policy framework in Ottawa after June 20.

I asked the minister: Who were the other organizations, other than the Federation of Agriculture and KAP, that she consulted with after the federal announcement? Could the minister answer that?

Ms. Wowchuk: Well, if the member wants to be very specific, specifically, I had conversation with CFA, which represents farm organizations from across Canada, and Keystone Agricultural Producers, which is the umbrella group for farm organizations in Manitoba. Those are the groups that I consulted with. I also had discussion and consultation with Agriculture ministers across the country where we discussed the framework agreement and the areas where we had concerns.

Mr. Jack Penner: Now the minister is changing her mind. She said a little while ago, and it is on the record, that she met with CFA and with KAP among many other organizations.

I would like to know who the other organizations are that she consulted with after the announcement of the ag policy framework that the Prime Minister announced on June 20. Who were the organizations? Who were the other people she consulted with?

Ms. Wowchuk: Again, I am talking about the broad consultation that I had during the development, and there were many, many developments of the agreement. But, specifically, since the announcement, I spoke with the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, which represents a broad group of organizations, and I spoke with Keystone Agricultural Producers, who is supposed to

be the voice of all farm organizations or a broad range of farm organizations in Manitoba.

Those are the people I talked to specifically after the announcement was made by the Prime Minister, as the member indicates. But prior to that, I have had discussions with many people, and I can tell the member that the door to our office is always open. Any farm group that wants to have discussion or provide advice or assistance can always call the office and offer their advice. I take their comments very seriously, Madam Chairperson.

Mr. Jack Penner: So the minister really has put erroneous information on the record. She has really not met with anybody at all after the ag policy framework had been announced prior to her making her statement about the content of the policy announcement and her questioning of the announcement and the contents of the announcement.

She is now saying to me that she has prior to, in a consultation kind of a way, at various meetings, been in discussions with various individuals, but not specifically after the announcement was done has she had any consultations with any farm groups at all. That is what she is telling me now. Am I correct in that, Madam Minister?

Ms. Wowchuk: No, you are wrong. Madam Chairperson, the member is wrong. I am not quite sure what exactly the member is trying to pin down here. If he wants a list of people that I talked to, he is not going to get a list of people. There are many people who call the office at any given time to offer their views on a particular issue. There are many people who have called to share their thoughts on this agriculture policy framework. I take all those calls very seriously, and I have had many, many discussions.

The member seems to be trying to pin down what happened after the announcement was made. I have said to the member that I had had discussions with farm organizations and asked for their input, and those people have reviewed the package and have given their comments. Those people gave advice as to what we should be doing with respect to the agriculture policy framework.

As I said to the member earlier and many times, the agriculture policy framework is an important document, but at this time there is need for additional detail, and that is what farm organizations asked us for.

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I can tell the member that I will be having further discussion with agriculture groups as to what their views are, and, when we have additional information, we will share that with the agriculture groups. Then we will move forward from there.

* (15:10)

Mr. Jack Penner: It is very evident that the minister has had very few discussions with hardly anybody, by what she is saying now, because she is putting conflicting evidence on the record. I find that very interesting, but that is, of course, her business.

I would like to ask the minister more specifically: Has she had any discussions with the Manitoba Cattle Producers Association after the announcement of the agriculture policy framework? I am asking the minister. I would like to know from the minister whether she personally has had discussions with either the president of the Cattle Producers Association or the association, and have you had any discussion with them after the announcement of the policy framework, after June 20?

Ms. Wowchuk: The APF has been a document that has been in development for almost a year now. There has been opportunity for all groups to have input, and I have had discussion with the Cattle Producers on this document. They have made presentations on it, and they have shared their views on it. Manitoba Cattle Producers are also part of the Keystone Agricultural Producers. I have talked to the president of Keystone Agricultural Producers.

I have not spoken specifically since the announcement to the Manitoba Cattle Producers, but now that we have changes in the documents and prior to making a decision on it there will be further discussion with the various groups to have their input into it. It is very important that we have that once we have more detail on what programs are going to look like.

Mr. Jack Penner: Has the minister had any discussions with any of the presidents of any of the farm organizations other than KAP in this province of Manitoba?

Ms. Wowchuk: If the member is asking if I have had discussions with them since the announcement, no, not since the announcement. I have had discussions with KAP, which is the umbrella organization. I think the member would agree that as the umbrella organization, they speak for many groups in the organization. It was clear that there was need for more information.

There were some concerns in the original document that the Keystone Agricultural Producers, on behalf of all organizations that are under the umbrella, asked me to get more clarification to see what the impacts of the document would be. As we have more information, as we continue to work on this and look at how these programs will affect our producers, we will have further discussions with them.

Mr. Jack Penner: So, basically, what the minister has confirmed then is that it was her and her political staff that have been responsible for putting out the rhetoric around the federal announcement that this could, in fact, be seen as a trade compensatory package of announcements that the federal government made. Is that correct?

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chairperson, the member continues to ask about the consultation. I think the member is aware that there were two general meetings that were held in Manitoba, and I believe he even attended one of those meetings. Our staff attended those meetings. That was the opportunity for producers and the various groups to give their insight and views on the agriculture policy framework, and then we take that information very seriously. That is along with meeting with our staff and making direct presentations to the minister. What they say at those meetings is taken very seriously.

The member is talking about the trade injury. I can tell the member the federal government had no money on the table until the Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta governments got together. It was Manitoba and

Saskatchewan in particular at the last ministers' meeting who talked about the impacts of the U.S. farm bill and the fact that farm organizations had identified the trade injury as \$1.3 billion annually. Prior to that the federal government said there would be no money. After the U.S. farm bill, Mr. Vanclief said the U.S. farm bill was very injurious. He was very concerned about it and there would have to be some bridge financing put in place to help farmers through this, and that all Canadians would have to help to pay for it.

The federal government can call it whatever they want. If they do not want to call it trade injury that is fine, but we know that money, that \$600 million, came onto the table after there was pressure from farm groups and from western provinces asking that the trade injury be addressed. That is where the money came from. It was not on the table prior to that; it was pressure from provinces like Manitoba that pushed the federal government to recognize there was trade injury.

All we hope they will recognize now is that the injury is their responsibility, and 60 percent from the federal government is not adequate. They have to live up to their full responsibility, that is addressing trade and addressing trade injury. They have not been able to reduce the subsidies. Until such time as subsidies are reduced the federal government has to be held responsible and live up to their responsibility, not 60 percent of their responsibility.

Mr. Jack Penner: I put as much credibility in the Prime Minister's statement as I do in our Minister of Agriculture's statement or our Premier's (Mr. Doer) statement. They are conflicting.

I think that the problem we have in this province today is we have heard our Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) make various statements that were at the end of the day found to be questionable, at best. We have heard the provincial government talk about fixing health care with \$15 million and doing it in six months. We have seen how absolutely futile that attempt was.

We have heard the Minister of Agriculture in this province make statements on this new bill

announcement, an announcement by the way she has been part of developing for the past year. The agriculture policy framework has been on the table for a whole year now. All the aspects of the bill, apparently, have been discussed, negotiated and debated within her department by her deputy ministers and her staff, her political staff, probably more so than the departmental staff. I would suspect many of the processes that have happened before even there was an announcement there would be a look at repackaging most of the programming we have seen or had in this country for many years would in fact take place.

The all-party committee we formed heard hundreds of statements made by various individuals as to what should happen in agriculture. The Premier made a clear commitment that he would head up an all-party delegation to Ottawa. The minister called Ottawa and asked for the Standing Committee on Agriculture to come over here. Instead we were invited over there. So we all jumped in an airplane and went to Ottawa and made our 15-minute, some of us 5-minute, statements on what needs to be done in agriculture in western Canada. What a charade.

* (15:20)

Now, after all the discussions, debates and efforts that have been made, we see the federal government come with a statement. I believe the committee, the caucus task force on future opportunities in farming, which was headed up by Bob Speller, had probably far more impact on the Premier's or the Prime Minister's and the Minister of Agriculture's decision-making than anything else that happened.

Quite frankly, I have a significant amount of respect for Bob Speller. I think Mr. Speller was fairly straightforward in many of his statements that he made in his report. I appreciated many of them, although I did not agree with many of them as well, but it was at least, I think, an honest attempt to portray the agricultural industry, especially in western Canada, as it existed. I appreciated some of the recommendations that Mr. Speller put forward.

I find it very interesting, Madam Chairperson, that our minister has been involved in this debate in a much closer fashion than

anybody could have been. Yet, the day of the announcement, she stands there and talks about a trade-injury package. This is not a trade-injury package. There is no mention of trade-injury in this package. We all know that. The farm community knows it. The farm organizations have made comments in a similar manner. They believe there needs to be another attempt made to enforce upon Ottawa that need for a trade-injury package.

We have said on a number of occasions to the minister, as we did again today in the House, that we are quite prepared to proceed with an all-party committee and indeed bring all the farm leaders to Ottawa and say thank you very much for the agriculture policy framework that you have announced; now let us deal with the real issue. Let us deal with trade injury. Our minister sits here and wants to couch this package as a trade-injury package. It is not. They make it very clear that they will deal with drought and other issues, but not including trade.

Mr. Jim Rondeau, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

The feds, I think, are absolutely paranoid about getting into a trade dispute with the Americans, and the Americans, of course, have no compunction at all about announcing whatever they jolly well choose to support their farmers. They are going to support their farm community. They are going to support their agriculture. They made no bones about that. I appreciate that. I think that is the right of every federal jurisdiction when certain sectors are in trouble that they be allowed the latitude of intervention, and trade agreements clearly have given a global amount of money that could be used to target agriculture in the states. I believe, when I look at what they have announced now, they are about a billion dollars under their cap, and I know that Canada is way under its cap, way under its cap, so we could clearly enforce upon Ottawa that they have all kinds of room to support its agricultural community, as we should. But, no, instead of that, our Premier (Mr. Doer) in this province, and our Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) want to walk away from this. They want to couch this bill as a trade bill, which, quite frankly, to me is somewhat of a joke.

If this minister and our Premier think that our farm people are naive enough to fall into that trap, then I think they have another thing coming because the five meetings that I have had in the last week amongst the farm community, and all of them were held in my constituency, clearly indicate that the general farm community understands very clearly what was announced here. Whether they support it or not is totally immaterial. It is clearly understood what was announced, and they have a fairly good understanding. They are appalled that our Premier would try and talk about this in context of a trade dispute. As a matter of fact, many of the farmers when they heard that actually thought it was a joke, that the Premier was actually joking about this, and they felt offended by it, as I felt offended by it. I think this is no joke.

This is clearly a commitment that was made by the federal government better than a year ago, when they talked about bringing all the Agriculture ministers together to talk about a new framework. This are clearly the four pillars that the feds came with initially, and the farm organizations suggested there be another pillar added. I think that has been done. I think that clearly speaks to drought assistance, and I would hope that the minister would choose to reinforce upon the federal government that we should also include flood compensation under that same provision, as you would drought, and therefore extend either the disaster aid program, to give it enough latitude to develop a compensatory package that would include crop damage over and beyond what crop insurance will cover because crop insurance will pay very little money. They might pay some claims because there are some farms that are totally wiped out from this last flood. But there are a lot of them that have 50% losses, some of them 70% losses, 80% losses.

I should have brought the aerial photos that I have of my neighbourhood. You cannot believe the amount of water around, and you cannot believe the amount of devastation that has happened just south of my place and just to the west of it. It is virtually unbelievable. But it is, in large part, due to the fact that the Americans have built a drainage system into Manitoba. There are four very large culverts that deliver enough water that the Amery River [*phonetic*]

simply cannot take. All the local rain that fell had to wait while the American water drained off, and then our water could flow. We became a storage basin for that water. The damage that has been incurred there is very severe and that needs special consideration. The same as just east of Emerson, between Emerson and Ridgeville. The minister was out there, I believe a year ago, when we toured that area. Well, she should see the devastation today. It is four times as great, maybe even five times as great as it was then. There are simply no crops left on many of the farms.

I believe that the minister would do justice in making the case under this bill if it is for drought assistance, that we could use this money as well on flood assistance in those areas, and deem that as special consideration over and above what crop insurance would normally pay. I would hope that the minister would try and focus in that respect instead of trying to couch this as a trade compensation bill. I really, truly find that a bit offensive. I think we should pay attention to what Mr. Speller said. He said the Government of Canada has seen the recommendations of the task force that he chaired and today has given its answer. Said Mr. Speller: This announcement recognized the need to assist farmers in a concrete way while we build a new future for agriculture that puts Canada first in the world. Then he goes on to say that the Government of Canada will also invest \$1.2 billion over the next two years as part of a cost-shared package with the provinces to help farmers deal with challenges such as drought, to help them bridge to a new generation of more effective risk management programs.

I would suspect that we should be negotiating to have flood compensation included in that as well. With the provincial cost sharing included, \$1 billion will be available in each of the next two years for this assistance, and I would suspect that, if I listened to what Alberta was saying just this past weekend, they will have better than a billion dollars worth of crop insurance to be paid out. I would suspect that many of the farmers will not get their costs back on those crop insurance programs, that they would agree to arguing that this should be flood and drought relief compensation under this \$1 billion a year. Mr. Acting Chairperson, I would

suspect that Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta, and, if you include in that Ontario's last year's drought, I would suspect that the billion dollars will not be big enough, if the provinces decide to cost share this to properly compensate farmers, and that they will not lose their farm.

* (15:30)

I have heard a number of young guys that put their land back into production this year say that this is it, this is their last year. They just cannot handle it, they say, and the minister sits there and says she will not agree to a compensation package, she cannot agree with Ottawa on a compensation package, something that she has been in discussions and negotiations for for a whole year and now she does not even know the contents of what the announcement was. It seems a bit odd. It is either odd, or it is naive. We are not sure which it is.

I think it is also interesting to note that the person that I am referring to says that this announcement comes at a crucial time for the industry, said Mr. Bob Friesen, president of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture. Now we need to ensure that governments and industry have the flexibility over the coming months to develop strategic business risk management practices to monitor their effectiveness within the APF, a total, supportive statement by the president of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture.

The minister just a little while ago told us that Mr. Friesen, the president of the Federation of Agriculture, had voiced some significant concerns to her. I would like to know from this minister, Mr. Acting Chairperson, what those specific concerns were that Mr. Friesen voiced to her in respect to this announcement after having made a statement such as he did in the news release that the federal government put out.

Ms. Wowchuk: Well, after that kind of a statement there are many, many comments that the member made here that I have to respond to. First of all, I cannot understand how the member could flip-flop that way. First of all, he said you know, it was useless to go to Ottawa. You did not accomplish anything all the time you spent working there,. You did not accomplish

anything, but we should be going to Ottawa again. Well, what is the point? He thinks we did not accomplish anything, but we should go back again.

Then the member talks about the Speller task force. Well, I can tell the member that the Speller task force would not have happened if it had not been for lobbying from the provinces. Manitoba was a very important part of that lobbying where we wanted the federal government to come out, come to Manitoba, come and listen to what is happening here to our producers, and they came. The member said that they did not come. Yes, they did come, and they did listen to producers. As well, there was the consultation committee that came out to hear what producers had to say on that trying to get a basis for the agriculture policy framework.

But I want the member to know that for the better part of the year when we raised with Ottawa the fact that we needed support for farmers, and I will say it is trade injury, we have asked for the support because of the impacts of the U.S. farm bill, and it is farm organizations and the federal government whose numbers were used to identify an injury of \$1.3 billion. Whenever we raised that for a better part of the year, Mr. Vanclief said: No way, there is no new money. There is no money. We are not putting any more money in.

It was after extensive lobbying by primarily Manitoba and Saskatchewan because that is where the majority of the hurt is from the trade injury from the U.S. farm bill, in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Suddenly \$600 million appeared. That money was not there. We do have \$600 million for two years. I do not believe that is adequate, because the U.S. farm bill extends for a six-year period, and our farmers will be left high and dry after the two years of \$1.2 billion from the federal government, but that is what the federal government has put on the table and that is what we have to make decisions on.

It has been clear by the comments made by farm organizations that they have said the federal government has responsibility for trade injury, as has the member's leader. We see letters in rural papers where Mr. Murray has sent out letters and said the trade injury is 100 percent the

responsibility of the federal government and the federal government should pay. Now the federal government has suddenly found this additional money and they have put it out there. But I can tell the member that the federal government has not decided how they are going to pay that money out or how they are going to pay out the \$589.5 million. We asked federal government. They do not know how they are going to pay that money out.

The member also talked about part of developing the announcement. Well, if the member will read that announcement, he will see clearly that it is a federal government announcement. There were no provincial ministers there. The federal government put the numbers out and then said to the provinces: This is what you will have to do. That is how that announcement was made. Clearly, there is money that has been put forward but details of how it will be used to help the agriculture industry are not available.

With respect to Mr. Friesen's comments, I think the member asked the question but he read the answer into the record himself when he read Mr. Friesen's statement. What Mr. Friesen said is: Now we have to have the flexibility to develop programs. When the document was first put out, the flexibility was not there. That was the concern of CFA, that was the concern of Keystone Agricultural Producers and other groups, that the flexibility to develop programs was not there and the analysis was not there. That was one of the big issues of Mr. Friesen's that we have an Agriculture Policy framework and we all agree. This is a step forward, to have an agriculture policy framework.

But I will tell the member that, before we sign on to this very important document, I will continue to consult with producers and ensure that it is the right kind of framework that we need. If there are changes that have to be made to it to improve and offer a better framework for our producers so that our industry can continue to grow and be viable, then I will continue to push for those changes, because I think that is what my job is. My job is to listen to producers and then work with them and ensure that we do have the kind of agriculture policy framework that will be there into the future.

Madam Chairperson in the Chair

I want to take the minister to the backgrounder of the announcement by the federal government and the overview of the agriculture policy framework. I suspect that the minister was in charge of negotiating some of this because it is a backgrounder and an overview of the agriculture policy framework. The Government of Canada, along with provincial-territorial governments and the agriculture and agri-food industry, is developing a comprehensive agricultural policy that will increase the productability of the entire agri-food sector. The agriculture policy framework, APF, cost-shared with the provinces, will provide tools and choices for producers to strengthen their business. It will allow them to meet the demands of consumers in Canada and around the world while responding to increased global competition and keeping up with the rapid technological change. Linking the following elements together in a comprehensive approach will ensure that the Canadian agriculture and agri-food sector has a solid platform from which to maximize economic, and I think those are the key words, "maximize economic," opportunities in the global marketplace. Does the minister agree with that statement?

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chairperson, we have been working with the federal government and the federal government has certainly had the lead on these discussions. They are the ones that held the consultations. We want to ensure that as we develop this agriculture policy framework, that it is in the best interest of producers, but we also want to ensure that we have flexibility in programming because what may matter in Manitoba may not matter in Prince Edward Island. It may not matter in British Columbia. So we need the flexibility within the framework to allow for development that will meet the needs of our producers.

So we have been working on the framework. Because it is a framework, there are issues that our producers have concerns with, and we will continue to consult with them and ensure that we get the changes in the framework to ensure that we are able to meet the needs of our producers. Ultimately, it is about looking at markets, ensuring that Canada's reputation is protected

and working with producers to give them the risk management tools and the protection that they need.

* (15:40)

That is part of this agriculture policy framework, but I think that it is better to take the time and have consultation, further consultation with producers. If they are not satisfied with the wording of the agreement, that we should take the time and get the proper changes to the agreement to ensure that we have the flexibility to provide the kind of protection and the kinds of tools that our producers need to take them into the future.

Mr. Jack Penner: Well, Madam Chairperson, I would like to ask the minister then, she has been involved, is that correct? You have been involved for a year now, along with the other provincial and territorial governments and the agri-food industry in developing a comprehensive agricultural policy in conjunction with Ottawa. You have been involved in that. That is a true statement, right?

Ms. Wowchuk: Certainly. We began the process, the discussions in Whitehorse. There has been development, but it has been an evolving document. There were some suggestions that came forward in January. Those were not acceptable to producers. Other suggestions were put forward by the federal government of what programs should look like.

There were changes right up to the day before we went to Halifax, where the federal government looked at one option and had input on it. It was not acceptable. Some parts of it were acceptable, others not, and that is why this is a document that, as I say, it is being developed through consultation with the producers.

The federal government has the responsibility of developing the document. Provinces then look at it. The producer groups have the opportunity to have input in a variety of ways. There was input from many people when the federal government held those consultation meetings, two of which were held here in this province.

So this is a document that we are working on with the federal government. The federal government does the majority of the development. We then have input, and our producers have asked us to bring forward further concerns. We will continue to work on it until it is at a point where it is satisfactory to our producers, so that we would have the kind of protection and information that the producers want to ensure that they are comfortable, because this is a very important document.

There has not been a document like this for agriculture before, and I think we should do the planning and we should have a vision statement, but we should also be prepared to take the time to address issues when producers raise them with us.

Mr. Jack Penner: So the minister agrees that this process will provide the tools and the choices for producers to strengthen their business, Madam Chairperson.

Ms. Wowchuk: Well, that is the goal, Madam Chairperson; it is to give the producers the tools. But it will ultimately depend on what the end result is, and that is why I want to be so careful and take the time to talk this through with producers, to have the answers and information on what programs will look like and to be able to consider whether it is an improvement or whether there are some disadvantages.

That is why we have to do that kind of analysis on all aspects, on all pillars of the framework. We need to take the time to ensure that what we are developing will give the producers the tools that they need to take advantage of any situation that might be out there and to improve their operation to the best of their ability. That is the goal, to try to develop those tools for them.

I will take the time that I need and that producers need to ensure that we are doing the best that we can within the framework to help them address their challenges.

Mr. Jack Penner: That means that the framework and the overview that I am reading from is, in large part, designed to meet the demands of the consumers in Canada and around the world

to ensure that we can actually keep up with the global competition.

Is that what the design of this program was meant to do?

Ms. Wowchuk: Certainly, on the food safety part of it, that is part of it. We all know that here in Canada we produce some of the best food in the world. It is very high-quality food, but there are always questions and issues that come up around the world.

We are in a global market. We are always trying to work with producers to take advantage of those markets there, but the world and consumers around the world look very closely at food supplies no matter where they are coming from. One pillar of this framework is food safety, and that is directed at the consumer.

But, you know, this is not a new issue for our producers. Producers in Manitoba and Canada have long recognized the importance of food safety, the importance of high-quality standards, the importance of traceability. Many have been working in this direction already, and this will add to what our producers are doing.

That is really an important point that has to be recognized in the agriculture policy framework. Different provinces are doing different things, but everybody recognizes the importance of a safe food supply, the importance of addressing environmental issues and the importance of safety net programs, just to mention a few. By having a framework across the country, although we want flexibility in each province, this will bring some standard across the country. Certainly, the issue of brand in Canada will be important for us and continue to be important as we work with international markets.

Mr. Jack Penner: The minister talks about brand in Canada, and, at the same time, I have heard the minister express concerns about U.S. labelling in the U.S. farm bill. What difference does the minister see in the Canadian branding or Canadian labelling and the U.S. labelling?

Ms. Wowchuk: I am not quite sure what the member is asking, but if he is asking about the U.S. farm bill and country of origin, the whole

issue of country of origin is a very serious concern of ours as to what country of origin will mean and how the Canadian product will fit into the U.S. market.

The member is fully aware that we send a tremendous amount of live and processed meat into the U.S. market, and, if it is going to have to be labelled and a priority is going to be given to products from the U.S., specifically as outlined in the U.S. farm bill that anything that is born, raised and slaughtered in the United States will have a different labelling, and if it comes in from another country, then it appears that it will have a less beneficial label.

* (15:50)

We are concerned about that. That is why when I was at the tri-national accord we raised this with the U.S. government and expressed our concern and are looking to work with representatives from the U.S. to try to resolve this because it is not only Canadians that have concerns about it, it is Americans. There is a lot of American beef that comes up from Montana into Saskatchewan and Alberta and is fed up here and then slaughtered in the United States. Here in Manitoba it is hogs. We ship weanlings to the U.S. We ship finished hogs to the U.S. Is that market going to be lost to us if this country-of-origin labelling proceeds? There are people on the U.S. side that are also concerned about it, and I think it requires a lot of work on both our parts to understand what the U.S. is trying to do.

There is no doubt about it a product that has a Canadian label on it in parts of the world is recognized as very high-quality food, and we want to continue to build on that so that indeed Canada is known around the world and gets access into additional markets because of our high quality.

Mr. Jack Penner: I wonder if the minister could maybe give us a bit of an overview as to the difference of our Canadian labelling and the U.S. labelling and how that might be perceived by the Americans and other countries of the world that this might be a retaliatory action against the labelling process in the U.S. Has the minister any concerns about this at all?

Let me put it a different way. Last week I met with an American friend of mine. This

person had been significantly concerned about the U.S. farm labelling. He said: Now you guys announced your program, and you are going to do exactly what our government is doing in the States. He said they are labelling U.S., and he said you are going to be labelling Canadian. He said: How are you going to ensure your quality in your processing industry and be able to label it Canadian if many of the products that we ship into Canada such as corn, wheat, beef, pork and many other products—how are you going to guarantee that the quality of those products are Canadian and of Canadian quality if you are not going to implement the same processes that our government is intending to implement in the United States? What would your response be to that?

Ms. Wowchuk: I think the member is talking about two very different things. What the U.S. is doing is completely different than what we are doing. When we talk about a brand in Canada, this program is about branding our food and letting the world know that this is a Canadian product and promoting Canada as having high-quality food. What the U.S. is doing is they are doing a country-of-origin labelling where it says it must be a U.S. product. It must be born, raised and slaughtered.

I think that the two programs are quite different as to what we are working on with branding Canada and promoting Canadian products versus what is being proposed under the U.S. farm bill. We are not saying in any way that a U.S. product coming in has to be labelled. Canada does not have a country of origin labelling. So I think that this is a whole different issue. I will leave it go there, but they are two very different programs as to what we are doing under the agriculture policy framework and what is being proposed by the U.S. It looks very much as a protectionist bill that will restrict product from having same access to market, whereas Branding Canada is a concept where our products will be recognized around the world as high-quality, safe food, and giving the consumer the confidence and assurance that we do have high-quality food.

Mr. Jack Penner: Well, if I accept what the minister says, and if she really believes what she says, then can you imagine how a marketer,

when asked a question of a product with a Canadian label on it or the Canadian flag, as the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) indicated has a Canadian flag on it to identify it as Canadian, and the consumer in another country would ask, is this actual Canadian product, what would our response be? We do not know? It might be American or it might be some other country's product that we canned in Canada or that we packaged in Canada or processed in Canada. Would that be our response? How would we be seen? Would we be seen in the world as doing exactly what the Americans are attempting to do, and that is ensuring that their products that they produce in their country are going to be seen by others? Because the Americans export as much as we do, probably even more. Would they be seen or would they be wanting to be seen as what you are buying in this package is actually produced, manufactured and packaged in the United States for market in and outside of the United States? Would we be seen in that same light by other countries? Do you perceive that as being the case?

Ms. Wowchuk: I guess, when you look at it, you know, there are products that come into Canada that are then shipped out of Canada under a Canadian label, but it meets a certain standard, if it meets the standards. I guess what we have to really remember in all of this is the labelling is a federal jurisdiction, it is a federal responsibility. Now, the federal government has developed a concept here, we want to promote Canada, and the provinces support this, but right now it is a concept of how we can better promote Canada, how we can put that Canadian label on and promote the high-quality food that we are known for around the world.

The member just has to think about Canadian wheat. We know that Canadian wheat is sought after in many parts of the world because of its high quality, so we have that high quality there, but there are other products that we want to be able to promote as well, and that is the concept that is being worked on here.

If you look at the U.S. farm bill, the U.S. farm bill and country of origin is a much different concept, and I believe that it will restrict and have a negative impact on our agricultural community, because it could reduce the flow of

product into the U.S., or result in product coming into the U.S. from Canada being labelled in a different way and then drawing a different price.

So I believe that they are very different, and I think it is a good concept to be looking at how we can brand Canada and take advantage of our high-quality food and get it into additional markets, but it is in the developmental stage, and the federal government has not given details on how we are going to do this, although provinces are supportive of it and are waiting for the plan to be developed and are looking for additional detail.

* (16:00)

Mr. Jack Penner: For a little while, I was almost led to believe that the minister was actually probably not quite as sure whether she was in agreement with Canadian labelling or not.

I want to ask the minister whether she thinks that the U.S. or the U.S. producers are going to be asked when they deliver their products into Canada, such as corn or beef, will they be asked the question at the border: Are these products raised under our specifications? Will they have the same safety aspects applied to it that we will demand under Canadian labelling? Is that how we are going to assure quality of our raw imported goods? Are we going to guarantee the international marketplace that whatever is labelled Canadian will have exactly the same protective specs on the label that we will guarantee when our producers deliver a product, or are we going to allow the Americans different access, different quality access into our marketplace in Canada here, package it and ship it into foreign markets under a Canadian label?

I am not quite sure what the minister is saying here. Could she explain, please?

Ms. Wowchuk: The member knows full well that there are standards in Canada now. CFIA has the responsibility of setting those standards. Under this program maybe, and this is hypothetical, those standards may get higher.

Certainly our producers are working every day within their industries to improve the

standards and the quality of the food that they produce and the traceability of products, but the member has to realize, as well, the standards are output based, so it is what is coming out of the processing that has to meet standards.

I do not know what the member is looking for. We do have standards right now. CFIA is responsible for setting those standards. There is a concept that is being worked on to expand the branding of Canada throughout the world to give us more accessibility to build on the high-quality food that we have in this country, but I do not see the kinds of things that the member is talking about happening, given that we now have standards. There are requirements that have to be met, and those standards will continue to have to be met.

Mr. Jack Penner: Well, I think the minister just put her finger on it. I want to ask the minister whether she truly believes that she has any way of assuring a buyer in Japan, for instance, or in China, when she ships her Canadian label into that marketplace, when that person at the other end of the line asks the question: Is this Canadian product, and what assurances have I got that what I am buying meets the standards that are applied by Canadians in this package? What assurance would you give a consumer in Japan, for instance, that there was no imported stuff, without any products applied to this material that you packaged as Canadian, if you have no assurance that when you import from the U.S. and/or other countries, that you manufacture and package here and label as Canadian, that that actually meets the standards that you prescribe to?

How can you assure that any crops or any meat products or any other products, for that matter, that you import in a raw form would be able to be identified by a consumer in Japan as a Canadian product with the same safety aspects applied that we would now require under this bill, and I will get through this ag policy framework before we finish Estimates.

But what assurance can you give a buyer in Japan that the quality that you prescribe to under this framework will actually be contained in the can that he is buying or product that he is buying if what you are saying is true?

Ms. Wowchuk: I guess the member should remember that it is the U.S. that is talking about country-of-origin labelling. It is not Canada that is talking about country-of-origin labelling.

What we are talking about is a safe food supply. CFIA sets the standards that facilities have to meet. If a facility, and I am talking about meat products, has the CFIA approval and there is proper inspection which I believe there is—if it is approved that there is proper inspection—then that product will get the food inspection certification on it because it meets the standards that are set out by CFIA.

I believe that the standards that we have here in Canada are good standards and have not resulted in difficulty, but no one is talking about country-of-origin labelling in Canada. We have expressed concern that the U.S. is bringing in country-of-origin labelling. We feel that that could have a negative impact on our industry because we are an exporting country. We export much more than other countries do. That is where our concern is with the U.S. farm bill, but I am confident with the standards that we have set by CFIA.

As we move forward with labelling in Canada, we may see changes, and we may see a higher standard coming forward. That will be a decision that the various industry partners will work on with the Government, but, ultimately, we want to continue building on the reputation that we have in Canada as having high-quality food, safe food. That reputation has carried us well around the world, and we should be looking at how we can build on that reputation.

Mr. Jack Penner: I want to ask the minister how she would guarantee the quality of a product or the safety standards of a product that she imports into Canada without knowing what is used to produce this product.

How would you guarantee a Canadian-labelled manufactured product to a foreign buyer, under a Canadian label, when you actually import the raw product and it is produced in a foreign country without you having any knowledge as to what is used in the production of this product?

How would you want to put a Canadian label and guarantee quality and standard as prescribed under this framework?

Ms. Wowchuk: The member asked how I would guarantee that. I have to tell the member that I cannot guarantee that, because that is not my responsibility. The responsibility of food safety and the standards that people have to meet with import and of products is the responsibility of CFIA. They set the standards. Companies, importers, and exporters have to meet those standards. That is where the responsibility will lie. We look for further detail to be spelt out on this and want to ensure that as we move forward of this branding of Canada the best needs of our producers are met and that we do use them to the advantage of producers and open up new markets for Canadian products.

* (16:10)

Mr. Jack Penner: Then I will go back to the original question that I asked. The question I think I asked was how are we going to satisfy the demands of consumers in Canada and around the world while responding to increased global competition under a Canadian labelled product that is packaged or imported into Canada and packaged in Canada. How are we going to guarantee to that global competition that this is actually a Canadian product? How would she answer a buyer if a buyer came along and said, you know, you have all these fancy names and standards and you have a maple leaf on your product, is this actually produced in Canada under your strictly prescribed standard or is it imported, and what were the standards used to produce that product in the country that you imported this product from that you packaged here and put a Canadian label on? What would you say to that buyer?

Ms. Wowchuk: If that person came to my office to ask that question I would have to send them to CFIA because CFIA is the one that has the responsibilities of food safety.

Now, the member talks about bringing products into Canada and then processing them. Any product that comes into Canada, any food product, has to meet CFIA standards. If it is

further processed then that processed product has to meet CFIA standards. Again I have to remind the member that although we are talking about a brand in Canada, we are not talking about country of origin, but ultimately if a product is processed in Canada it has to meet those standards. I am trying to think of what might come in. If there is a meat product that comes into Canada to be further processed it has to meet Canadian standards. If it is any other food product it has to pass through CFIA before it can get to that processing facility. I was just reminded that hamburger is a good example of that. That is a product that around the world is consumed in great quantities, but for it to be sold in this country it has to meet the CFIA standards. I believe that as we talk about branding and promoting Canadian products, CFIA has the responsibility and will continue to play a very important role in that area.

Mr. Jack Penner: Well, we know that many of the crop production materials that are used in other countries are not allowed to be used in Canada. We talked about this at the conference that we had in Minneapolis and the need for a registration process that would be similar and equal to what the U.S. uses or what Canada uses, either way, that there should be a reciprocal arrangement between the two countries.

Yet now the minister is saying we are going to brand this Canadian, and we are still going to allow the importation of materials that have significantly different standards on either quality or from a safety aspect than what we would allow under an application of laws and rules in this country. Yet we are going to label this, as the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) says, with a maple leaf. I find that rather strange, that the minister is thinking in this direction, that we will just apply the maple leaf and call it Canadian, even though the processes or the materials used in the production of this could have applied products that are not registered in Canada, as is the case now under our own rules.

Is the minister then saying, under the program that has just been announced by Ottawa, under food processing and under agri-food exports, under those aspects—and then I go to the other part of the announcement, that there will be environmental actions taken, including

improving access to newer and more environmentally friendly pesticides, and I guess we are going to spend \$264 million on that, out of this farm aid program. Are we going to apply those same principles then to products being imported for manufacture in this province?

I am not talking about other provinces. I am talking about this province. What is the minister's reaction going to be to that? Are we going to say that we are not going to allow the importation of products that have not got these environmentally friendly pesticides or other environmentally fragile mechanisms used in the production of products into this province to be exported and labelled Canadian in the future? Is that what we are saying?

Ms. Wowchuk: You know, the member is talking about importation of a product that may have been treated with a chemical that is not registered here in this province, and how—

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

Point of Order

Mr. Jack Penner: I did not use the word chemical in my remarks. I used the word production, environmentally friendly materials is what I used. Chemicals can have a significant connotation to it that might not be deemed as friendly by some as others. I think you need to be a bit careful in the terminology you use. I certainly do not want to be quoted as having used chemicals and all those kinds of things.

Madam Chairperson: Thank you for that information, but that is not a point of order.

* * *

Ms. Wowchuk: I can tell the member that I am well aware of products and crop production material. In many cases they are called crop production material, in many cases they are called chemicals. In either case, sometimes when a certain product is used in the production of a crop, and should there be a residue on that product that is not registered in this country, then that product, if there is too much of a residue, it will not be able to be used in this country. That

what they will be in the future. The CFIA may make some changes to those standards, but I do not see us changing those kinds of standards. I have to tell the member that, as a province, we work very closely with producers. When there are issues that have to be addressed, our department works with them.

There was an issue, for example, with the lindane treated seed, which is not registered in the U.S. There was concern about how this seed would be used, and our department worked with CFIA. Ultimately, a decision was made by PMRA to allow for this seed to be used up, and that is what will continue to happen.

If a product is not safe, if it has a residue in it, whether it is a meat product or a crop product, that it has a residue in it, it cannot be used in Canada now, and it will not be in the future. Ultimately, we want to ensure that the food supply is safe and that the processing industry is not put at risk because of residues in product. That will continue as it has in the past. As the federal government develops this branding, that is supported by provinces now, we will look for changes and look for more detail on the program that they are proposing here, but, ultimately, it is about getting more promotion for Canadian products in the world market where Canadian products are recognized as being very high-quality food and safe food.

* (16:20)

Mr. Jack Penner: This agricultural package that was announced by Ottawa contains \$264.5 million for environmental action, including approving access to newer and more environmentally friendly pesticides, increasing the number of farms with environmental plans, taking environmentally fragile land out of production and developing renewable energy sources. It is a fairly strong statement. Then we talk about Canadian labelling in context of that. Then we talk about investments in transitions. Then we talk about improvements in the global marketplace and access for Canadian product.

How are you going to convince our American friends when you criticize them for wanting to label their products U.S. when they will, in turn, turn around at the negotiating table and say, well, you are following us lock step into the

same kind of a process? What are you going to say to them?

Ms. Wowchuk: I guess I would have to tell the member that I believe what is being done here in Canada, and the supports that are being offered for our producers, is completely different than what the U.S. is proposing. I see us as supporting and promoting a safe food supply and making the world know that we are taking the steps to ensure that there is a safe food supply in Canada, that there is traceability, whereas the U.S. is, I see this more as a part of a bill that is very protectionist and almost looking to protect the market for their own product. I see those as very, very different.

When we talk environmental issues and market access and the things that are happening here in Canada, I have to commend our producers on that because our producers recognize the importance of having a safe food supply. They know that there is a lot of scrutiny on the agriculture industry, and they have been doing a lot of things to ensure that they are protecting the environment, that they are raising their animals in a safe way to ensure that there is high food quality there.

I see what we are doing is, what Canada is proposing is much different than what the U.S., proposing in their country-of-origin labelling. That is why we have to continue to have discussion with the U.S. That is why we have put together a committee between Alberta, Montana, Manitoba, North Dakota and Saskatchewan to look at this country-of-origin labelling to ensure that it is not used as a trade barrier, because if it is used as a trade barrier it will hurt Canadian producers, but it is also going to hurt U.S. producers. They have expressed that concern, as have the processors in the United States as well. There is a lot of work to be done and a lot of detail to be worked out and information to be gathered to learn more about the U.S. farm bill, but there is also a lot of work to do on our branding of Canada. Again it will be CFIA that does the majority of the work and sets along with the industry to ensure that we really do promote Canada's high-quality food and find a way to open up more markets for Canadian products.

Mr. Jack Penner: Do you see this as being seen by the U.S. and other countries as being a protectionist process? When I say this, I mean the Canadian labelling. Do you think they might see us in the exactly the same light that we see them in this respect? Do you have any concerns about that?

Ms. Wowchuk: Not at all. Not at all. What we are doing is building on what has been done in the past and building on what producer groups have been doing and being able to say this is a Canadian product and it is a safe product. It has nothing to do with saying this animal was born, raised, fed and slaughtered in Canada. It is saying Canadian product and building on the reputation that Canadian products have around the world.

Mr. Jack Penner: How can you then assure somebody that is buying this product that it is actually Canadian if you have no assurance that it was not produced in Canada?

Ms. Wowchuk: I do not know where the member is going. If it came through a Canadian facility it meets the CFIA standards. It then has a Canadian label on it because it has met our standards. There is also the traceability to trace back to where the product came from.

Mr. Jack Penner: It was not produced in Canada?

Ms. Wowchuk: It may not have been produced in Canada, but it meets Canadian standards. We are branding Canada. We are promoting Canada as a safe place, a safe food supply, high quality, high standard. If that product meets those high standards, then it will receive the certification. Any product that comes through a Canadian facility, if it meets the standards, will be sold by a Canadian company. Because the U.S. is talking about country of origin, the member seems to be hung up on the country of origin. We are saying that is not what we are doing. We are talking about high-quality Canadian food that can be promoted around the world as it has been in the past. There may be product that is being sold by Canadian companies around the world, but if it meets Canadian standards then that is what we want to continue to promote and continue to build on.

Mr. Jack Penner: I thank the minister for that observation. I would suspect the question I have been asked on a couple of occasions lately is if you are so opposed to the U.S. labelling U.S., then why are you labelling Canadian? What is the difference? I have been asked that point-blank, and I think rightfully so, because they have no idea of what our process means and, quite frankly, we have no idea what their process means.

We hang our hats on three words contained in a draft farm bill that was produced by the American Senate and congressional committees and we hung up on three words in that. So I would suspect maybe our American friends are going to get equally hung up about the requirements that we are going to impose upon imported goods that we are going to manufacture, produce and label Canadian in Canada. Has the minister any response to that?

* (16:30)

Ms. Wowchuk: I guess, again, there is something very different here than what the U.S. is doing. We are not imposing anything here in Canada. It is not compulsory, and it is a promotion of Canadian products, brand in Canada. The member is talking about what is going to be imported, what portion of something is imported. Products are imported. If they meet CFIA standards then they are certified.

This is not going to be everything that comes out of Canada branded. It is a volunteer program that we would hope will build on the credibility we have now and open us to new markets, because there are always new and evolving markets around the world. We want to put together a package under the leadership of CFIA that does the certification to give Canada more exposure and to promote Canadian products as high-quality food into the market and give more opportunities, not only for our producers but for our processors as well, because we know there is a high standard here in Canada and we have a safe food supply. We want to build on that. So that is the intention of this.

It is not compulsory that every product that goes out is labelled with the Canadian brand on, but we think the producers, companies will take

advantage of it, because the Canadian brand carries a lot of credibility around the world.

If you look at what is happening now we are doing it now. Beef and pork are promoted as Canadian products around the world right now and are highly recognized. All we want to do is build further on that. I mentioned Canadian wheat. It does not carry the Canadian flag on every seed but certainly it is recognized around the world as high-quality wheat and is purchased in many countries because of our high quality so that it can be blended with theirs.

Canada does have a reputation now. We brand to a degree now. What we want to do is build on that to give further opportunities and advantages to Canadian farmers, processors and exporters.

Mr. Jack Penner: So you do not see Canada moving towards a system whereby the label would read: Produced in the U.S. and Manufactured in Canada?

Ms. Wowchuk: Unless the member has some inside information from his connections in the federal government, that is certainly not anything that we have been made aware of, or heard any intention of being promoted. What we are looking at is building on Canada's reputation as a producer of high-quality, safe food.

Mr. Jack Penner: So Canada will not require an identity of the products that are manufactured in Canada, that are raised in another country and manufactured, or packaged in Canada, they are not going to need an identifier?

Ms. Wowchuk: As the member knows, food safety and food inspection is the responsibility of the federal government. So it would be the federal government that would have to answer that question. But to my knowledge there has been no discussion on any such thing as the member is proposing.

Mr. Jack Penner: Does the minister realize that we have processes like that in place now?

Ms. Wowchuk: Again, the member is referring to responsibility that falls under CFIA. They are responsible for labelling. If they are making

some changes to the process of labelling that we have right now, I am not aware of those changes. As this program evolves and we get more detail on how we are going to brand and promote Canada, I will share that with the member.

What I want to share with the member is there is a lot of promotion of Canadian products that happens right now. There is a lot of promotion of Manitoba products. We are very proud of our products. We want to get those products in the market. We will continue to build on that, and if the brand in Canada will be an advantage for Manitoba products then we will encourage our people to take advantage of that right now.

Mr. Jack Penner: Madam Chairperson, I just want to move on from there. I suspect that the Canadian labelling, in negotiations with our American counterparts in the future will come to the fore and be compared in many aspects to what the U.S. are doing with their country-of-origin labelling of many of the products. It will, I believe, become a trade negotiation point at some point in time in the near future. The Americans will see this as an attempt to be protectionist, as we see their U.S. labelling as protectionist. I suspect that other countries will see our move as being protectionist as well.

The reason I raise this, Madam Minister, I think our people should be prepared and develop a defence on this because I agree with many of the things that you have said are currently the practice. However, if this program is, in fact, going to be brought to a conclusion, which I suspect it will at some point in time, whether our province wants to be seen as a 60% province or not is going to be our minister's choice and our Premier's choice. But I believe this farm bill will be brought about, this farm program. I also suspect that many of the actions that are being proposed here will be flexible actions, and they will change as we go along. I would suspect that many of the specific actions are going to be questioned by others as well.

I want to just go back to where we talk about helping set the stage for the new direction in agriculture and to accelerate the benefits of the APF for the industry and consumers. It talks about also including \$589.5 million in new

federal measures beginning this year, and part of which we have already talked about, and that is the \$264.5 million environmental action plan and some of the more specific ones promoting better use of agricultural land with measures that include taking some environmentally fragile land out of production, improving water supplies, increasing the number of farms with environmental plans and improving access to new and more environmentally friendly pesticides.

Can the minister tell this committee today what this means to the average farm and how it will change how they operate? I am talking specifically about increasing the number of farms with environmental plans and how she sees those environmental plans being, first of all, initiated, carried out and applied.

* (16:40)

Ms. Wowchuk: The member talked about provinces not participating and Manitoba having 60 percent. I want the member to realize and I am sure he heard the Premier (Mr. Doer) say this, that with the agriculture policy framework we were supportive of the agriculture policy framework in a 60-40 agreement. We will be there, although we want some detail worked out and that is what we told the federal government, that the agriculture policy framework and the safety net portion of it, parts where there is provincial responsibility, we will be there.

On the 600 million the member refers to, I have to tell the member that although there are people that signed on to the agriculture policy framework while I was in Halifax, there are other provinces who have said they will not take on federal responsibility and they will not be putting in 40 percent for trade injury. Although it is spelled out as transition dollars, other provinces have said they will not be putting money in there as well.

With respect to the \$589.5 million that the member referred to and the \$264 million for environment, that is the federal portion and the federal government has not shared details. They have given some announcement of areas like market access where they are going to put money into, environment and various areas, but they have not given the detail of how they will spend that money.

We have heard them talk about on the environmental plans there is a possibility that the federal government will be paying the costs for environmental plans, but that is an unknown. There has been discussion as well as to voluntary farm plans, so some people will want to do the plans and some will not be doing them, but I know that farmers have recognized this as an issue for some time now.

I believe Keystone Agricultural Producers several years ago developed a book, a farm planner, that would be the basis to start doing the work for the Environmental Farm Plan. Other provinces have moved more quickly on environmental farm plans. I believe Ontario has passed legislation on environmental farm plans that will require them. Québec has done a lot more work on environmental farm plans, so different provinces are at different stages and the federal government has not spelled out how they will spend their money, but I know that environmental farm plans is something the federal Minister of Agriculture strongly supports, and he has talked about a variety of time periods when we might see environmental farm plans on all farms. At this point, as I understand it, they will be voluntary, but, again, the member can see now that this is the kind of detail that we are looking for.

I am concerned about what the costs of environmental farm plans will be. I am concerned that farmers will. Environmental farm plans help the farmer, but they also help society, and I want to know who is going to be picking up the costs. Is it all going to be paid by the producer, who has no way to pass on those costs?

The same thing applies to food safety. As I said many times today, the federal government has the responsibility of ensuring that we have a safe food supply. Are those costs going to be passed on to the producer, who has no way of passing them on to the consumer? So there is a lot of detail that we are looking for and, in particular, in the areas where the federal government has full responsibility. They made announcements last week, and when we asked them for detail, they told us that those details were not developed yet.

Mr. Jack Penner: Madam Chairperson, I would like the minister to identify for me any part of this area where it speaks about trade injury in this announcement or in this program. There is no mention of trade injury. She constantly reverts back to trade injury. I think she is trying to manufacture a mentality amongst the media or somebody to try and couch this announcement as a trade injury announcement. I, for the life of me, maybe I am too naive to read this, but I think I have read it twice or three times now, and I have yet to find the word "trade" in this bill, nor "trade injury." I think the word "trade" actually appears in here once, and it talks about reaping the benefits of international trade, but I think that is the only area that I can find the word "trade" in this announcement or this program. Maybe the minister can enlighten me.

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chairperson, well, the member talks about that he does not see the word "trade injury." Well, the federal government can call it what they like, and they have chosen to call it transition funding.

A year ago, the federal government said there will be no additional money. There will be no more ad hoc programs. They said that over and over and over again. It was not until Manitoba and Saskatchewan put pressure on the federal government saying that we had to have some trade injury money. It was not until the U.S. farm bill was passed and Mr. Vanclief said then that this was going to be very difficult for our farmers and that there would have to be some bridge financing to help them through the term of the U.S. bill.

When we were in Saskatoon, when the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Murray) was with our Premier (Mr. Doer) in Saskatoon, it was Mr. Pettigrew and Mr. Martin, the then-Minister of Finance, who said that this would have a devastating impact, and it would have to be addressed in some way, that following the pressure that was put on, led by Manitoba and Saskatchewan, we then got some package. It does not meet the needs of producers because producers, with the federal government's documentation, identified the injury as \$1.3 billion. It is \$1.2 billion over two years. I do not believe it is adequate, but it is a start to address the injuries resulting in the U.S. farm bill.

The federal government has their reasons for not calling it trade injury, but we know what it is and we want the federal government to recognize their full responsibility and not try to get the Province to pick up costs that really are the federal government's responsibility.

Mr. Harry Enns (Lakeside): Madam Chair, I will leave the trade issues with my colleague, Mr. Penner, and raise another subject. We are dealing on Administration and Finance in her section of the department. I must confess I do not share all of that concern that my colleague expresses about labelling in the comfort that in due course Ms. Vicki Burns will put her label on our food and I will know it will be safe and we will be secure in that knowledge.

* (16:50)

I want to speak to the minister of the department about two very successful programs that have operated for many years in the province that have done a great deal, in my humble judgment, in improving our beef live-stock and that is our bull testing stations. We have the two of them, the older one being at Douglas, I believe, and has operated for many years, and the latter one being in the Interlake at Gunton.

I just want to put on the record, I think the work the department has done with both these stations, the support that they have given them over the years in the administration and the successful running of these bull test stations has a great deal to do with the success of our beef industry in the province. Certainly, speaking more intimately about the Interlake in terms of improving the quality—and I have always found it a joy to visit them at their special sales days—and it is a real opportunity for beef producers to measure their own performance by bringing their calves in, along with their neighbours' calves, and under I think a good program. I am aware that the department has had an ongoing relationship with both these bull test stations.

In the mid-nineties, the people at Douglas approached the department about the possibility of more formalizing their tenure of the land that they were on. In the case of Douglas, it was a little more complicated because they were

actually situated in Parkland, part of the Spruce Woods Park as I recall. But the approach was made and for understandable reasons of better self-governance, better capability of making arrangements for credit with the local money-lending institutions for further improvements of the site. Well, for whatever reasons, I and the advice that I received from my department at that time—and I believe it was circa '94-95, maybe '96, we were pleased to accommodate the Douglas people, in essence, helping them transfer the property in the name of the station, keeping in mind that these are non-profit organizations run by a local board of directors and, by doing so, you were not enriching a single individual or group of individuals, Madam Chair.

The good people that are running the Gunton Bull Test Station would like to follow suit and have a better, more formal arrangement with respect to their land tenure. They are, as I am given to understand, located on Crown land, but it is very fuzzy whether it is the Department of Agriculture that actually has the lease for the quarter or half section involved. I know that the Department of Agriculture has, and I am very appreciative of it, continued to support it over the years, not only just in terms of expending some staff time and help of running of the station. I make it a point of trying to attend the sales, particularly at the Gunton station. I recognize staff people, departmental people who have worked with the directors, the local board of directors, in bringing about these successful sales.

I would ask the department, I would ask the minister to consider making it a similar arrangement with the Gunton Bull Test Station, as is currently in effect with the Douglas station, again for the reasons that were provided back seven or eight years for Douglas.

They have some ambitious plans for continued expansion. They have some plans for working co-operatively with the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Manitoba, doing experimental work with cow-calf operations, a number of things. They certainly want to continue their relationship with the department, but it would make it easier for them in a business sense to be able to have a secure form of tenure

rather than the kind of nebulous arrangement they currently have with the Department of Agriculture.

They have asked me, as a matter of fact, to organize a meeting with you, Madam Minister. Being the considerate member of the Opposition that I am, I explained to them you are under constant and withering attack from the Opposition these days as we are going through your Estimates, that perhaps when the doldrums of summer have set in your office would find time to meet with the board of directors and have them explain the situation to them. I would appreciate any thoughts the minister has on this subject matter.

Ms. Wowchuk: I want to thank the member for outlining the work that is done at the Gunton Bull Test Station. I have to tell the member I have had the opportunity to tour the facility and meet with staff and recognize the work they do there and the impact of the work on the beef industry in the Interlake. The staff of our department works very closely with them and are very supportive of the work that is being done.

The member raises an issue. The board of directors of Gunton have not raised this issue with the department to this point. I would welcome the opportunity to look at how this land arrangement is different from the land arrangement at Douglas and take the steps that are necessary in order to facilitate their operation. The work they do in that area is very important work. As our livestock industry grows, as our feedlot industry grows, the kind of research projects that are done at this facility with respect to feedlots and manure management are very, very important.

I would ask the member to pass that message on. He may call my office or have the board of directors call the office and we will make arrangements to have a meeting in the near future to have the directors come forward and explain their situation. Then certainly we will take the steps and see whether it can be resolved in their best interests.

Mr. Enns: Madam Chair, I do appreciate the minister's response. I will do as she suggests,

forward a copy of today's transcript of Hansard to the board of directors of Gunton and certainly encourage them to make their arrangements with your office for a meeting at your convenience.

I would only ask that the minister keep an open mind to the question, to the matter. At issue is to help facilitate them to run their station better at a time when dollars are scarce, that is unless you happen to be in the Ministry of Health or Justice or Education, but for the virtuous and righteous in the hardworking departments like Agriculture, dollars have not become any more plentiful, even under this administration. I would think if the methodology could be found that would further the good works of the station by encouraging some investment of private monies into that station while still working with the department and maintaining that connection, the minister should be open to it.

I thank the minister for the reasonable response to the issue and look forward to having the directors make their own arrangements to meet with the minister. Thank you.

Ms. Wowchuk: Certainly, as I said, staff in the department have not been aware, and I guess the board of directors have not made their issue known to this point, but we will ensure that we look at the Douglas situation and look at the Gunton situation and look forward to them contacting the office and then moving from there to see whether or not their issue can be resolved.

* (17:00)

Mr. Jack Penner: Getting back to what we were discussing before, that is the APF program, and basically talking about setting the stage for the new direction in agriculture, basically that is I think what is attempted here by this document.

It talks about promoting better use of agricultural land with measures that include taking some environmentally fragile land out of production. Does the minister see this portion of the program as an advantage to the province of Manitoba? How would she see this as being implemented? Under what terms could this be implemented in Manitoba?

Mr. Stan Struthers, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Ms. Wowchuk: When you talk about marginal, fragile lands, there is no doubt that there are fragile lands in this province and across the country that are being farmed. This has been a subject of a lot of discussion. There is a proposal, the ALUS proposal, that has been put forward by the Keystone Agricultural Producers. There is a program in Minnesota where a fair amount of land has been put into permanent cover, taken out of production and is a variation. Ducks Unlimited is quite involved in these kinds of programs.

There has been a lot of discussion. Certainly there has been delicate land that has been put under cover and is being protected, but, ultimately, when we look at this concept, it is a concept right now under the environmental package. It is going to depend on whether there is adequate compensation for the producer. That is one of the details that is not available. Ultimately, farmers will make those decisions for themselves, whether it is viable for them to take their land out of production and take the compensation, or whether it is not.

I know of areas of the province where, right in my home community, where there is land that probably should not be cultivated, but, with the financial pressures that farmers are under, they are looking at every option to make a living. So it will all depend very much on what kind of compensation is offered as to what kind of uptake it is. It will also depend on the details of the program, again details which the federal government has not spelled out to this point, and again we look forward to the discussion and look at what is happening in other countries in this area and in other provinces as well.

Mr. Jack Penner: It looks to me, when I look at this package that has been announced, that there is going to be \$264.5 million invested in these kinds of initiatives. I do not know whether the minister has had any discussion as to what portion of that \$264.5 million will be taken as a land set-aside, but it would appear to me that the program that is now called ALUS, which has largely been promoted and developed by one Ian Wishart from Portage la Prairie through the KAP

organization: Do you see this as a favourable aspect of this announcement, and could it be used in the province of Manitoba?

Ms. Wowchuk: The member talks about the ALUS program, as I have mentioned, and the federal government is aware of the program. I have certainly made the federal government aware of the work that is being done here in Manitoba but, ultimately, this is federal money. They have not given us the detail on what they want to do, how they are going to use this money. One of the issues that I continue to raise is we do not know how the money will be allocated. Will it be demand-base driven? How are they going to allocate it? What kind of programs will it be used for?

They have made the announcement. We know that, on the environmental side, there is \$264.5 million. But that is the kind of detail that we have to get from the federal government. As we move forward, I hope we will have more information on it.

Mr. Jack Penner: Do you see the Province as having an interest in cost sharing in this kind of a program?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, the portion that the member is referring to is the federal portion of the money. They are not looking for cost sharing on the \$589.7 million. They will determine how the money is used and what kind of programs it will be used for.

Mr. Jack Penner: So what the minister has just told us, Mr. Chairman, is that the \$589.5 million is total federal money. There is no requirement for cost sharing of provincial dollars in this program?

Ms. Wowchuk: As I understand the announcement, as I understand the discussions that we have had with the federal government, the \$589.5 million is federal money and the federal government will make the decision on what the programs will be and how this money will be distributed.

Mr. Jack Penner: So you have had no discussion while developing this framework on the matter of environmentally fragile land and

improving water supplies or increasing the numbers of farms with environmental plans and improving access to new and more environmentally friendly pesticides? You have had no discussion about this during the development of this program?

Ms. Wowchuk: As I have said to the member and as I have said to many, there are many details. What we have here is a framework of a variety of programs and details will be worked out. That was the full intention of coming to an agreement and then working out details. What the federal government did was announce money and the \$589.5 million is a five-year program. It will be the federal government that will determine how that money will be spent.

* (17:10)

When the member talks about lands set-aside, those are discussions that we have had with farm organizations to look at how we might work on those. We have programs that we work with producers on to do trial projects. But, specifically for this part of the announcement of money, it is federal money and it is the federal government that has determined the amount of it, and they will spell out details. I believe that, as they come up with some plan and details, we will have the opportunity to have discussion. I would hope that they will work with us, because they have told us that they do not want to do parallel programs. They want to work with provinces and with organizations within provinces. Those are the kinds of details that we will have to work out as we move forward, but certainly we are looking for additional detail from the federal government to see how the work we do in this province with our producers can complement, or whether we can use the federal money to compliment, what we already do in the province.

Mr. Jack Penner: I find that rather interesting. Could I ask the minister then, have you had any discussions about any aspects of the environmental action plan, including improving access to newer and more environmentally friendly pesticides, increasing the number of farms with environmental plans, taking environmentally friendly land out of production and developing renewal energy sources? Have you had any

discussions at all during the last year about these kind of initiatives?

Ms. Wowchuk: Of course, there have been discussions. There have been all kinds of discussions on all aspects of this, and departments have talked with the federal government and looked at various options of what might be done, and what farm plans look like in other provinces. They have looked at the farm planner that Keystone Agricultural Producers developed. They have looked at fragile land situations and how those issues should be addressed. There have been many discussions that staff has been involved in. But, with respect to the money that the member is referring to, there is no detail available from the federal government at this time.

Madam Chairperson in the Chair

I am sure that, as they come forward with this detail, they will take into consideration discussions that have taken place between various departments across the country, and they will take into consideration the comments that have been put forward by staff in the Department of Agriculture. I would like the member to know that his colleague, the Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire), has been invited by the federal government to sit on the environmental farm plan consultation centre committee just quite recently. We would look forward to the input that he would have to ensure that the interests of Manitoba producers are raised and addressed at those meetings where he will be participating.

Mr. Jack Penner: We are quite aware that the honourable member has been invited to sit on this committee. I am also quite aware that the mention in part of this announcement is provinces to add cost-shared portion. That is why I am asking whether the minister has had significant discussions about taking environmentally fragile land out of production and how that program could be applied in the province of Manitoba. Is she prepared to at least cost-share this part of the program?

Ms. Wowchuk: There are areas where the Province and the federal government share programming but not all programming. In this particular case, the federal government has said that

they are going to spend additional money, and it is going to be their money that they are spending. They will determine how it is spent, but there are no details available now. I am sure that there will be opportunities when this is announced that we will be able to take advantage of this money and work in the best interests of our producers. The member is asking if we are going to cost-share this program. That has not been the request, and we will continue to work in the areas that we do work to address environmental issues.

When the federal government announces the details of their plans then we will look at that as well. At this point, there are no details available as to what it is they are proposing here. We asked the question when we were at the meeting last week and they told us clearly that they do not have the details spelled out yet. We have to remember that this is over five years, so there is time to develop the programs. We will be watching closely.

One of the things we have to remember is that there are many things that are being done in the province right now with environment. That was one of the things we talked about when we talked about this agriculture policy framework that we always wanted credit for what the provinces were doing already. The federal government is now trying to catch up. If the member will remember, there used to be a Green Plan that was the federal and provincial governments in partnership. When the agreement ran out, the federal government did not put additional money in, the province carried on with the plans and continues to work on issues. Many times it is with waterways and delicate areas under a program that is called Covering New Ground and there are many good projects out there.

So we are continuing in what we are doing, and I am very pleased that the federal government recognizes they have a responsibility here and now they are coming back in with money they removed a few years ago. They have a responsibility, they are putting some money in. We are very appreciative of what they are doing, and our money is on the table right now and our projects have been carrying on even during that time period when the federal government was

not there addressing these kinds of environmental issues.

Mr. Jack Penner: The environmental action plan includes also access to new and more environmentally friendly pesticides. Is there going to be any provincial involvement in the development of new pesticides, and how is the partnership or how might the partnership that has been developed at the University of Manitoba with Monsanto fit into this program development, Madam Chairperson?

* (17:20)

Ms. Wowchuk: As I understand it, this money will go to complement the work that the PMRA does already, and they do work with minor youth programming and new and friendlier pesticides. Our hope is that having this additional money there will speed up the process of getting chemicals or products certified sooner. That is what we would hope would happen, but there are certainly products that producers want, and when there have been issues raised with the availability of a particular product, we have been able to work with PMRA, and there have been some positive steps taken. So we hope this money will help in that process, but again the details are not available as to how the money will be used. We hope it will be able to be used to address some of those issues that are important to our producers where we have specialty crops but smaller acreages where we are not able to get the testing done, and if this will help us that will be very much appreciated.

I believe the member asked at the end of his question about the University of Manitoba and Monsanto, and I am not aware of any way this will affect the Monsanto work at the university, but, again, we will continue to work with the federal government on this one and look for additional detail that will help us understand where they are spending the money and hopefully it will be beneficial to our producers.

Mr. Jack Penner: The whole area of renewable energy has some significant connotations for Manitoba. Number 1, our hydro power supply could lead us into hydrogen development. I saw in the newspaper that we had a hydrogen-driven test car here not too long ago. This also I believe

could have some very significant impacts on agriculture and cleaning up the agricultural emissions in many aspects if that is a consideration. Would the Province be looking at participating in the development of renewable energy sources and under this kind of a program?

Ms. Wowchuk: This is an area that we are very, very interested in. This is one area where we are not waiting for the federal government to give their detail on how they intend to spend this money and we are taking steps here in Manitoba. I do not know whether the member heard the announcements today, but we announced the ethanol energy committee that is going to be doing consultations and collecting input from residents across Manitoba to look at how we can build an ethanol industry in Manitoba.

I am very excited about that because I think this is one of the areas that offers real opportunity for our farmers and for our rural communities. When you look at the opportunity to create energy in this product and then have a by-product that can be used for livestock feed, a by-product that can be used to produce many other products, it can be the base of many, many products. I think there are opportunities to produce ethanol from grains, particularly wheat. But there is also work being done on production of ethanol from straw and other products. So we are not waiting for the federal government, we are working on this one.

We are looking at other opportunities for economic development in rural areas where we can develop additional energy. Then, of course, if we can develop additional energy, we can reduce the amount of hydro that we have to use in this province. If we can reduce the amount of hydro we have used in this province that means we have more for export. If we have more for export that means more resources to be paid, given back to the people of Manitoba by providing them with more services.

Again, the federal government said that they were going to be putting forward an ethanol strategy and alternate fuel strategy, but we have not heard the federal government's plan. We do not have the detail, but on this one we are proceeding because we see this as an economic

opportunity for the farming community and an economic opportunity in rural communities.

Mr. Jack Penner: The minister has just opened an area of discussion that I think is very significant. In energy development, alternate energy source development has been an item of discussion in this province as long as I have been in government and I think under the previous government as well there were significant discussions, Madam Chairperson.

However, I found it very interesting that, during the last election campaign, the Premier (Mr. Doer) was very pumped about hydrogen cell development in the province and developing an industry out of it. Yet, over the last while, Madam Chairperson, we have heard virtually nothing, even though they demonstrated in the city of Winnipeg just a week ago, less than a week ago, a model of a car that was driven by hydrogen energy. One would have expected the Premier would have jumped all up and down this one with an announcement that we are going to proceed toward hydrogen cell development. Instead, I heard an announcement on ethanol.

Maybe it was done because the Premier is somewhat shy about dealing with hydro or hydro-use issues right now, because the Province of Manitoba, the Government, this NDP government, took upon itself to foist a cost on the hydro users of this province, singled them out really, and increased the cost of hydro to the users in this province by \$400 million, almost a half a billion a year, or \$388 million, I believe, was the exact amount that the deficit was in this province of Manitoba, that these ministers have overspent, on top of the fact that they had almost \$1 billion of increases in revenue over the last two years.

It astounds people when you talk about them. I sent out a little letter with an attachment to it, and the amazing number of letters I am getting back are telling Mr. Doer to keep his hands off the hydro bill. The biggest problem is that we have now discussions on an ethanol plant. One would expect we are nearing, every day we are coming nearer to a provincial election. Announcements such as this are being received in a very, very sceptical manner because people are saying: What a perfect

opportunity, hydrogen fuel cell development in this province. Yet we talk about ethanol. A brand-new industry, we are going to build. We are going to do what? What did we announce today? We are setting up another committee.

* (17:30)

This Government is famous for its committees. If we do not know how to make decisions, we will set up a committee and let them deal, bring back recommendations. Then we do not have to deal with anything. Then we do not have to deal with how we have to govern. We can be governed by committee.

I think this Government needs to be congratulated for one thing. They have truly come to the point where governing by committee has become somewhat of an art. I think today's announcement again demonstrated that, how insecure this Premier is about making decisions and how insecure his ministers are. I think some of them are not that insecure, but he will not allow them to make decisions. Instead, he appoints committees and lets the committees travel and spends money on committee travel. *[interjection]* Absolutely, I was on a committee. What a waste of money on the committee we did, to tour and ask farmers what needed to be put into an ag policy, because this Government has done absolutely nothing with it. They incurred all the cost and wasted everybody's time, yet this Government has done absolutely nothing. Now they have set up another committee.

We even offered the minister, we have offered to the Premier, if she or he, if they have not got the expertise in their caucus to give the minister good advice, we will volunteer our time. We will not even charge for it. We will volunteer our time, and we will give them the advice. We will help them. Yet the Premier chooses to appoint another committee.

An Honourable Member: Oh, so you would be better than Costas Nicolaou on this.

Mr. Jack Penner: We would give you good advice. We governed in an economical manner; we brought the overspending by the previous Pawley administration to a halt; and we put in

place a plan to create an economy that would actually sustain the programming that government put in place and have a surplus at the end of the term. The first year in government, these people, this NDP government has to dip into Hydro's reserve to balance its books. The interesting thing was—

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. I believe all honourable members wish to keep the discussion and questions flowing along constructively. I respectfully ask for your co-operation in this matter. Thank you.

Mr. Jack Penner: Thank you very much, Madam Chairperson, I will suggest then, very constructively, that the honourable Member for Dauphin-Roblin (Mr. Struthers) that he continually keeps nattering about all kinds of things that happened previously. And again, it is in reference to the fact that this Government has no direction. The previous government did, so they constantly refer to the great thing that the previous government did. Quite frankly, selling MTS was probably one of the best business moves that a government has made in this province for many, many years, and I will tell you why. Try and ask Saskatchewan today how much their telephone system is worth on the marketplace. How much is it worth on the marketplace? We knew that the technology that was coming was advancing to the point where the—

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. I would like to remind all honourable members of the committee to try to keep the questions relevant. *[interjection]* You have not been recognized. *[interjection]* You are not recognized.

Mr. Jack Penner: As I was saying, I had heard the minister make reference to Hydro and the infrastructure and all those kinds of things. Then the honourable Member for Dauphin-Roblin referenced MTS, and I just had to comment that I think it was a great business decision on behalf of the previous government to sell an entity that was probably declining in value.

The amount of money that we received for MTS was very, very significant. I believe we wrote off \$750 million worth of debt and banked some \$400 or \$500 million and put it in the rainy

day fund, which I believe the rainy day fund still stands today at around \$400 million. So I think this was a good thing. The money is still there. If government chooses to, before the next election, use some of that money to go do some, maybe flood protection support. The rainy day fund was set up for an inordinate kind of programming. I think the flooding that we have seen in southeast Manitoba, the huge amount of damage that was done to the agricultural area, huge losses that will be incurred by the farmers. Maybe the minister could encourage her Premier to dip his little fingers into the rainy day fund and use it for what it was intended to be used on, extraordinary events. That is what I would suggest to the minister.

However, I want to say to the minister, instead of appointing another committee, the people of Manitoba are looking forward to some action from this Government. We would like to see some action. That is why I have been on this series of questioning, because this plan that was announced by the federal government, that has been rejected by our minister and our Premier, seems to have some significant programming in it that I believe many of our people in this province have asked for, for a number of years.

I refer to the environmentally fragile land which, as I said before, was promoted by Ian Wishart who did a great job of convincing the general farm organization to support it. Took it to Ottawa. Ottawa obviously liked what they heard, and yet I have not heard our minister buying into this plan. Talking about green plans and stuff like that, that the previous government, again, initiated and brought forward, and a great idea it was. Now she talks about, well, they kept it, and I am glad they did keep the Green Plan because it was a good program.

The provincial cost sharing that will be required in some of these areas, I think is somewhat traditional in some of the areas that are identified in this program. I find it very interesting that the Premier (Mr. Doer) today in his announcement to set up a committee to study the ethanol industry might have been an announcement and, quite frankly, to my colleague from the Interlake, I honestly thought that the Premier would announce a hydrogen cell development program for the province of

Manitoba. With the power that we have, with the hydro we have, instead of taking, you know, almost a half a billion dollars a year out of it to cover his debt costs, I thought maybe he would use some of the money to build an industry. And yet all we did today was announce another committee.

It is a government of committees, and I think they should instead of naming it the NDP, name it the ND Committee Party. I think the New Democratic Committee Party would be a perfect name for this Government because they have government in large part by committee. The amount of waste that we have seen is unbelievable.

* (17:40)

However, I want to get back and ask the minister whether she sees another draw requirement on Manitoba Hydro this coming year to allow them to balance their Budget, and maybe this is the reason why she is so adverse to participating in this program that she spent a year negotiating.

I am really amazed when I sit here and listen to the minister when I ask her questions, specific questions, the minister does not know anything about this whole program. She has been there a year, and when I asked her about the environmental part of it, she said: I do not know. I do not know the details. We have not talked about that. When I asked her on the details of drought measures: I do not know, we have not talked about that; increased water supplies, I do not know, we have not talked about that; our rural development communities, I do not know, we have not talked about that.

I mean, this is the response I have received all day when I have questioned on this. Where has she been? Did she just go fishing when she went to the Yukon? Where did she go? What was she doing? She obviously was not listening to what was debated around the table or else I think there would be a bit of knowledge here on some of these things.

I ask the minister: Is it the Government's plan to cut out spending in agriculture or is it their plan to dip their fingers into Hydro some

more to help them balance their Budget in this coming year? Why is she so hesitant in agreeing that virtually everything we have discussed today is receptive to the farm community, as far as policy position is concerned? Why is she trying to couch this program that was announced as a trade compensation package, that is what she has been saying all along, and nobody has seen a word about trade compensation in this package at all? Can the minister enlighten us as to what their true agenda really is?

Ms. Wowchuk: Well, with those kinds of comments, the member is really telling me he has very selective hearing and chooses to just take what he wants but not really listen. I am really, really surprised at the member to put on the record comments that are really discrediting the Keystone Agricultural Producers, a group that he was part of, I believe, farming. He was a big part of Keystone, and now he is putting comments on the record that discredit the Keystone Agricultural Producers, because the Keystone Agricultural Producers were the ones we talked to who asked us precisely the questions the member is asking there, if we would get more detail on the information the federal government was putting out. They said, do not sign until we get more detail. Do not sign until we have an analysis of our safety net programs, because the federal government has announced some money here, but we need more detail to know whether it is going to work, whether the programs that are being developed are to an advantage or a disadvantage for the producers.

So, for the member to say, clearly, from the questions he has asked, those are the kinds of questions farm organizations are asking. I have told the member many times, the federal government, if you look at the announcement, they made the announcement of what the funding will be. There has been a lot of negotiation on programs and we will continue to negotiate.

Now the member also put inaccurate information on the record when he said our Government was not prepared to share in this program. What we said and the Premier (Mr. Doer) clearly said is where we have traditionally shared on a 60-40 basis we will continue to share on a 60-40 basis. On new areas such as trade injury, which is not the responsibility of the provincial

government, the additional money, the transition money, is new money that was not on the table before. We will not share in that money because we are not prepared to let the federal government off from their responsibilities. We will continue to pursue that one.

There are other comments the member made as well. I am surprised the member says this is a government of committees and committees are a waste of money. Here I have a quote from the member made on April 18, 2001. He said: Our caucus is pleased the Doer government has agreed to establish a legislative committee to hear Manitobans on the agriculture crisis. A quote from the member.

When he is on the committee, he wants us to put him on a committee. Today he asks for a committee to go to Ottawa. We will spend money on that one. Then we talk about ethanol. I am also quite disappointed the member would say this is a useless committee, not going to do anything, when I look at the people who are on the committee. Mr. Garth Manness, the chief executive officer of Credit Union Central of Manitoba, a person with tremendous financial skills and economic development skills; Teri Nicholson, a farmer from Shoal Lake who is also involved in economic development who can bring the agriculture and the rural economic development perspective to the table; Costas Nicolaou, an economics professor from the University of Manitoba who specializes in energy-related issues, is well known as a commentator on energy prices and as a consumer advocate.

The member then is saying that it is not valuable to have a panel that will seek out some key questions from Manitobans, questions such as: What are the most important benefits on an expanded ethanol industry? What particular benefits do you see to individuals and to communities? What are some significant barriers to expanding the ethanol industry for producers, consumers, agriculture producers, and retailers? Can these barriers be overcome? What are the next steps that government should take to expand the ethanol industry in Manitoba?

We have an industry in Manitoba, an ethanol industry, and it has not been growing. There has

been talk about it growing. It has not been growing. There has been talk about an additional ethanol plant in Manitoba. There has been the Iogen plant that people have been talking about. Many communities are organizing and looking at this as an opportunity for economic development in their region. Why would the members be so opposed to going out, to having three people go out and listen to producers and hear their ideas and then have our Government work with communities that want to have an ethanol industry?

As well, you have to remember that this is not just only about ethanol. This is about the opportunity to build a livestock industry, value added, but there are also many other products that ethanol is used for, other products that are produced as by-products.

So I am very disappointed that the member would be so critical of very credible people who have taken on this task. I know that there are many members in the public, so although the member may see this as a waste of time, I think it is very important to consult.

I seem to remember where the member was in another committee. Was there not a diversification committee under the previous administration where that particular member traveled around rural Manitoba and consulted? So I guess when the Conservatives do it and consult, it is valuable to collect information; when New Democrats do it, well, then, that is in his mind not considered valuable. Well, I think any consultation is valuable.

The member talks about alternate energy and why we have not developed the hydrogen cells. Well, I just tell the member, wait, just give us a little bit of time. There is a lot of work being done on hydrogen fuel cells.

There is work being done on wind energy and there is work being done on energy transmission. I can remember when we talked about energy transmission and the member said at a meeting, oh, well, the only reason you want to talk about energy transmission is because it is something the Premier (Mr. Doer) wants to use in an election campaign, but when the time came and we actually had the presentation on energy

transmission, the member supported it because there was consultation done between Manitoba and three states looking at how we could improve energy transmission. That consultation and work was very valuable.

* (17:50)

So, on one hand, the member criticizes us for consulting, but when you look back at history, he has been part of consulting. I do not regret or apologize for one of the times we have taken to talk with producers and rural people and urban people as well on these very important issues, because I think that that is very important for government to keep in touch with the grassroots.

With respect to the agriculture policy framework, we have always said we have supported the concept. We support the idea of having a framework that stretches across Canada. We have said that we will take the time we need to consult with producers in Manitoba and look for the detail that we want again. I will not apologize to anyone for taking the time to consult with farm leaders who have questions. If they are looking for additional information, I will take the time that I need to get the information they are looking for to ensure that they are comfortable that this agriculture policy framework is going to meet their needs.

I can tell the member that with respect to the transition, we are not prepared to take on the responsibility that is the federal government's. If the federal government wants us to have 60 percent of what is deserving of our producers while George Bush puts in 100 percent, I guess that is what we are going to have.

I tell the member that there are other provinces who were at the table, who signed the policy framework agreement, who have said this will be a federal program. Even though they have signed the agreement, they will not be putting in the money into the transition or trade injury portion of the package. So there is the agriculture policy framework, there is the trade injury. We are supportive of the agriculture policy framework. We will work until we get more details, but the trade injury is a separate package that we—and I am sure the member does

not want the Province to be taking on federal responsibilities because if we have to take on that responsibility, then really what is the role of the federal government? Why do we have a federal government if they are not going to live up to their responsibilities in areas such as trade?

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I would ask the minister, in terms of the transition package which is 600 million a year for two years across the country, what options are currently being looked at in terms of how that money might be paid to producers?

Ms. Wowchuk: That is a very good question. It is a question that I asked the federal Minister of Agriculture at our meetings. He told us at that meeting that details were not spelled out and he could not tell us how the money would be paid out. They did tell us though, those provinces that do not have the resources to put in 40 percent, that the federal money will flow to those provinces, but the details that we are trying to find on how the money will flow have not been developed yet.

Mr. Gerrard: I would ask the minister what option she is recommending or putting forward in terms of how producers in Manitoba would receive funding from this program.

Ms. Wowchuk: What we have said since we began to lobby the federal government for additional money is that the money should be allocated on the basis of injury or hurt that is being caused by the U.S. farm bill and European subsidies and that it should not be distributed generally. It should be targeted to where the hurt is.

Mr. Gerrard: I would follow that up. Is the minister advocating what would be, for example, a NISA top-up?

Ms. Wowchuk: Yes we have had discussion with the federal government on the NISA top up and have spelled out a couple of our concerns with it. For example, one of the concerns we have is if a farmer has used up all of their NISA account, how will they be affected compared to a farmer who has chosen to go into debt so has a large NISA account? So those are the kinds of issues that we have raised with the federal

government. The federal government is also aware that when we had the CMAP program, CMAP1, CMAP2 where our provincial government put substantial money into agriculture over the last two years, we were able to administer that program very quickly through Crop Insurance. So they are aware of how that program was administered. So we have spelled out some of our concerns that we have with using the NISA account.

Mr. Gerrard: I would ask the minister: What is the minister's preference, a CMAP-type program or a NISA top-up-type program?

Ms. Wowchuk: At this point we have no preference as to which way the dollars would flow. We would like the dollars to flow in a way that would be targeted and ensure that some producers are not left out, such as when we had CMAP. We had young farmers who were not qualified so we had to make adjustments to it then. It is federal dollars that are going to flow, so when those dollars are going to flow and the federal government asks us for advice we will make suggestions. At this point, we know that they are looking at the option of the NISA and we have raised our concerns and asked that those areas where we have concern about accounts being higher in some area and lower in other ones—the other area, of course, that is always a concern for me is that young producers who have not had the opportunity to establish NISA accounts, we want to ensure that they are not left out of it. When they are ready to flow the money, then we will have that discussion; but, as I indicated, when I raised the issue with Minister Vanclief on Thursday, he said that they had no details of how they were proposing to flow that money. So there has to be time given for them to develop a program and then we will look at it from there.

Mr. Gerrard: Has the department done some analysis on how the NISA top-up approach might work with young farmers to see if it would be better than the CMAP?

Madam Chairperson: The hour being six o'clock, committee rise.

JUSTICE

* (14:50)

Mr. Chairperson (Conrad Santos): Will the Committee of Supply come to order, please. This section of the Committee of Supply has been dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Justice. Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber. We are on page 117 of the Estimates book, resolution 4.1.

Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie): I would like to ask the minister specific questions as it pertains to my constituency of Portage la Prairie. Recently, in fact it was June 21, 2002, the minister made a news release in regard to a number of initiatives. One initiative involved the women's correctional facility in Portage la Prairie, and, very specifically, the minister made the announcement that the women's jail, as it is located in Portage la Prairie, would be replaced.

Now, I would like to ask the minister to go through the process with me, if he will, so that I can more fully appreciate the length of time that this announcement is referring to, and basically clarify the responsibilities between Government Services and the Department of Justice as it pertains to this particular facility; because, as you will appreciate, the facility is effectively owned by the Province, operated by the Province under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Government Services, but the programming is delivered within the confines of that facility by the Department of Justice.

So if, in fact, the facility is to be replaced, the Department of Justice effectively will be working with Government Services in this whole process. That is basically where I would like the minister to begin, please.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): The last time we canvassed this issue in Estimates together, I believe I had made it known that there was an evaluation or analysis ongoing as to whether the facility could be rejuvenated, or whether it had to be replaced. That analysis was done cooperatively between the two departments.

The expertise as to the kinds of facility and what kind of programming fits what kind of facility, and the kind of supervisory methodology was, of course, information that the Justice Department had and was shared with Government Services which has the expertise in terms of building.

As well, I know that there has been ongoing work since that analysis, in terms of canvassing at an initial stage different kinds of options which allowed me to be able to announce finally that the Government had made a decision that the facility could not be renovated to suit the standards that were expected in the modern world for Corrections, nor to provide the programming that was necessary.

So while it was the recommendation going back 11 years from the AJI to close the facility, we recognized that a lot has changed since that recommendation in 1991. As I recall, that recommendation, I think, had recommended that there be no replacement; that the facility be closed and that there be community operations to take its place. There has been a change in the profile of female offenders, and it is not the view of correctional officials now that the 1991 recommendation is one that is fit now.

Having said that, there is some thinking within the department that reflects the Aboriginal Justice Implementation Commission recommendation, and that is that there be a correctional facility that meets the needs of the inmates in a more effective way, which may mean that there is more than one facility. There is no decision on that, but that is a possibility that I know has also been discussed among other organizations. It may be that a lower risk facility, a halfway-house-type facility, should be part of our correctional services for female offenders. I am not prejudging that. I just know that that has been a discussion that has been ongoing, but we also recognize that there is a continued role for medium- and high-risk facilities.

I know the member is, of course, very keen to know what the future is for a women's correctional facility in Portage la Prairie specifically. We certainly are aware that the analysis that will have to be done will have to have a

consultation element. I know that Portage la Prairie will certainly be eager and willing to put its best foot forward in terms of the rationale why a facility should remain in Portage. I can only say that Portage is obviously one very obvious option.

At the same time, it is important to recognize that the analysis of the Portage option would have to include the socio-economic issues associated with a facility in that city. So those are issues to be dealt with. There may be other municipalities, and I have heard of a couple just recently, that may be interested in putting their best foot forward, whether Winnipeg is another option. Those are all issues that have to be determined.

* (15:00)

I just want to make it clear that there have been two decisions made by the Government collectively. The first one is that the existing facility must be closed and replaced.

The second decision is that there must now develop immediately a consultation process to consider the options, the options being not only location but the programming and the role of the federal government. The federal government had indicated at a staff level, not at the political level, an interest in partnering in Manitoba so that there could be facility or beds for female offenders sentenced to two years or more because currently there is not a federal women's facility in this province. The advice we had was that the federal government would not engage in further discussions with us until a decision and an announcement was made about the replacement of the Portage facility. So we can begin those discussions now. Clearly, some of the needs of the federal government and its inmates will have to be part and parcel of what unfolds here.

My understanding is that the department is looking at a number of issues related to female programming and corrections and are doing some analysis in terms of location in order to begin a dialogue with the stakeholders so that we can understand internally what some of the issues are, what is important to the provision of correctional services for women in Manitoba. I think that really is the state of play right now.

I do not know if there is anything more I can add except that there have been questions about how long this will likely take. Because I was not sure myself, I asked the department how long it took to build the Remand Centre from the date of decision until the opening of the doors, and my understanding is it took about four or five years. That is without a big consultation process in terms of locations in Manitoba. So, because we do not have complete control over the decisions, because it is a consultation process with information to be discerned and with options to be decided on, we cannot be firm on the date. Whether it is even sooner, I do not know, but the experience in the Remand Centre suggests that it is a several-year process.

Mr. Faurchou: The comments, I know, are wide open, and I am looking for perhaps more definition in the answer than is available at this point in time, but to clearly understand whose department will effectively be doing the consultation, or is it done in a co-operative mode between the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ashton) and yourself? Who is taking the lead? Is it the Minister of Government Services, or is it the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) that is taking the lead on this? Also, too, are there parameters here as to how a community or jurisdiction goes about making their best presentation? Does a community start with a blank page, or is Government Services coming forward with saying this is what we are looking into a jurisdiction? Just how do we, as a community, go about this?

I will inform the minister that the front page news article in the *Portage Daily Graphic* last week was a council meeting by Long Plain First Nations, in which Chief Dennis Meeches and council were very strongly recommending that they partner with Portage la Prairie, city, rural municipality to put forward a proposal that I do not think would be matched by any jurisdiction here in the province because, simply, the co-operative nature that exists plus the will, I will say, in my constituency to have the Portage Correctional facility be rebuilt in Portage la Prairie.

I am asking the minister now: Is there going to be more than a blank-page type of request put out by the department?

Mr. Mackintosh: I understand that the practice is the Department of Transportation and Government Services is the lead on the building of new facilities, but that will be a co-operative effort involving our department for advice on programming and other correctional needs. My understanding is that the first phase now is to put together a draft consultation process. How that will unfold and, from that, there will be the parameters, if you will, the guidelines for any interested parties to make presentations and be part of the consultation process. I know that, aside from the Elizabeth Fry Society that has a very real interest in offenders' interests, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs has asked for and we have agreed to work with AMC and ensure that they have a role as well. There may be others in addition to Portage la Prairie that will want to have a role in the unfolding of plans for a new women's facility.

Mr. Faurchou: I am pleased that the minister has expressed that it will be in stages, that we will have opportunity to make known the amenities that Portage la Prairie has for this particular service. I think that, when one looks at a large facility like the one that is proposed, there are support services that sometimes are on the fringe of consideration but actually are vitally important to the operation of that facility. I suggest that, if Headingley jail had been located one block away from fire and ambulance and police services with less than a minute's time response, as the women's correctional facility is in Portage la Prairie, perhaps the amount of damage that Headingley jail experienced in that riot may not have occurred if that had been the response time. I would also like to highlight as well the number of highly skilled and departmental, trained individuals that are already located in Portage that a relocation of the facilities may jeopardize their continued service to Corrections.

There is also a significant recognition, I hope, by the department that in and around Portage la Prairie the community has a very deep appreciation of concerns by the Aboriginal community. We have four First Nations organizations, if I might place it, three official and one that is looking for official status, former Waterhen residents. All of these organizations can play a part and have played a part in Portage la

Prairie. I also want to say to the minister that the Portage la Prairie School Division does deliver services and has available services that some smaller school divisions, just by sheer numbers, cannot provide level of services.

On that point, I would just like to digress for a moment and hope to make the minister aware of the vital importance of education. I have known for quite some time that the level of formal education by inmates on average has been around Grade 8. We are finding now that currently it has at times fallen to Grade 5. That is of significant concern to myself, because I believe from my educational background that through education one is empowered and has a greater ability to fend for oneself in the cruel world if one is prepared with a formal education. I think it is vitally important that programming be made available to those who are confined.

In any event, I do want to have the minister's acknowledgment that the process will give credit and due weight to some of the items mentioned by myself.

Mr. Mackintosh: The member has raised with me both on the record and off the record attributes that I know he is willing to have the departments here know in terms of the locating of the facility on a continuing basis at Portage la Prairie. I know that that information will be important as the Government moves to a decision as to whether the facility continues in Portage or elsewhere or whether part of it remains in Portage or whatever combination unfolds.

I might just add that given that we are looking at several years for this process, we thought it was important that there be some ongoing issues dealt with at the Portage jail in the meantime, and therefore there were some staffing realignments done as it affects Portage. There was an enhancement to the staffing component at Portage. There was, I understand, at least three staff added to Portage, but, as well, as the member knows from the Headingley riot in '96, until November of 2000 there was really no programming conducted there. In addition to the overcrowding, I think that was a very serious situation.

After November, there was a reinstating of programming, and I will just advise the member that there is some new programming that is unfolding there, but, further, the overcrowding situation was ameliorated by the completion of some renovations at the Remand Centre. I think the Warriors' trial was also a factor in that overcrowding, but it was not until the renovations were completed at the Remand Centre that the remand population was shifted.

There are a number of programs that are under development for implementation at Headingley. There is a behaviour management and self-harm intervention program, an intensive supervision and support program for female inmate reintegration and finally, a vocational baking program. So these are coming on-stream and I hope will go some way to recognizing that we have not been very specific in programming for female offenders. That is also explaining why we now have Ototema, our female young offender mentoring program. So Circles of Change is a 40-session program that focuses on relationship problems that can contribute to offending.

Then there is the Salvation Army's positive lifestyle program. There is adult ed, and the member talks about that. I was unaware that the Portage School Division has a role to play and I look forward to learning more about the relationship between Portage and the facility.

* (15:10)

As well, there is cultural programming through an Aboriginal cultural worker in the MTN call centre. I understand it is teaching employment skills. AA is offered twice a week and religious programming twice a week. E. Fry provides information sessions about the operation of the court system and release planning. I understand that the Portage Women's Shelter provides one-to-one counselling as shelter staff is available and health education and awareness are offered on an one-to-one basis by the facility nurse as well. Psychological services are provided one day a week; psychiatric services, a half day a week.

So that is my understanding of the nature of programming, both present and planned. I just

wanted to put that on the record as well because I know that there have been concerns, particularly from the Fry Society and inmates about, not just the facility, but what happens within the walls of that facility. I know, too, that Portage la Prairie will have to deal with some of the issues raised. I think, Elizabeth Fry has been vocal, I think, that is where most of the public concern has been raised about the location of the facility. So clearly there will be a challenge to Portage la Prairie to rally arguments as to why it is an appropriate location and so on. I look forward to seeing this process unfold.

I might add that I am very eager to see this process get started. I think that there is a lot of hope that is garnered by the announcement. Clearly this is a significant decision for a government to make. I know from discussions with the Minister for Transportation and Government Services (Mr. Ashton) that this is a comparatively large project even if the infrastructure is on the lower end of cost, because it is by its very nature, an expensive project. The early indications I had was that it could range from \$8 to \$15 million and the most recent now, just around the time of our announcement, there were some estimates that it could cost as much as \$20 million.

So you can see that the potential for this to be a very costly investment is there. I suspect though that the nature of the investment costs would depend on the type of facilities, if it is plural or singular in terms of the different features. That may be contingent on location and may well be contingent on programming. So everything is tied together.

Mr. Faurshou: I appreciate the minister's response. I know that Elizabeth Fry has effectively had concerns with programming and the availability in Portage la Prairie, but I think that one has to look a little bit deeper. I believe the same situation would be in the case whether it be a community the size of Portage la Prairie or the community size of Winnipeg on the basis that individuals when they go into special programming, then their release date comes forward and they are effectively released midway through their programming; it is a concern to those that enter into partnership to provide for programming and educational opportunities,

lifestyle and personal problem resolution. All of these different programs that are there are continually being interrupted by early release dates coming forward.

I think it is vitally important that the Minister of Justice, however the communication channel is, work with our judicial process, specifically the judges here in the province. They have to comprehend if individuals who have come into our system for whatever reason require some programs to give their life balance and understanding so they will not re-enter our Corrections facilities days, weeks after their release, the judges within our province have to give that amount of time to resolve the issues so that we are not releasing someone back into our community that is as yet unprepared to carry their load within our society.

So I do not think the concerns raised about Portage la Prairie and programming are just on the basis that there are other considerations that would be in play regardless of in what community the Corrections facility would be located. I just wanted to put that on the record, not that we are convinced of the criticisms of Portage la Prairie only, unless we have co-operation by the judges here in the province.

I know this will be a concern in discussions. Does the minister have any comment before we leave this specific topic?

I would like to then continue on in regard to Portage la Prairie and concerns we have toward policing. We have had two major incidents in Portage la Prairie that have affected our RCMP personnel in quite a substantive manner. I know there are persons away on sick leave and stress leave and those on maternity as well.

Even though, as the minister referred to earlier in the Estimates process, we are only one person down on traffic and we are only one person down on city, that is in complement numbers. That does not reflect the number of individuals ready, willing, and able to take a shift. There are significant numbers away, for the reasons I have just stated. I would like the minister to acknowledge that he is aware of the situation, not only just in Portage la Prairie, but

that this same situation does exist in other communities.

In fact I will even broaden it away from RCMP but also to DOPS, Dakota Ojibway Police Service. They have significant numbers that are affected, members that are affected by stress and illness and are very challenged to accommodate their responsibilities at present. I do not know whether the numbers were correct or not, but my understanding of Sandy Bay, for instance, when an incident took place about a month ago there was only one available officer out of, I believe it was, eight that are supposed to be on that detachment service. That is the type of concern I would like the minister to acknowledge that he is aware of.

Mr. Mackintosh: The overall support for the RCMP and for DOPS, I should first note, has increased significantly and at a significant cost to provincial taxpayers, to the province. The RCMP and DOPS policing, in general, is in my brief experience an expensive commitment to our safety. When it comes to the RCMP, for example, we know that many of those costs are beyond the control of the Province, even though the Province is responsible for paying 70 percent of that police force. The contractual arrangements are barely entered into by the federal government. So there has been some frustration across the country for many years about that issue.

On coming to office, we wanted to, in addition to enhancing and bringing in innovative programming, get back to some basics in terms of policing and prosecution investments. We prioritize within our budgeting process the policing financial commitment. We had, for example, in '99-2000, a budget of just over \$53 million for the provincial policing allocation. This year, it is now at \$61.5 million. So it has gone from \$53 million to \$61.5 million in just a very short period of time. So the member can see that this indeed is an investment that goes beyond the average increase of the provincial budget, and certainly beyond the cost of living.

* (15:20)

What that has enabled the RCMP to do is have the finances available to, first of all,

increase complement and, second of all, to staff to complement. There has been a celebration, if you will, I think, on the part of RCMP, that we have worked co-operatively for this. This is not just the provincial government doing this. Our financing is very important, but it is also important for the RCMP to make the plans and to get the recruits and have the training and all that. The two energies have worked on this. We have tried to strike a new relationship with the RCMP in terms of how we communicate around budget issues. I think, from what I understand, things are going very, very well. I was very proud of the relationship I had with the late assistant commissioner, and I look forward to the new assistant commissioner and, as well, senior members of the RCMP in this regard.

The issue of deployment of the RCMP was one that was a real live-and-well issue when I came into office because of some realignment of policing and some changing of detachments in the province. I remember my first AMM convention, being besieged by representatives of many municipalities who were quite upset about the change and deployment of RCMP in their particular communities. That was an example of where there was a jurisdiction given to the RCMP in terms of deployment. The Province did not have any direct role, of course, in that initiative. Looking back and seeing the general satisfaction that has been apparent from municipalities, I think that a lot of the concern was not just about the reorganization, but it was also tied to a lack of staffing for RCMP in Manitoba going back three years.

The number of complaints has fallen off drastically and dramatically. In fact, we are getting communications now that are complimentary in terms of the deployment of RCMP in local communities. Having said that, we also have to recognize that the deployment, the retirement, recruitment, sick leave, maternity leave and stress leave, all those issues are managed by the RCMP. The RCMP is a federal police force. We have a general contract with them for many years, I think another decade. They are charged with the management of their police force. Having provided them with the funding to increase complement and staff, it is our expectation they will manage those resources wisely, with a view to maintaining the

policing resources at a level that has been agreed to by the Province, the federal government, the Solicitor General and the RCMP itself.

When it comes to the Dakota Ojibway Police Service, as well, we have found, despite the fact there is a different percentage formula for that police force, it has not come really any more cheaply to the Province. I think it has provided excellent policing services. In recognition of that and some tough negotiations and bargaining, the number of communities policed by DOPS, as I understand, increased from four to six. The number of officers increased from 17 to 26, an increase of 9. This might not be the most current evaluation of those numbers. As well, though, I do know there is a half-time crime prevention co-ordinator. Certainly since we have come into office, there has been a significant increase in the funding of the Dakota Ojibway Police Service.

That is sort of an overview of those two policing operations. I know the other day we talked in here about the deployment and the complement for RCMP in the Portage area. I think out of the total complement, I cannot recall, is it 30 or 40, the indication from the RCMP was they were down only by two or maybe three staff. Staff is just getting the precise updated figures now. From the information we have, it appears Portage has been able to generally staff to complement or near complement. If there is a shortcoming it is only by a couple of members.

In terms of whether there may be people on sick leave, that is a matter that is managed by the RCMP. Of course there would be a contract between the City of Portage la Prairie and the RCMP to govern those issues, I understand. The Province is not a party to that contract. It is a contract the municipality has to decide on in terms of what local municipal priorities are and then make that arrangement with the RCMP. The Province has a more direct role of course with regard to the detachments outside of Portage la Prairie under the Provincial Police Service Agreement.

That is my understanding of the lay of the land, but I know the member has some further

questions. Perhaps before we go on we could deal further with the member's questions.

Mr. Faurchou: I know the minister wants to be totally encompassing in his remarks, but just that was, I thought, very clear as to my very specific question. Does the minister, through his department, track available officers, not just those who are assigned to complement but officers who are available to take a shift at a given time?

This specific point is something we, in office, must get full value for dollar. If you want to go back to the contract with DOPS and the Long Plain incident that involved an officer fatally wounding an individual that was effectively going to cause bodily harm to the officer, and it was justifiably—force was used. But I will say that that constituted the balance of that detachment booking off on stress leave. Effectively, not only the officer that was involved in the shooting, but the three other fellow officers also booked off. So we have a detachment of four DOPS officers, all off on stress leave and no policing for the entire First Nations of Long Plain, and we paid double.

* (15:30)

Now I know this incident did not take place under the current minister's watch, but this is an example of what is occurring still today and we, as legislators, have to demand value for dollar. We cannot pay twice for something that we already paid for. In this case with Long Plain, we had to pay for RCMP officers to come in to cover off a DOPS contract, which effectively we had to pay for anyway. So we paid the DOPS officers and we paid the RCMP for exactly the same job done. This is occurring today, maybe not to as bold an example as I am using, but it is occurring today.

I want to ask the minister very specifically if he is not tracking the numbers of available officers within the complements, then I suggest that he consider doing so. I might just add to be clear. If there is not in the language of the contract that we have, at the very minimum, a percentage of the officers of the complement available, then I am suggesting that we should. If we are contracted for nine DOPS police officers and only one is available at any particular time,

then effectively perhaps our contract should be in breach, because there is only 15 percent of the available officers available to the contract that we have signed for. I do not want to lose the minister, but I am trying to hammer home effectively that we are perhaps not receiving the level of service to which we are paying for.

Mr. Mackintosh: We will certainly pass on the concerns of the member. I think what the member does recognize is that the Province is responsible for managing a contract, but not the day-to-day operations of these police forces; that that is a function of the federal police force or DOPS, depending on what force he is talking about.

In terms of the staffing, the daily staffing and who is on duty and so on, I mean, just to look at, for example, the Portage PPSA has 11 as their established complement. That right now is staffed fully as of May 17, so it might not be the same today. That was the last figure that we had from the report from the RCMP. So that indicates that there is a full complement there, and I suspect that that has not been the case for several years until just recently.

When you go to Portage traffic services, the establishment is eight and they are at seven. So clearly, there has been some long-term or longer-term vacancy there as a result of transfers or normal attrition or promotion or perhaps even extended out-of-province duties. But then we go to the Portage municipal detachment, and it appears that the complement, as agreed to between the city and RCMP, is 23 officers. As of May 17 there are 22. Then there is what is called the Portage municipal general intelligence, and there are two people deployed for two positions. So you can see that there are only two short right now out of all those numbers.

I know what the member is saying, that that may be the staffing level and the complement, but on a daily basis there may be somebody that is off on sick leave and so on. I think that if Portage is finding that there are on a daily basis officers insufficient in numbers to fulfill the contract or to meet public expectations and needs, that that is an issue that should be raised with the RCMP. But it is important to recognize that the actual number of officers, of course, will vary from month to month if not day to day just

because of the numbers overall and is affected by such things as mat leave and transfers and promotions.

That is an issue that is left to the RCMP and all of its managers and its professional wisdom to ensure that it is being handled in a way that recognizes the objective of public safety.

I might just add, too, that in addition to that, though, the change to the complement over the years does have an impact locally in certain areas. In Manitoba, from an authorized complement of 594 in 1992, up to 613 in August of '99, and now in August of 2001 I understand that the complement is 622.

The member knows too, in particular in his area, that if there are increases to the policing by the Dakota Ojibway Police Service in areas formerly policed by the RCMP, the RCMP complement may go down, but the Dakota Ojibway Police Service complement would go up.

I know the member was also talking, I think, about some concerns in the Portage area about incidents. I would be pleased to address those if he wishes to canvass those. I have some more information here than I had earlier, although the Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings) and I had some discussion around this issue that would be on the record.

Mr. Faurchou: I think the minister knows where I am going. I know he has to tread lightly in regard to it, because, as I mentioned two years ago, the way an announcement is made that so and so, a female officer will be away on maternity leave but there will be no change in level of service for this detachment, well, effectively what the RCMP is stating is that that female police officer is of zero worth, because, if we are going from five members to four members in a particular detachment, which was the case when we discussed this item, you know, then if four members can do what five did, then you are making a statement in that press release that this female officer's value was zero.

I am really specifically trying to get to the contractual issue which the Province enters into with the federal government on provincial police servicing. I know on municipal it is a different

negotiated contract, but when we expect that we are going to have 11 police officers and we are paying for 11 police officers and then when we find out that maybe there are only four that are actually available to take a shift, then maybe we should be looking at our contractual language, because I think we have the expectation as taxpayers here in the province of Manitoba that we are getting value for dollar and that when you answer the call that there are 11 police officers backing that up.

I know that within the public we understand that police officers are only people and do experience illness and stresses, and, in the most part, to a higher degree than we do in other lines of work. But we have to, as a public, have the understanding that there are sufficient numbers, and if we have negotiated that there is work for 11 police officers and there are only 4 who are taking those shifts, then something is desperately wrong here. Not only are the officers who are remaining on the job increasingly overworked, but we, as a society, are receiving less than we have expected as far as protection in our society.

So I want to leave that with the minister. I do have to get away to another appointment right at the present time. But that is the concern we have. Portage la Prairie along with Thompson vie for No. 1 position month in and month out in the number of occurrence reports as allocated per police officer. It is a very, very heavy workload, and along with the heightened numbers of commuting public that now traverse through Portage la Prairie—and the highways department can verify this, that over 35 000 people in a 24-hour period will travel through Portage la Prairie on any given day during the summer months—that is a concern as well.

* (15:40)

So I will leave it with the minister to talk with department officials. I believe it would be important for the minister's knowledge to have current figures and if they are not specific to detachment, perhaps at least in a global nature; that if we have 622 police officers as complement here in the province, how many are able to answer the call at any given moment? He should know, as a minister, that maybe there are 4 or 5 off. Maybe there are 25 to 30 off. Perhaps there are as many as 70 or 80. I know that here, in the

city of Winnipeg, that out of their complement, each and every day there are more than 100 police officers incapacitated, unable to answer the call for a shift. That has to be a consideration of any management team responsible for the security of Manitobans. Thank you.

Mr. Mackintosh: I think that we are talking about contractual issues and contractual language. I certainly will have a look at that issue. It was a 20-year contract. I think it was signed in the early nineties by Mr. McCrae, so I think we have about another 10 years left on that which, of course, would engage the federal government if there were to be any changes.

I will say this to the member, though, that there is a reconciliation provided to the department at the end of every fiscal year on the number of vacancies, so that there is an adjustment there. At the same time, if the member is aware, that, for example, with the Portage municipal detachment if the number 23 in terms of complement and 22 in terms of deployment is not accurate, if he could let me know, I would appreciate that information. Clearly, though, if there are issues around how many are available to answer a call because of illness and so on, that would be an issue for Portage to deal with, with the RCMP as its contractual party.

But I thank the member for that concern. I can say I heard a similar concern from the Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings). It does raise issues around the role of the federal government and the Province surely but, as well, the managerial jurisdiction of the RCMP and what accountability mechanisms may exist to deal with that concern.

Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry): Just some housekeeping items. I have requested several times from the Minister of Justice's office, and personally from the Minister of Justice himself, for a spreadsheet on the compliance bill. We now have the Aboriginal policing, Bill 44, and The Common-Law Partners' Property, Bill 53. I would like to request a time when we can sit down together and go over these bills with the briefing notes and with the spreadsheets.

Could the Attorney General confirm that today so we do not have to take any longer?

Mr. Mackintosh: I have been most eager to see the member have any information she needs with regard to The Charter Compliance bill. The advice I had received last week was that she would be contacted to arrange a date for a meeting. Well, I will follow up on that if that has not been the case because, first of all, I hope she got the background document. It is my information that had gone out over a week ago, actually. Well, I will see to this because that is not what my instructions were at all.

Mrs. Smith: Well, I thank the Attorney General for that because I have absolutely nothing in my office. Whether it went astray or what happened, I do not know, but I am quite organized in my office, and my assistant has been looking for it because we have had some questions. I wanted to meet with Legislative Counsel, and I have called them in this regard, but if we could do that. Also, because there has been such a long delay on that, could we also include Bill 44, the Aboriginal policing, Bill 53, The Common-Law Partners' Property and Related Amendments Act, as well? I would be so pleased if I could have a briefing on all of these bills from the minister's office.

Mr. Mackintosh: You will check on that, The Charter Compliance Act. In fact, I recall the information had come to me that it had been personally delivered to the member's office, so something has gone amiss, obviously. I think that was over a week ago, and I know the appointments secretary was to call to make arrangements for a meeting on that bill because, like I say, I am very eager to see the member get all information needed on that one.

In terms of the provincial policing act, we will certainly arrange the same, and when The Common-Law Partners' Property Act is tabled, we will certainly fast-track that, and I will keep a close eye on that one because there is a time issue. I can tell you there are time issues, not just with regard to the completion of the drafting, but there are translation issues that are causing some challenges for the Government. So, hopefully, even maybe before the end of the day, we will have some confirmation of where things are at, particularly with The Charter Compliance Act.

Mrs. Smith: If the Justice Minister could be so kind to have the compliance bill spreadsheet

delivered here to the House, and the briefing notes backgrounders, I would be very pleased to receive them and get down to the business of looking them over today. With the Aboriginal policing, Bill 44 and Bill 53, if by tomorrow we could put a time line, then we both know that this is happening. I am very anxious to look over these things. I understand tomorrow at noon now we are meeting on the securities bill, so if we could say tomorrow noon, if I could have Bill 44 and Bill 53, I would appreciate it very much.

Mr. Mackintosh: Bill 53 has not been distributed yet, so that is still ahead. But the other ones, I do not know if, on the Aboriginal policing, if there is a side by side on that. There is, yes. That is great. I hope I can get that to the member tomorrow then.

In terms of The Charter Compliance Act, I wanted the member to know that there was not a side by side created for that one; there was a background document. My understanding, I just got a note that it had been delivered. So, if the member does not have that, and it is a fairly thick document, it is a good quarter-inch thick, then we will provide another copy. My understanding is my office is setting up a meeting on that, so I will make further personal inquiries as well.

Mrs. Smith: I thank you for that. I know we have had a staff member out ill, and she does receive all these documents, so perhaps it could have got put in the wrong pile or whatever. If another copy could be provided for me, that would be great, and if we could get the rest of this on my desk as soon as possible. The Aboriginal policing by tomorrow would be useful because then we could move along in these areas.

On another topic, I would like to talk about the non-staff magistrates here in the province of Manitoba at this time. The non-staff community magistrate fills an important role here in the province, in the justice system in Manitoba. I have to say today in Question Period when I was questioning the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) about the domestic violence trial dates, before we get into the community magistrates I am curious what would bring the Minister of Justice to say that these domestic

violence trial dates could be set within six weeks of entering a plea to the charges against them, when, clearly, if I know that the actual trial dates are actually four to eleven months away, clearly, the Minister of Justice must know that.

* (15:50)

Mr. Mackintosh: The information that you pass on is based on the records of the court. It is not information generated at the political level.

In terms of the Domestic Violence Court, we had information that came from Prosecutions Division three or four weeks ago that there were trial dates available within six weeks of setting the matter down. That was the information given to me. In fact, I understand that as of last week there was a date in late August, on August 27. That is information passed on to me, and I simply passed it on to the media when asked. It was the result of an inquiry.

I do understand that over the last couple of weeks, things have changed remarkably as they do every year at this time because we go to the summer rota where the judges and others in the court system are taking more vacations than usual. That certainly has an impact on the availability of trial dates through the rest of the summer. I suspect, although not reported, that that is also part of the lay of the land. I think what is even more critical here is what is the appropriate measure of how long it takes to get a trial date. We know, for example, that last week you could get a trial in late August, but that may not fit the diary of a defence lawyer. If a defence lawyer says he could not get a trial for four months or longer, it may well be because the dates available from the court did not coincide with an opening on that person's calendar.

As well, it depends I think on the length of a trial that is expected in terms of whether that fits. So different people are using different measures. I know going back to the tenure of Rosemary Vodrey here, the department has used a measure of when the earliest trial date is available. That is just what I did. So there was nothing that was done differently there, but what was available three or four weeks ago, as I say, may well be different now.

I am more interested, though, in looking to see what can be done to reduce the time lines that it takes to process a case, in some cases more than others. Whether it is a month and a half or it is four months, clearly the summer slowdown does have an impact and will have an impact on cases for the rest of the year. That has been historical in Manitoba. Whether there can be changes to that, that may well be, but people are in Manitoba dependent on vacations in the summer months. So there is that annual slowdown.

Aside from that, I think there is a lot that can be done. I know the member in Question Period says, well, judicial resources or the number of judges is the determining or a major factor. If the Opposition wishes to make that case, I am prepared to listen to it so long as there is some clear evidence that that is a determining factor. On coming into office, I may have thought that that was a determining factor. I may have thought that the number of prosecutors was the determining factor because when people talk about backlogs, the traditional one-line answer is, you need more judges and prosecutors. That is why we had Ernst & Young come in; it was not a cheap report. They came in and spent several months looking through the system to see how it could be made more efficient, and, by golly, they came out with a recommendation that, if you read it as a whole, read all the recommendations, they say the number of prosecutors is actually a small part of making the system more efficient. What you have to have is relief for prosecutors from the burden of managing staff and doing photocopying and file organization.

We have brought in a reorganization of the Prosecutions Division. We have an office manager there now, which it is unbelievable to think that was not there before, I suppose, in a way, but this is why you have outside people come in. It relieved senior prosecutors of organizing the support staff, and we have brought in additional support staff. They did say there should be more prosecutors, and we have already hired the majority of those. We have to phase this in. Their main concern was how information was gathered at an early stage and put into the files and how there were photocopying and phone calls being made on behalf of prosecutors. As

Mr. Phil Mason [*phonetic*] said, get the prosecutors out of the copy room, or the Xerox room, and into the courtroom.

Almost all of those recommendations are being addressed. There are a few that have been rejected. I think I am just talking a very few in number. As a result of the implementation phase, which engaged about a third of the staff in Prosecutions, were involved, and six change teams. In other words, when the report came out, there was this mobilization of the division to implement Ernst & Young. As well, it was overseen by bringing in a private-sector managing partner from one of the private law firms in Winnipeg, so there are some synergies so that we could learn from the private-sector approaches.

Mr. Doug Martindale, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

This is perhaps a lengthy answer to a short question, but my belief is that we can find better ways of doing things. The taxpayers and Justice ministers—I am talking about at least two Justice ministers and two governments now, since 1998 have invested significant new monies in Prosecutions after going through a shrinking of their resources at a very difficult time and, I think, an unfortunate time. We have paid that cost, and now we are rebounding from that. But, after those unfortunate decisions were made, between '95 and '97, there has been an increase of about 60 percent to prosecution resources and about 30 percent since we have come into office. I think taxpayers are entitled to ask the question: Is this just about more money, or is this about new processes?

I would urge the member to consider more than just the one-line answer that it is more judges. As the member knows, when I came into the minister's office, there were 39 full-time judge positions approved. In very short order, we approved 40. It is at 39 now, as a result of a retirement at the end of December. With an appointment of a new Chief Judge within a matter of days, it will either go to 40 again if a person is appointed from off the bench, or will remain at 40 with a vacancy if the person appointed is from the bench. There is a job to do

in that case if the person is appointed from the bench to fill the 40th position.

Again, I would challenge the member to look at the use of courtrooms. She was there when we had this discussion with Mr. Tonn on behalf of the Provincial Judges Association to look at the utilization of courtrooms, but I think it is well recognized that, with our court speed up strategy that we have begun with the Ernst & Young report's implementation. We should be seeing some improvements, and if we do not see the improvements we are going to have to change the strategy, but there is now, for the first time to my knowledge, a comprehensive strategy that is unfolding. That is not simply the provincial government doing this. I mean, this involves the other partners, which is the judiciary and Winnipeg Police Service as well as a partner in a couple of these initiatives.

* (16:00)

One of the very important initiatives that is seen from the police's view as one reducing overtime in overtime cost for us is a backlog reduction initiative. We had a pilot program based on our Ernst & Young recommendation and the knowledge of Mr. Slouwe [*phonetic*] in particular of a similar initiative in Victoria. We invested new resources and a different process to look to see what cases are likely to fold, and we did this with Winnipeg Police Service, Division 11, for six months. With just the one division in six months there were 423 court cancellations. You can see the potential of that kind of initiative. By September, that initiative will be for all of the police divisions in Winnipeg as a result of our investment and some policing resources as well at very significant savings to the City, but I think significant savings in terms of time and convenience for victims and witnesses, and, even more important, the availability of courtrooms and trial dates. So that is a very key component of our strategy.

Of course, the strategy also comprises the increase in prosecution resources. The judges are doing a case-for-management project and as the member heard, it has been my urging to the Chief Judge and to the Acting Chief Judge and to many others, including in committee the other day, that the judiciary look to expanding that,

and looking to see how we can make better use of courtrooms in afternoons. In the Family Violence Court, we recognize that it is particularly beneficial when we can get early trial dates and there has been some success. There have been some improvements. I also note though that the Family Violence Court, because of the excellent work of prosecutors in particular there, have now a resolution docket, an intake docket and what are called victim days, in other words, new initiatives to get a settlement of cases and get a screening of cases at an early stage to free up trial dates.

In September there is going to be a new pilot unveiled to reduce remands. The member knows I have been taking a national position, urging, along with Alberta, which is taking the lead on this one, Alberta and Manitoba, to do away with preliminary inquiries which quite frankly can as much as triple the time it takes to process a case. B.C. has joined in on this because they said it has cost \$1 million to \$1.5 million for British Columbia to have preliminary inquiries.

As well, we are boosting community justice, and we are now sharing a database with Winnipeg Police Service for the sharing of the file information at an early stage; then we are moving to computerization of Prosecutions.

So those are some of the initiatives that are necessary, I think, and I do not particularly want to get into all the recommendations from the Ernst & Young report at this stage, but there are big changes that can be made with doing business in a different way.

Mrs. Smith: Well, clearly the Justice Minister goes on ad nauseam about what the plans are, and the first of its kind programs. In actual fact, does the Attorney General know how many remands or know about the backlogs in the court system? Is the Attorney General aware, or does the Attorney General believe, that everything is going just fine in the court system?

Mr. Mackintosh: I think if the member has some particular concerns, I mean, she is talking about a *Free Press* story and availability of a trial date over the summer period. That is one issue, and I have dealt with that. It depends on how you measure the time that it takes to process

cases in Manitoba. There have been in Manitoba in recent history some very difficult experiences, some long delays. I think there have been some improvements in some areas. I think that in the area of family violence and youth there has been some improvement. There are more improvements necessary. One thing I will accept is that improvement is needed, and we are intent on seeing that come to fruition.

* (16:10)

I do not know how useful it is to compare apples and oranges, which is what I think you are doing when you are comparing different statistics that the department or Prosecutions may have versus defence counsel. I think it is useful, though, to look for solutions to how we can get cases moving more swiftly in our Provincial Court, and I have made it known publicly that we have a number of initiatives underway. I hope the federal government will take us up on one, and I will continue to work with the Provincial Court to see if there are any barriers that the Province can remove to moving to more effective utilization of our court infrastructure in the Provincial Court.

In terms of the trial dates, the department has been measuring these from the time of plea to the first available date. I mean, I can go through some of those statistics, but I can also say, again, that, over the course of the summer that we are in, those dates can differ from what is the usual course over the year in general.

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

One thing that I think is worth noting—is that the department is working with the judiciary to free up some additional custody dates in the summer, and it is our hope that that will make some difference. As the member knows, the in-custody dates are very important and also recognizing that the number of accused in custody can vary from week to week, sometimes significantly. But, generally, the number of custody dates are fewer in the summer because of the vacation schedule and the rota.

Another thing to note here is that the approach, I do not think, should just be generally

to reduce the time it takes to process overall. I think you have to see what kind of cases would benefit best by being heard more expeditiously. So I know that we are on a good path. I think there are efficiencies that are unfolding, and I think we will see the results of the initiatives cumulatively. As I say, if we do not see them, we will be changing our approach. But I urge the member to, as well, consider the role that court utilization has in this whole initiative. The Province can invest a lot of money and can bring in a lot of new initiatives, but I think there are further efficiencies that can be found.

Mrs. Smith: Could the Minister of Justice please outline specifically what improvements have occurred in terms of court backlogs, court remands, since this Minister of Justice has come into office, very specifically compare and contrast what happened before, what has happened now? Is the Attorney General aware of what has happened, and, if so, could the Attorney General please let me know?

Mr. Mackintosh: The number of remands that take place on these files, I think, is a cause for concern. There is a remand culture that has built up over decades, not just in Manitoba, but in the court systems, and I think that is a challenge that is worth working on and is something that we have proceeded to deal with. The number of remands can sometimes even cause more court cases because, when offenders, or accused, are required to attend remands, it increases the risk that they will not show and there will be breaches that become a further burden on the court system. The department, working with other stakeholders, has put together a case management subcommittee of Provincial Court rules which is now dealing with a review of the front end; in other words the pre-trial part of the justice system, to find out how the process can be improved and expedited, recognizing that the Justice Department alone does not have the sole power on that. There are defence lawyers involved, the judiciary, Legal Aid, and police.

We have expectations that court rules in the Provincial Court can make a real difference. I have often asked the question, you know, to my astonishment, why there are no Provincial Court rules when there are inches upon inches deep of rules for the Court of Queen's Bench.

There is now in place in Manitoba a second video bail court to allow applications for bail to be heard in two courtrooms and without moving the accused, which is both a timesaver and a benefit to public safety. It reduces the matters being put over as a result of huge numbers on the dockets. That also has the benefit of answering one of the last recommendations outstanding from the Lavoie report, and has now enabled the specialization of domestic violence cases coming forward for bail.

There is a custody co-ordination project which is now underway which allows matters to be remanded to the custody co-ordination docket without the appearance of the accused where they are tracked. When the co-ordinator is advised that a meaningful event will occur, the matter is placed on a court docket. That is to avoid appearances by the accused when there is no disposition and it is simply just another remand.

The provincial liaison committee was struck by the Acting Chief Judge to allow issues to be raised and discussed among the judiciary, the Crown, Legal Aid, defence bar, and the Courts administration. I highly commend the court and the acting chief for that initiative. Again, that recognizes that the answers are not only with one area of the justice system.

The Headingly link committee has representatives of Courts, Corrections, Crown and defence to explore appropriate communication links to assist in interviewing clients with the goal, first of all, to resolving matters earlier, and, second, without the necessity of bringing the client into Winnipeg. That is well underway.

There has been a request to the defence bar to remand matters to a date when an event is likely to happen, and, as well, I have seen the request that has gone from the assistant deputy attorney general to prosecutors. I as well have personally met with and spoken to the judiciary about this issue and about the appearance of the accused when there is no meaningful disposition likely to happen.

You know, the system has a lot of participants. Each has to be consulted if we are going to make significant change. I think I can say now

that the participants in the system see that it is a priority of the Government to attack the remand culture. As well, I spoke to the representative of the defence bar about this challenge. So I take every opportunity I can when I meet with our partners to challenge them, to deal differently with this issue.

I think that the rules of the Provincial Court could be instrumental in where we are going, but I should not say that that may be more instrumental than the other initiatives I have just outlined. I know that getting the information to our prosecutors is very important because they are within our bailiwick as a government. Just as often as I hear from prosecutors that, well, it is up to the defence, I hear from the defence, well, it is up to prosecutors. So I think we have got to make sure that we just be as comprehensive as we can in moving this along.

* (16:20)

Mrs. Smith: Could the Minister of Justice just answer the question? The question is, does the Minister of Justice know how many remands, how many court backlogs are happening. Does the minister know, since coming into office after three years, whether the court system has improved or is he unaware of what is happening there? If the Minister of Justice knows, could the Minister of Justice compare and contrast between what is happening now, what has happened before coming into office? We have heard for many, many minutes all the programs. It is a bit of a filibuster.

My question is does the Minister of Justice believe or have hard documentation that the court system has gotten better since this Government came into office. Have there been some significant numbers that the Minister of Justice could relay? If there is, I certainly would like to hear them.

Just one other comment. I do not get my information from the *Winnipeg Free Press*.

Mr. Mackintosh: My understanding is from information in the department that there have been some improvements in some areas.

The member should know that there has historically been difficulty in the area of family

violence. The department said that there has been some improvement in custody dates because of a recognition that some kinds of trials should be available at an earlier date than has been the case in the past. When it comes to domestic violence and custody matters, there has been a real demand put on the Remand Centre. So there has been a focus on that area. I spoke about some of the initiatives in the Family Violence Court. It is my understanding that the earliest available dates in March of '99 were as much as 4.5 months for in-custody, and my understanding is that up until three or four weeks ago those dates could be available in about six weeks. Now the summer will make some difference to that, but hopefully that kind of turnaround will be available going back into the fall, but as well we hope to benefit from the new initiatives in the Family Violence Court.

We know that sometimes there can be a trial within three weeks for youth offences. I recall headlines in the local paper on December 1, Drug police cuff kids at Kelvin, and then seeing Kelvin teen jailed in a newspaper headline December 20. It is my understanding from the department that for out-of-custody youth matters there has been a reduction there as well by several weeks over the last several years. But I think what is important to recognize is not just the availability of trial dates as a measure of a justice system but rather as well the quality of how these matters are dealt with. For example, the child-friendly courtroom and the Victims' Bill of Rights are two initiatives that can fundamentally change the quality of justice in a jurisdiction.

So we are hoping that, by both enhancing services and having more sensitive programs in place for people who are in the justice system, we also hope to reduce remands and to ensure that justice is timely in Manitoba.

I might add that when the member asked in Question Period as to how many cases are dismissed for delay in the province, the information I received from the department was that it was usually on average about two cases a year over the last decade. There is no change in that, but the member should know that those cases largely depend on their unique facts. For example, the last one that was dismissed for

delay was largely dependent for its dismissal on the facts that there had been not one but two witnesses who became unavailable, and that raised the issue of possible prejudice to the accused.

When it comes to delay, as well, it depends on the circumstances of the case. There are some cases where fast tracking may not be in the interests of gathering the evidence or other strategies, but I think it is generally accepted that the timely disposition of cases is a laudable goal. That is why we are pursuing the several initiatives that we have set out, which for the first time represent a strategy to speed up the court system, and, as I say, we will watch this carefully.

I think at the same time that there should be some more work done on how we measure delay. I do not think that there has been a consistent application of all the measures from the different kinds of cases over the years. I think that, by and large, they try to look at the first available date, but that has varied I think depending on the nature of the case and has posed the challenge that as we move ahead, it is good to have a good measure, but recognizing the disparity in the kinds of cases that we have and the different reasons for delay, it is indeed a challenge.

A case can be delayed solely because it is a strategy of the defence. A case can be delayed because of a delay in getting the decision following a preliminary inquiry, for example. So there are many kinds of reasons why cases take a long time, but I think when the Justice Department can make a difference, then it is obliged to come in with the kinds of innovation that we are bringing in.

Mrs. Smith: My question is to the Justice Minister. The new person who has just arrived or arrived a few minutes ago, I would assume, is Irene Hamilton, the ADM of Courts. Am I correct in that?

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes.

Mrs. Smith: The ADM of Courts has a lot of knowledge about the courts here in the province of Manitoba, and my understanding from Ms.

Hamilton's background is that she is very knowledgeable about a lot of the court system due to some of the work, I believe it was in Brandon and things like that.

I am asking the Justice Minister: Would the ADM of Courts be able to provide the Justice Minister with information about where the court stands right now. After three years into the current government, I am still asking the question: Is the Attorney General aware, very specifically, whether the court system has gotten better or worse in terms of remands, backlog? I have not even touched on the bail issue yet.

Clearly, with the resources that the Justice Minister has at his disposal, if I have this information, I am quite sure the Justice Minister must have this information. It is like the gang member count in the province of Manitoba. Indeed, the Justice Minister came higher than my documentation was. When the Justice Minister was in opposition, I went meticulously through the Hansard, and the Justice Minister was very, very concerned about the backlogs, very concerned about the remands, very concerned about the bail. I have gone to extreme lengths to get information. So, rather than going into all the initiatives and the hopes that this will improve matters, three years into the mandate, is the Justice Minister aware whether the court system specifically has improved, and, if so, specifically where is it? And is he aware of the challenges that are there that have actually got worse?

* (16:30)

Mr. Mackintosh: One thing to be careful of here is that the availability of trial dates depends. It fluctuates. I think that is one of the challenges, in recognizing that, whereas in the month of July there is a different availability of court dates from the fall, we not make assumptions because of that annual fluctuation.

Mrs. Smith: I would like to ask a question centred around the non-staff magistrate. I know I started earlier and I had some other issues to ask. I did not think it would take quite this long to get some answers which, in all due respect, I still have not got from the Justice Minister. I am not certain whether the Justice Minister is aware, or

if he is just willing to not give me the information. It is like the spreadsheets for the bills. They get lost here and there and all over. I would like to work more closely with the Justice Minister trying to do some problem solving rather than going along political lines, because there are some real challenges happening out there in the court system.

Now, non-staff magistrates in and for the province of Manitoba fill an important role in the justice system, as I said earlier, in Manitoba. Their roles include swearing-in information, summons and subpoenas, search warrants, warrants of arrests, conducting non-contested bail hearings to release or remand an accused person. As you know, the non-staff magistrate can release the accused on undertakings or on a recognizance. They may be involved in issuing orders under The Mental Health Act. Their mandate also allows them to provide services to the community in signing passports, witnessing and endorsing documents for people.

In terms of their retainer fees, or hearing fees, or travel expenses, all those issues that non-staff magistrates have, as you know, that, currently, we just had meetings concerning the increase pay for sitting judges on the bench. At that point in time, the Justice Minister did not make a ruling as to whether or not that pay would be increased here in the province of Manitoba, although members on this side of the House are supportive of a pay raise for sitting judges on the bench.

We now have the non-staff community magistrates who also do have issues. As you know, the non-staff community magistrates receive \$75 a month to be available when called to perform these kinds of services that I have gone over just a few minutes ago. This amount has not changed in a number of years. Today, there are fewer non-staff community magistrates, which are, in actual fact, covering much larger areas. For hearing fees, they are paid \$4 when they conduct hearings requiring a judicial decision. When they conduct a bail hearing, it can take anywhere from two to four hours of work. There is no compensation for local travel expenses and any out-of-town travel must be approved in advance. This is extremely awkward for some of them if the request is received after

5 p.m. on weekdays, weekends or statutory holidays, which we have just gone through. They are expected to attend one-half days of continuing education on education training on an annual basis. They have some challenges. Although the Province does pay for basic expenses like meals, mileage and accommodation at provincially set rates, there is no compensation for time. Some magistrates own their own business, and they have to hire and pay people to replace them. Others must take time off work without pay or use their vacation time.

So there have been some real challenges for the non-staff magistrate here in the province of Manitoba. They have some issues, and I am speaking, asking questions from the Justice Minister, because these issues are some things that need to be addressed in this time, so two questions to the Minister of Justice.

Number one, is the Justice Minister intending to raise the pay of the sitting judges right now, that are hired by the Province as recommended? Number two, is the Minister of Justice going to address the issues that the non-staff community magistrates have now in the province of Manitoba?

Mr. Mackintosh: With regard to the judges of the Provincial Court, the Government's position will be made known before the standing committee, which, of course, is the process. The lead minister on that one is the Minister of Finance, the minister who co-chairs the compensation committee. Of course, the Province's position was made known during the process of the Judicial Compensation Committee. We do think, and have acted accordingly, that the process had to be improved. That is why we brought in legislative amendments, and they will have now the force of law on the next round of Judicial Compensation Committee hearings and reports.

In terms of the community magistrates, it has recently come to my attention that there are some magistrates who are seeking reconsideration of the remuneration levels for them. I understand they want an increase in monthly remuneration and a per document fee. As a result of that information, which clearly is a budgetary issue in no small part, we are reviewing that

request. The department is doing an analysis now. It is a very recent issue that is being analyzed carefully. It is being analyzed, recognizing, not only the financial pressures on the department, but, as well, the work and the value of community magistrates.

Mrs. Smith: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on another matter, it has come to my attention that Thomas Sophonow has returned the cheque to the Province. Clearly, earlier on in the year, the current Minister of Justice was very sympathetic with Thomas Sophonow, and yet months went by before anything was done about that until, at the ninth hour, suddenly there was a cheque cut to Mr. Sophonow. My question to the Justice Minister: What is the Justice Minister now going to do now that Sophonow has returned the cheque to the Province, at least that is my understanding? If that is not the case, please let me know.

Mr. Mackintosh: I am advised that Mr. Sophonow returned the monies forwarded to his counsel on June 20 and that money has been invested, I understand, in term deposits, the money being held in trust.

Within days of Mr. Sophonow's counsel being advised that we were in a position to forward monies to him in addition to the \$100,000 that was sent to him when the recommendations were provided, there was \$953,000 further that his counsel was advised was now available. He apparently had instructed his counsel to file a civil suit against the province. We were advised of that on the Monday after making his counsel aware that monies were available on the earlier Thursday or Friday. Now we have asked our counsel to review the claim and advise accordingly on next steps.

* (16:40)

Mrs. Smith: It is my understanding that Mr. Sophonow now is waiting to see what decision the Attorney General is making at this point in time in the province of Manitoba. Has Mr. Sophonow not gone through enough? Can this not be resolved in a timely fashion, which does not mean another nine months?

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Sophonow has sued the province and has taken on that initiative. We will respond after reviewing advice from counsel. The Province has discharged its stated intention to forward the monies to Mr. Sophonow according to the advice from Commissioner Cory. He has chosen to send it back, which I think is unfortunate, because we have discharged what we advised Mr. Sophonow and the public we would do in accordance with the recommendation of Mr. Cory, recommendations that I think are weighty. In the meantime we will make a decision based on advice from counsel.

Mrs. Smith: Could the Justice Minister please update this House on what this Government is doing to stop the Hells Angels store from taking root in downtown Winnipeg?

Mr. Mackintosh: First, with regard to the application for that venue, the department immediately contacted Winnipeg Police Service and provided support for the position of the Winnipeg Police Service at the application stage, and appeared, and put its objections on the record. In the meantime, a working group has been looking at options to see if the existing laws are sufficient to counter the growing challenge not only in Manitoba, but across the country and probably around the world of organized crime using commercial corporate establishments to further the objectives of a criminal organization. I am particularly keen to know if the existing laws are sufficient in order to provide law enforcement with the tools to counter organized crime on every front.

I know that the current municipal process in the City of Winnipeg is still unfolding and that is, in a large part, because the Justice Department has appealed the initial decision, and now, as a result of the review by professionals and legal advisers in the department, it is the view of Manitoba Justice that there are grounds to appeal. I understand that may well be set down later in August. I think the date has not been finally determined. So that municipal process is still an open question and is still unfolding and whether that municipal process and by-law regime, the land-use regime, will be sufficient to deal with this particular challenge is yet to be seen.

But, as I say, in the meantime we are looking to see, as well, what other laws are there. I know, in speaking with senior law enforcement officials, that there are some strong feelings that the Criminal Code in the new anti-gang provisions set out in C-24 may well provide very, very effective mechanisms in the criminal law, innovative mechanisms, to deal with this challenge. I have nonetheless asked the department to look to see what more innovative use can be made of civil law and administrative law, and I am awaiting advice on options there, if any. So that is the state of play on that. It certainly is a very live issue, particularly with the ongoing municipal proceedings right now.

Mrs. Smith: Could the Minister of Justice please advise this House exactly who in the department is working on this issue? Does it go as far as the ADMs? I mean, this is rather a serious issue, and I think should be at the highest level of the Justice Department.

Could the minister please be very specific on who in the Justice Department and what ADMs are working on this particular issue right now with your team of people?

Mr. Mackintosh: There have been a number of individuals in the department that have shown their innovative skills and their legal analysis skills in the past that are involved, but I am very wary of listing positions publicly and certainly listing names. That concern comes not just from me. That concern comes from somebody that actually was appointed to this working group who has expressed concern about being known, identified publicly. But I will just assure the member that this initiative has the attention of the management team in the department comprised of the assistant deputy ministers, as well as the deputy minister. I think the deputy minister is seeing some of the work that is in progress. I think that is likely the assurance that the member was seeking.

Mrs. Smith: Well, clearly, it is public knowledge who the minister's ADMs are, and, clearly, why would any ADM not want to have his or her name put forward as working on this initiative? It is the Department of Justice for the Province of Manitoba directly under the elected

representative, the Attorney General. What ADM is working on this issue?

* (16:50)

Mr. Mackintosh: I think I have made it clear that by stating that the ADMs are involved, that because they are the corporate entity of the Department of Justice, that is their job, and I think the public would expect them to be involved in an initiative like this, and they are, as well as the deputy.

But in terms of other staff, I think that accountability rests with the minister still in the end, but I would prefer not to list individual members of the department.

Mrs. Smith: I can certainly understand not listing the members of departments. So, very specifically, which ADMs in the Department of Justice are currently working on this issue? What areas have picked this up to address it, talking about ADMs only.

Mr. Mackintosh: The areas in the department involved are Constitutional Law, Policy and Planning, and the Criminal Justice division. The assistant deputy minister directly involved is the ADM of Criminal Justice, and, as well, the deputy minister is directly involved.

Mrs. Smith: Is this the only ADM involved in this issue of organized crime, which seems to me to be a very big issue, or should be, in this department?

Mr. Mackintosh: In terms of the organized crime strategies, in addition to the deputy minister, the two assistant deputy ministers involved are the ADM of Prosecutions and the ADM of Criminal Justice.

Mrs. Smith: Why would other areas not be included as well? Is there some reason that other areas are not involved? It is just these two areas that are involved in this particular issue?

Mr. Mackintosh: The management team on organized crime comprises the deputy minister. In terms of the senior management, Corrections, Criminal Justice and Prosecutions, the ADMs of those three divisions.

Mrs. Smith: So to be specific, Bruce MacFarlane is the Deputy Minister. We have Rob Finlayson as the ADM for Prosecutions. We have Jim Wolfe as the Corrections. Is that all that is involved?

Mr. Mackintosh: The gang suppression approach involves staffing and, therefore, managerial direction in the area of Corrections. First of all, I think that is the main area, and, second of all, in Prosecutions, third, in Constitutional Law which reports directly to the deputy minister, and, finally, in the area of Criminal Justice and that is Mr. Greg Graceffo, who is the ADM there. Criminal Justice is responsible for a lot of the policy work and the research work. That division had the lead on the fortified buildings legislation's construction.

Mrs. Smith: So in other words, all the assistant deputy ministers except the ADM for Legislative Counsel and the ADM for Courts, is that correct?

Mr. Mackintosh: The ADM for Finance and Administration, the ADM for Courts and the ADM of the Legislative Counsel would not have an ongoing managerial role with regard to this initiative. The exception to that would be, of course, the role of Legislative Counsel in the drafting of any regulatory or legal changes which may or may not bear on this issue. So that would be the management team on that.

Mrs. Smith: But would not the courts have a role to play in this as well?

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, just to be specific on that, in terms of the department's strategy on organized crime, the ADM of Courts is not involved in that. That is outside the ambit of that initiative, as is the ADM of Finance and Administration and alleged council, except to the extent that we talked about earlier. There has not been an administrative tie-in there. That is not the policy development areas, yes.

Mrs. Smith: Perhaps the Justice Minister could outline what the roles and responsibilities of the assistant deputy minister, then, for Courts is. This is rather a serious problem here in the city of Winnipeg. It would appear to me that the whole team of ADMs would be working with their justice departments to deal with this issue.

So, could the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) please outline exactly the roles and the responsibilities of the assistant deputy minister, to clarify for me, on this side of the House, why this would not be one aspect that would be a very important one to deal with in the suppression of organized crime here in Winnipeg, here in the province of Manitoba?

Mr. Mackintosh: The ADM of Courts provides executive leadership, and I am going from the supplementary book here largely, to the delivery of services in the Courts Division, in other words, the administration of the court, the court functions. On page 80 there in the Supplementary Estimates, the Activity Identification is listed. The only tie-in between organized crime and the courts administration would be the courthouse security program in Winnipeg, I suppose. But that is courthouse security generally. It does not deal with organized crime in particular. It would certainly have an application to any persons attending the courthouse.

* (17:00)

Mrs. Smith: Could the Justice Minister please outline why the ADM for Corrections would be involved? It is my understanding that that has to do with adult correctional services, youth correctional services, Corporate Services. How does that tie in with the organized crime aspect, in terms of shutting down the store in the inner city?

Mr. Mackintosh: I think there may be some confusion here. I think we had gone from a discussion on the use of commercial operations for the purposes of criminal organizations to general policies on criminal organizations. In terms of the specific policy analysis ongoing about the use of commercial operations by gangs, Corrections does not have a link to that. Corrections only has a link to the approach to criminal organizations that has been adopted and built by the Justice Department in terms of, for example, the prison gang suppression initiative or the supervision of offenders, intensive supervision support program, for example. That is the tie-in.

Mrs. Smith: Well, we can all agree that organized crime is something that we all want to

get rid of. Having said that, the Justice Minister talked very tough to the media and said that we will get rid of this; we do not want this organized crime. I agree. That is exactly what should be done.

Now I have heard that the store is up and running, business is going on, and the Attorney General, or the Justice Minister, says right now that a team is in place working on it. A few minutes ago I tried to clarify what kind of team was together. I endorse the fact that, indeed, a team at the highest level of the Justice Minister's department should be together. I understood that everyone, Jim Wolfe, the ADM for Corrections; Rob Finlayson, the ADM for Prosecutions; and Greg Graceffo, the ADM for Criminal Justice—was a part of this team, and I must say that sounds like a very dynamic team. However, the problem is still there. It is not solved.

So could the Justice Minister clarify to me why the Corrections piece would be there without the Courts piece being there? What is more important about the Corrections piece being there and the Courts piece being neglected? Why would the Corrections piece be part of the policy? I am not talking policy. I am talking about what law, what legislation can we pass to get rid of these guys. Plain and simple. It seems to me that the Attorney General, or the Justice Minister has stated that he is trying to find out what laws could be put in place, what policies could be put in place, what could be done? So could the Justice Minister clarify for me why this team would not be made up of most of the ADMs? Certainly the Courts, the Corrections, the Prosecutions, the Criminal Justice, policy development and analysis we have not talked about, I do not know why that would not be a piece in there as well, but maybe that is not necessary, I do not know, but this is a huge problem. Organized crime has taken hold in this city. There is a huge problem there. Why would the Courts ADM not be a part of that, because certainly that would be an ongoing part of this whole piece in organized crime? Why would Corrections be there instead? I think they all should be a part of this.

Mr. Mackintosh: The deputy minister is the one who, as head of the administration of the department, has the responsibility to determine

who is part of any particular project. In terms of looking at the use of commercial organizations for purposes of gangs, again I remind the member opposite that it may be that the laws on the books are very effective, provide the remedies and the tools that the police need. I am not going to prejudge that.

I think the interest here is to determine what is available and what is not, but in terms of that issue, the deputy minister has put together a team comprised of executive members. They are as follows: the ADM of Criminal Justice, Constitutional Law, Policy and Planning, and as well there are others outside of the department. In terms of the organized crime strategy generally in the department, it has been put together and is being administered by the Assistant Deputy Minister of Corrections, Assistant Deputy Minister of Prosecutions, Assistant Deputy Minister of Criminal Justice, Constitutional Law, Policy and Planning.

The administration of the Courts, for example, as Administration and Finance and Legislative Counsel do not have gang-specific personnel or anti-gang personnel in those areas, and of course in terms of Courts that is to administer the courts for all litigants and parties that come before the courts, there is not, that is not an area that has attracted policy development that is anti-gang specific.

Mrs. Smith: So what is the anti-gang-specific plan from Corrections, because the Justice Minister just told me that the ADM of Corrections is a part of that? So how would that fit in to closing down the storefront? I am not clear on that.

Mr. Mackintosh: The ADM of Corrections is involved in the departmental organized crime strategy generally, but is not on that specific project.

Mrs. Smith: In all due respect, the Justice Minister is giving very veiled and few answers. Could the Justice Minister please outline specifically what the ADM of the court system is in charge of, because Court Services, Winnipeg Courts, Regional Courts, Judicial Services, Sheriff Services, Board of Review, to me that is a very important piece in the Department of Justice and should be linked to the suppression

of organized crime, so I am asking: Could you please give me an overview of what that job is and a rationale as to why it would not be a part of the overall group here suppressing organized crime?

* (17:10)

Mr. Mackintosh: When the department and my office was looking at the need to specialize in the area of organized crime, the first area that was identified was in the area of Prosecutions and Corrections, and that is because the Prosecutions Division, in our view, could be strengthened by having a gang unit and a high-risk offender unit housed in that division so that there was a building up of expertise, a specialization and a targeting of Prosecutions. Then, in the area of Corrections, having the gang coordinators as part of a gang-suppression strategy was, in our view, a concept that was worthy of support, and under the umbrella of the criminal organization and high-risk offender unit, it is Corrections, Prosecutions and Constitutional Law that have functions.

In the area of courts, when you look at what the court system does, it provides the infrastructure, the administrative infrastructure for the judges, essentially, to make their decisions. I guess, if there was a one-liner, that would be that. So it is an administrative support role. It does not provide the suppression strategies that were available through Corrections and Prosecutions and, indeed, through Constitutional Law. The Courts Division, aside from the area of family law, does not even provide any legal advice or legal functions. It is only in the area of family maintenance and family law where Courts has a role. The Courts agency, if you will, the Courts administration has to be there as a neutral administrative support function and not targeting a class of accused or, for that matter, a class of prosecutors. It is there to provide the court clerks, those kinds of functions.

Mrs. Smith: As the Justice Minister brought in an outside judge to review the Sophonow case, would it not be reasonable then to use the expertise. I would assume that the ADM of Courts would know first-hand the expertise of judges. It is not a court case. It is expertise, talking about how organized crime can beat the

court system or not the court system. It is my understanding that the ADM of the Courts has a lot of expertise, a lot of information on what happens when organized crime comes into a court setting. It is my understanding that the information that an ADM for the court system would have, would bring much to the table to strategize on how to deal with the policies and the closing of storefronts, and the advent of organized crime in any city. This person would have the expertise or know who has the expertise in the judicial system to make recommendations and commentary. In view of the fact that the Justice Minister has been very strong, and I commend him for that, in saying that the storefront needs to be shut down and needs to be shut down quickly. It seems to me that all aspects of the expertise that can be found under the jurisdictions of these very capable ADMs is very important to have this brought to the table because clearly the court services and the courts, it is not only family court, I mean, there are other kinds of trials that do occur. There are many judges who have expertise and ideas. There are many Crowns that do as well, so they have been brought into the mix. Does the Justice Minister have any reason for not including this aspect in this very important team?

Mr. Mackintosh: The role of the Courts Division in Manitoba is not as a crime-fighting unit. It is an administrative unit to support the decision making in the courts and the court process, although there are services for Family Law. So that is why the courts have not been part of the development of strategies on criminal organizations.

Similarly, Administration and Finance is there to provide administrative support to the department, but is not a crime-fighting unit within the Justice Department. The crime fighters are the prosecutors, the correctional piece and, of course, the Criminal Justice piece, and there are some other ones that report to the deputy minister, including Constitutional Law and Policy and Planning. So it is just a matter of the historic function.

The courts are there to provide an independent or an impartial administration for the use of the parties that are in the court systems, whether at Court of Appeal, the Queen's Bench

or Provincial Court. But my understanding and by the advice that I have is that over the last decade or so in terms of the development of criminal law policy, courts have never been involved in that. It is just not the function of that area of the department or the administration of justice. It is not a research and public policy development area. In terms of expertise in terms of criminal organizations, that has not been the area where that expertise has traditionally been recognized. It is not an area where there is an obvious or any link to the development of policy when it comes to criminal organizations.

Mrs. Smith: To clarify, then, is the Justice Minister saying that in other provinces the court piece has not been an active participant in anti-gang strategies?

Mr. Mackintosh: What other provinces do I cannot speak to. There may be in some provinces. Maybe there are some offices there that have some time, but that has not been recognized in Manitoba.

The co-ordinated response in Manitoba has been, I suppose, more in Prosecutions than any other division and then also in Corrections. I know I have to add up the number of persons involved in each of those divisions in terms of their involvement with criminal organizations. As well, in Manitoba we have a policy and planning group, and it is not housed in either Administration and Finance or Courts. It may be that way somewhere else in some other jurisdiction in Canada, but it is not in Manitoba.

Mrs. Smith: So, to clarify, the Attorney General is basically saying that, to his knowledge, no other provinces include the court piece in the closing down of gang storefronts. Is that correct?

Mr. Mackintosh: I could never say definitely because it is not an issue that I have ever canvassed. I certainly know in Manitoba that there has not been that link, and I do not even know if in other provinces the policy people or any other persons in the Justice departments are looking at this issue specifically.

As I say, how other departments are constructed outside of Manitoba, I do not have

first-hand knowledge, but I would think that just by its nature, the Courts Division is not one where there is policy development directed against organized crime.

I say it does not mean that the courts do not deal with organized crime. We leave that to the courts, but the administration itself does not deal specifically with organized crime as a policy initiative.

* (17:20)

Mrs. Smith: Well, clearly, the history here in Manitoba is limited because organized crime has moved in in the past virtually two years, two and a half years.

Having said that, does the Attorney General not think it is prudent to canvass the other provinces to see what they are doing to shut down what is considered to be business that is spearheaded by the Hells Angels and by organized crime?

Mr. Mackintosh: I will quote the member, perhaps. To suggest that organized crime began in Manitoba in the last two to two and a half years is just a ridiculous statement, and I think it is so unfortunate that something like that would be said that is so contrary to the history of this challenge.

Perhaps I refer the member no further than to some of the writings on the background to the Hells Angels in Manitoba. The Hells Angels came to Manitoba first in the fall of 1997, I understand, but the history of biker gangs alone in Manitoba go back many years. In fact, there is a recent writing by Bruce Owen on some of the background to the Hells Angels in Manitoba.

But to suggest that organized crime has been in Manitoba two and a half years is so partisan, it does not even deserve a response.

Mrs. Smith: I think maybe the Attorney General is getting a little personal and a little sensitive in this area, because I am asking quite clearly, since the Attorney General has been talking very tough about closing down the storefront, what is the Attorney General doing specifically with which team, and when is this going to happen?

Mr. Mackintosh: The member probably would suggest that organized crime came to Manitoba on October 5 of 1999. It really is just absolutely astounding, and I really would urge the member to research the history of organized crime in this province, understand where it came from and when, and perhaps look at some of the lack of responses that have been taken in this province and in this country when it comes to organized crime and why we are dealing with the challenges we are today.

But I am prepared to look for innovation, and the member may want to put words in my mouth, but I can tell the member again that we are looking to see what laws may be available to assist police. We are listening to the police. It may be that the laws already exist. It may be that they can be used in different ways. As I said publicly, if it falls to the Province to fill a gap, the Province will fill the gap, but I am awaiting that kind of research.

This is a time for careful analysis. Clearly, if there was a one-line answer to organized crime, whether it is street gangs or biker gangs or Hells Angels in particular or any other biker gang, then we would not have the numbers of Hells Angels around the globe that we have, let alone in Canada.

But I think Manitoba is prepared to step up to the plate in terms of making sure that we do the analysis, and it may well be that the Criminal Code, as some police believe, is sufficient in its refashioned form to deal with the challenges of organized crime using commercial establishments. If that is the case, then it is up to the police to make a decision as to when the Criminal Code should be invoked, when charges should be laid. I think it is important to recognize that, when it comes to battling organized crime, all who are keen on seeing effective responses recognize the pivotal and critical role of the police in assessing what tools should be used and when. So we will see, over the next short while hopefully, what options are available and if new laws are required. It may be that the findings are that the criminal law is sufficient. It may be that by-laws are sufficient. In fact, there is a process unfolding that will, I think, tell that story.

Mrs. Smith: In all due respect, it is unfortunate the Minister of Justice has to be so sensitive about he said, she said. I am saying quite clearly that it took me months to get the actual gang numbers out of the Minister of Justice and his numbers turned out to be close to 200 higher than what I had.

We heard about a cyber tip line with great fanfare over 400 days ago that was supposed to be put up for the protection of children here in the province of Manitoba. Now we hear about a national line when, in actual fact, even Manitoba is not taken care of. We heard about the record numbers of judges. There was one, if that, since the former government was in power. Now what I am trying to do is get a handle on exactly what this present Minister of Justice is doing to shut that storefront down. So I have heard about committees. I have heard about whose jurisdiction is what, where and how, but the fact of the matter is, the problem is not solved. It is not even close to being solved.

So are we looking forward to another photo op and another headline or are we looking forward to this particular storefront being shut down? What specifically is done, is going to be done and when is it going to be done to shut that storefront down?

Mr. Mackintosh: The member may have missed the information, but if she was saying there was a record number of full-time judges in Manitoba under our administration, I believe that is accurate, that 40 full-time judges is as high as we have had in this province. There is one vacancy now, and we will wait and see the results of the appointment of the Chief Judge as to where that is at.

I know the member talked about 3600 known gang members openly operating in this province. I think the member knows full well that the police numbers list gang members by two categories. One is active and one is inactive. I believe the member herself said that inactive members were described by police as defunct.

In terms of the Hells Angels' operations in Winnipeg, I can only reiterate that there is a process unfolding. It is an open question and the department has appealed that. I know the

department will rally the arguments, as it has already rallied research which has determined that there are indeed grounds to appeal. That does not suggest, of course, what the result is, but it does indicate that the legal analysis indicates that the applicable law around that process affords basis for appeal.

What this is about is, of course, supporting the Winnipeg Police Service. That is why we appeared at the hearing, we being the Justice Department, in order to put our objections on the record to show the community that the police had the support of the Justice Department in terms of its arguments and its objections to the application.

* (17:30)

Mrs. Smith: In all due respect, I have to put on the record that it was not me that mentioned that non-active gang members were defunct. It was this Attorney General who actually said that. The non-active members this Attorney General disregarded as not being that important. In actual fact whether they are active or non-active, non-active is just simply that they have not been caught yet. They are still known gang members.

I see the Attorney General is quite amused by this. I am not amused by the organized crime in the city of Winnipeg. It is a big problem. I am not amused by the fact that there is tough talk to the media, and nothing happens in actual fact. I am not amused by the fact that there is no plan in place. I am not amused by the fact that we do not know when that storefront is going to be shut down. It is all political spin.

Now, the Attorney General can sit there and continue to give political spin. I would rather know what plan is in place to shut this thing down. You do not see me smiling today in the House. I do not find this amusing. I find the gang member numbers alarming, and no personal attack on me is going to solve the problem. What is going to solve the problem is when a Department of Justice and the Attorney General at the head of it puts a plan in place to make this happen.

I am alarmed that there is increased drug trade. I am alarmed that there is increased

violent crime. I am alarmed that this current Government defends its policies without anything happening to effect change in the province of Manitoba and in the city of Winnipeg. I think this surpasses political spin. I do not think anyone of us can afford to have political spin. Organized crime in this province and in this city has to shut down. That store has to shut down.

So rather than the political spin, I would like to know specifically when that store will be shut down and when will the legislation be put in place to make that happen.

Mr. Mackintosh: I think I have given a full answer to that in terms of the processes and the analysis.

The member has been very critical of the cyber tip line, and I just want to pass on that I think that is unfortunate. Child Find Manitoba as the project leader on that has been working tirelessly and professionally to pull this together. It has become a much larger and significant project than even any of us envisioned and to the credit of Child Find Manitoba as well as others who are on the Child On-Line Protection Committee.

But I would like to do my part to persuade the member to find out more about the tip line and the work that has been ongoing, the challenges, the successes, the triumphs with regard to the tip line, because her remarks may well be construed as an attack on those who are doing the hard work at a time when I think they need support for what they are doing in trying to make not just the province but the country a safer place.

But I am certainly prepared to do what I can to accommodate the member getting a briefing from Child Find Manitoba, so that she can see how this unfolded and how it is coming along and what the issues are, because I can tell the member that she will be very surprised I think at the work, the preparation that has been required to give this tip line the integrity that it has to have to perform its stated objective.

Mrs. Smith: I think it is very unfortunate that the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) has to turn words around. I have the highest regard for

Child Find. This has nothing to do with Child Find.

The only thing I am critical of is the time it has taken to put the cyber tip line up. We are now on the 406th day. Four hundred and six days since the Minister of Justice announced his cyber tip line, stating it was critical to, and I quote, better protect our children on-line. I praised the minister for this announcement. I am on record for praising the minister for this announcement. What I did not bargain on, that it would take 406 days and it still would not be up. I am concerned about the children of Manitoba. While the minister busies himself with announcements and re-announcements, children continue to be exploited on the Internet. How many more months have to go by before the minister's promised cyber tip line actually becomes a reality? Four hundred and six days ago the minister announced his cyber tip line, and whenever I bring it up, his standard line is: Oh, members opposite are criticizing Child Find.

We support Child Find. We praise Child Find. What we are criticizing is the minister's lack of ability to get this cyber tip line up. Now we hear: It is the first of its kind. That is great, it is the first of its kind. But what it was originally intended for was the children of Manitoba, first, to get the line up for Manitoba, to take care of Manitobans.

Now, suddenly, because the minister wants to make a name for himself and do the political spin, it has become national. Why would the minister put a national one up without knowing that a Manitoba line would be successful? And it has taken so much time. There are many children who have been exploited without any cyber tip line there to support them. I think it is shameful that the Attorney General will turn it around and make political spin out of this. I have thought I have been rather generous. I have only asked a couple of questions on this when day after day goes by without anything happening. It is over a year, Mr. Attorney General. Four hundred and six days today.

I am very concerned that this cyber tip line be up. I am very concerned that the resources be there for Child Find. Child Find is a wonderful organization. They need all the support they can

get. I am a strong supporter of the police resources, and members opposite know that. I am not interested in the political spin. But it is the first of its kind, I am sure, that it takes 406 days to get a cyber tip line up to help children. If the minister is so concerned about the children of Manitoba, I would suggest that the cyber tip line get up and that blame not be put on everybody else except the current Government. The current Government is in charge. It is the current Government's job to put that cyber tip line up. It is the current Government's job to shut the storefront down. That is what you are all about.

I would like to go on to another section of the Justice portfolio. One more thing I want to put on record. I know that it takes all parts of the community to put justice on the streets and to put crime down, but I think it is part of the political realm and the right of politicians. When leaders are leaders, you are not a leader if nobody is following you. If you look behind, you are only taking a walk if no one is following. People will follow when results are produced. It has been my experience that people do not really care a whole lot, but politicians have to say because they do not have a lot of faith sometimes in what politicians do. I would like to see some changes made where the blame does not go on any place else except the person in charge and the Government in charge. I say that quite clearly on both sides of the House. That is what we are here to do.

As frustrating as it is for me to sit in Estimates and get no answers, it is even more frustrating for the public to have to deal with crime on a daily basis. Things are happening in different parts of the city right now under this Government's jurisdiction that have never happened before. I know that it is not just the Government in place, it is the sign of the times in society. But we have to work together to have a plan in place to stop it, and, very specifically, the cyber tip line is a great idea. I just wish it would get up and running. The cyber tip line will help a lot of people. The resources need to be there to make sure that this line is working and working well. Our first responsibility as members who have been elected by the people of Manitoba, is Manitoba. Our first responsibility is not trying to make a name for ourselves.

The first of the kind, I would like to see the first of the kind in Manitoba where the cyber tip line deals with the child pornography issue and deals with the kinds of concerns that will come over that cyber tip line to assist children here in Manitoba. Therefore, the thing has to be up, and it has to be running.

* (17:40)

I also understand that there are many challenges, and there are many questions, believe it or not, in Question Period that I have not brought forward to give this Attorney General some more time. This Attorney General is now three years into the mandate. It is time. If you look back on the record, you would see quite clearly that I have supported the Attorney General. I commended the Attorney General when the cyber tip line came on the radar screen. My only concern is the 406 days that have gone by, and it still is not up. My only concern, my biggest concern, is that children do not have this available to them.

Having said that, I would like the Attorney General, if we could get into the backlogs in the court system. I asked an original question, and I still have not gotten an answer to. Is the Attorney General aware of whether or not the court system now is less backlogged with specific details than it was in years gone by, or is it more backlogged since this Government has been in power? Is there any change in the remands?

Ms. Marianne Cerilli, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Is there any change in the status of some of the bail hearings because when this Attorney General was in opposition, this Justice Minister said that this was a deplorable situation? To my knowledge, at this point in time, it has gotten worse in many areas. Now, realistically, no person can put the blame all on one government, because organized crime has evolved and has grown here in the province of Manitoba. I do not find that amusing. I find it very serious. Other things have happened. Societal changes have happened, and we have challenges there. But there has to be a plan in place to solve this. I have heard about initiatives. With all these

initiatives and all this spin, my question to the Justice Minister is: Is he aware that things have gotten better in the court system and specifically where and by how much?

Mr. Mackintosh: I believe we have addressed that today. I am prepared to deal with that further. I just want the member to recall, and I will say this again that when she talks about spin, it is important to recognize that when she purports to criticize either myself or the Government for lack of ability to get on the cyber tip line up, she is either knowingly or unwittingly criticizing those who have been charged with the responsibility to get it up and running. That is what I wanted to raise with her. I think it is unfortunate because the criticism is being felt by people who are working very hard.

The announcement that was made was to establish a Child On-Line Protection Committee with the first and foremost duty to put together a cyber tip line based on the experience of other jurisdictions. That was given to this committee and to Child Find Manitoba, which is the project leader. So in terms of announcements that was what was committed to. When governments work in partnership, when governments give things to other people to do, they support that and work with them. It is, I think, important that we actually move ahead to more of that kind of partnering and working with community organizations to bring about change.

When the member says that day after day goes by without anything happening, I wanted her to know that there was a great deal that was happening. That work was ongoing, and a final unveiling of that cyber tip line is expected very soon, either this summer, or is it early this fall? Why does a provincial government not have sole control? Well, that is because this is a partnership deal, and it should be. The federal government has a very significant role to play in this initiative in many ways, and in no small way with financial assistance, as does the private sector, as does Child Find and other organizations involved in this, including Manitoba police forces. So that is what is unfolding.

It is, I guess, easy for anyone to say, well, I wish it were sooner, but it is our intention to make sure that this is a tip line that is strong, that

has the protocol, that has the protections in place, both for staff and for others, that has the proper links with the agencies, particularly with police. We will look forward to the operation of that tip line because we expect it to have the integrity and the features that will make it among the best anywhere.

This is not a matter, as one of the members opposite alleged, of having just a phone line. This is an Internet site that has to be protected. There are a lot of security issues revolving around this, a lot of legal issues, backup issues. The draft protocol is one or two inches thick, as I have seen it.

I can also say that the experiences of tip lines like this elsewhere have been called on with a view to making sure that we learn from the experiences of those who have had this kind of operation elsewhere. Is it slow? In actual fact, it is slow compared to the other jurisdictions in the world. Canada has been falling behind, but I can say that Manitoba is ahead of this, at least within this nation. We will be all accountable, as a partnership, as to how this turns out when it is up and running.

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

Mrs. Smith: I must put on record, we talk about mincing of words, I have to say that the Attorney General has an extremely dynamic, very intelligent set of ADMs and staff. They are second to none all across Canada and, I must say, the Attorney General is very fortunate to have this kind of talent. No blame in any way for any longevity of putting the cyber tip line up, or of the suppression of the storefront gang. The gang store downtown is any reflection on any member, and it is unfortunate that the Justice Minister tries to twist my words.

I put the full responsibility on this Government and on the current Justice Minister. He and this Government are the leader in this province. They have the power; they have the wherewithal to get things done.

The staff under the leadership of the current Justice Minister only does what the Justice Minister requires them to do, and they are an outstanding staff, an outstanding group of

people. So, when the minister says that there is a reflection on staff, that is really hard to believe, and I want to clarify this assumption very, very clearly. Many of the staff who are here today have worked with the former government; it has nothing to do with politics. It has to do with the fact that the current Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) has a very dynamic team that can be working with him.

* (17:50)

My question today around the storefront was why more of that team was not on that solution to bringing the storefront down. So, having said that, any remarks that I make and any remarks of members on this side of the House have to fall squarely on the shoulders of the current Government, squarely on the shoulders of the Justice Minister because that is who is in charge. The staff are doing a fine job in the areas that they are working in, so I want to assure the staff sitting here today that it is no reflection on the staff at all. It is unfortunate if that was brought into the mix today by the current Justice Minister because many of us on both sides of the House have complete faith in the abilities of the staff around this table.

However, having said that, we do not have complete faith in what is happening in the area of justice in the province of Manitoba, simply because crime is increasing, the challenges are there, lack of police resources, and often political people, some of them seem to do a lot of spinning. It is unfortunate; we need to do a lot of problem solving, not spinning.

I have a question for the Attorney General. I understand that, going to the Order-in-Council, I had one question about Pearl McGonigal, her appointment to the Department of Justice Order-in-Council was terminated, I understand, earlier this year, and Alice Krueger, I understand, was appointed as Commissioner of the Manitoba Law Reform Commission for a term of three years from the date this Order-in-Council is made. I just am aware that Alice Krueger was a former reporter, and I understand a very, very capable person.

Could the Attorney General please inform this House as to the qualifications brought

forward by this very talented individual and why this appointment was made? What are the qualifications that were brought forward to appoint Ms. Alice Krueger as Commissioner of the Manitoba Law Reform Commission?

Mr. Mackintosh: I first want to, since the question was raised, acknowledge the contribution of Pearl McGonigal to the Law Reform Commission. I knew Pearl when she was Lieutenant-Governor and held the office with a great degree of distinction and was just a wonderful Lieutenant-Governor in this province, and I think before that, of course, she had served with distinction in many different ways.

I was pleased on becoming minister to hear of her contributions to the Law Reform Commission, a body for which I have high regard. I wish I had more money for it, but I think we have been able to increase their budget and, at the same time, work with them on different projects to rally the resources necessary, and to work with them in terms of the kinds of issues that they canvass. I know that it was my understanding that, when Ms. McGonigal's term had expired, she had some interest in moving on or allowing someone else to come in. I would have been just as pleased, if not more, I suppose if she had stayed on. We started looking for who a replacement would be. We should recognize that the position she held was unique. Hers was the lay position on the Law Reform Commission. She represented the non-lawyer approach to law reform.

I think when we looked at this position, we were trying to think of someone who had a broad appreciation and understanding of a lot of different areas of public policy, someone who was not

caught up in one particular cause, one area of law or one area of interest but had a broad interest. I started thinking who had fulfilled that role in the past? I recalled, and I think correctly, that in Manitoba there was a journalist who had performed that role in the past. I started thinking that a journalist is someone who can have that broad understanding of public interest issues, of priorities for the public. Then I thought of current-day reporters or journalists in Manitoba. The Government, of course, collectively made this decision after some consideration.

But I had known Alice Krueger as a legislative reporter. Before that, I think she was a food reporter. I had a high, high degree of respect for Alice Krueger. I thought she was a very fair reporter even though sometimes you get your good reports and you get your bad ones. I think she was respected by members on all sides of the House. She is someone that I was not aware of any partisan background that she had. I think that she would just serve the public well through her reporting. I thought she would be an ideal person to fill this role. I have every confidence that she will.

When I phoned her, she was very excited about the prospect of serving in this capacity. She is retired now, and she has time to devote to it. So I will look forward to the good work.

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

IN SESSION

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 6 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, July 2, 2002

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