



Fifth Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(Hansard)

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	NDP
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	Liberal
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	NDP
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	NDP
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	PC
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	PC
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DOER, Gary	Concordia	NDP
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
DUCHARME, Gerry, Hon.	Riel	PC
EDWARDS, Paul	St. James	Liberal
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	NDP
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	NDP
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	PC
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	NDP
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Liberal
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	PC
GRAY, Avis	Crescentwood	Liberal
HELWER, Edward R.	Gimli	PC
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	NDP
KOWALSKI, Gary	The Maples	Liberal
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Liberal
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	NDP
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	PC
MACKINTOSH, Gord	St. Johns	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MANNES, Clayton, Hon.	Morris	PC
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	NDP
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	PC
McCORMICK, Norma	Osborne	Liberal
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	PC
ORCHARD, Donald, Hon.	Pembina	PC
PALLISTER, Brian	Portage la Prairie	PC
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	PC
PLOHMAN, John	Dauphin	NDP
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
REID, Daryl	Transcona	NDP
REIMER, Jack	Niakwa	PC
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	PC
ROBINSON, Eric	Rupertsland	NDP
ROCAN, Denis, Hon.	Gladstone	PC
ROSE, Bob	Turtle Mountain	PC
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	NDP
SCHELLENBERG, Harry	Rossmere	NDP
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
STORIE, Jerry	Flin Flon	NDP
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	PC
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	PC
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	NDP

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, July 5, 1994

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Canada Post—Unsolicited Mail

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of M. Vandale, T. Tomasz, J. Hamilton and others requesting the Legislative Assembly to request the federal minister responsible for Canada Post to consider bringing in legislation requiring all unsolicited mail and flyers use recycled materials.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

Renewing Education—New Directions

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table for the House a document called *Renewing Education: New Directions, A Blueprint for Action*.

Mr. Speaker, I also have a ministerial statement.

It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today to present the government's plan for educational renewal, and it is entitled *Renewing Education: New Directions, A Blueprint for Action*. It presents the framework for change for the renewal of our education system. Building a secure future for our children and our province requires a solid education. We need to do everything possible to ensure that our children are prepared to be successful in today's competitive world.

Kindergarten through senior years is the most crucial time for skill development. The education received at this level is fundamental to each student's ability to prosper both at the post-secondary level and in the workforce.

Government must take the lead in renewal. Our focus will be on literacy since it is the foundation of everything that an individual requires to become a lifelong learner. Ensuring all students can read, write, think and compute at a high level is the goal of the educational renewal process. To make this happen, we will promote greater and more effective decision making at the grassroots of education, the schools and their communities.

New Directions is a framework for action set out in six priority areas. They are essential learning, standards and evaluation, school effectiveness, parental-community involvement, distance education and technology, teacher training.

Together, parents and communities play a vital role in education. Parents, as a child's first teacher, establish the foundation for lifelong learning in their children. Many parents and community members want to be more involved in shared decision making about educational programming and other school matters.

* (1335)

Actions are required to enable parents to have a more significant role as educational partners and to create ways for all parents to become involved in their children's schools and schooling. Therefore, we will require schools to establish advisory councils for school leadership comprised of parents and community members as requested by those same parents. We will require schools to include advisory councils for school leadership in developing school plans and divisional school budgets. We will enable parental choice, within limits, in selecting the public school best suited to their child's learning requirements in order to increase flexibility of parental choice within the public school system. We will state fundamental rights and expectations of parents related to their individual children. We will define basic or essential education and outline the core subject

areas that will be mandatory along with those subjects that will be compulsory, kindergarten to Senior 4.

When choices are being offered by the school, the local community will be involved. Within all subjects, the required foundation skill areas will be literacy and communication, problem solving, human relations, technology. We will also enhance educational standards and evaluation to ensure that all students in Manitoba can read, write, think and compute at a high level. Standards of student achievement will be developed in relation to what students need to know and be able to do at the end of Grade 3, Grade 6, Senior 1, Senior 4.

We will move in a direction which sees effective learning environments established uniformly and consistently in early, middle and senior schools throughout Manitoba. To do so requires us to acknowledge that schools are the most important organizational unit in the education system. Principals play a key role in all effective schools. Schools must be responsible and accountable to parents, the community and the ministry.

Consequently, we will designate principals as the primary instructional leaders in schools and state their fundamental responsibilities and roles. We will require schools to develop and communicate yearly school plans. We will state the fundamental responsibility and roles of teachers, school boards and the minister, and we will initiate school reviews when necessary.

Technology is rapidly changing our world. Advances in technology and the many ways it is used occur at a continuing, escalating pace. To remain competitive in the global economy, Manitobans must be aware not only of how to use existing technology, but must also learn how to use technology in new ways, to solve old and new problems and create new opportunities.

To shape and co-ordinate this, we will proceed with technology and distance education projects which provide professional development opportunities for teachers. We will establish a provincial advisory council on distance education and technology. Teachers, including principals, have a pivotal role in ensuring that students receive

education and training that provides them with the knowledge and skills required to participate in and contribute to a vigorous and prosperous society.

As a result of their direct contact with students, teachers have the greatest impact on the teaching and learning that a student experiences in the classroom and in the school. It is crucial, therefore, that teachers and principals be provided with the tools required to deliver relevant educational programs to Manitoba students. It is also critical that the tools teachers and principals acquire remain relevant and current as education progresses. With these factors in mind, teacher certification in the province of Manitoba will be reviewed and reformed.

This document outlines new directions, priorities and initial actions. In the fall, we will build upon these important beginnings by defining specific time frames, policy changes, regulatory amendments and other implementation details. Much of this change will be driven by the actions of our communities and by our collective willingness to continually innovate and improve the education system for the benefit of all Manitobans.

It would be more prudent to make changes in an integrated, planned approach over several years, so that all our citizens know that by the turn of the century, our education system will truly be the best in the world. I invite all partners in education to work with me to renew education in the province of Manitoba. Together we can meet our obligation to present and future generations of Manitobans.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

* (1340)

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): I would like to thank the minister for tabling his statement in the Chamber today. He has certainly used a lot of the right words in the document, but our criticism is the fact that over the last six and a half years, they have not performed any of the deeds necessary to get our education into the 21st Century.

We see these words, Mr. Speaker, as words to get this government past the next election, not to

get Manitobans into the next century in terms of getting our kids ready.

The government has made three promises in education. They have promised to keep the funding level of education at the inflation rate. They have broken that promise. They have promised to provide grassroots democracy and autonomy to school boards and school divisions. They have broken that promise. They have promised in 1988 to revise the education acts of Manitoba, and they have not fulfilled that promise, so when we see a statement today in the House, we will evaluate the government's performance on its deeds, certainly not on its words.

Mr. Speaker, provinces across Canada are far ahead of this government in terms of real action at the education area. Ontario has just produced an action plan to deal with violence in schools, something we see wanting from this document.

British Columbia produced three years ago a strategy to deal with protocol dealing with kids who are involved in the law and involved in social services and involved in the education system, again, nothing we see from this government in terms of a real action plan.

Certainly, we see a total vision of curriculum available in other provinces, detailed curriculum strategies to take the provinces into the next century. We do not see that in this document. We see more consultations. We see more deliberations. We see more studies. We see more good intents. We see good words, but no deeds.

The words about parents we certainly support. We have been calling on this government to involve parents for the last six and a half years. The government's words ring hollow to us when they rolled back all the rights of the democratically elected school boards and made only one school division with the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and rolled back the autonomy of the grassroots. They have no credibility because they have done nothing for grassroots, and they have done nothing to involve parents for six and a half years, as we have called for.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that education and our schools are so important for our kids and our future. It is the first place that many kids can have the opportunity—their family is the first place and their school system is the second area of contact where kids can get the opportunities in life that are so important—the training, the skills, the absolute input to move forward and be successful.

Kids need a healthy school system. They need a safe school system. There is a serious problem in our schools in terms of safety in our schools which is not addressed by this document. They need structure. They need basics. They need benchmarks, but they also need a curriculum that is articulated and a curriculum that will take our children into the 21st Century, a curriculum in a changing world that provides a broad level of skills and a broad level of services to take our children into the next century.

We also need to invest in our teachers. You cannot on the one hand expect teachers to go ahead and forward with new curriculum changes and on the other hand decimate the curriculum programs. Just like distance education, they decimated the Distance Education branch and then they talk about advisory committees today on distance education. The words ring hollow to the actions of the government and the three ministers who have held that portfolio over the last six and a half years.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that there is something fundamentally wrong in our society when kids cannot get physical education and drama and music because there have been cutbacks in funding in our education system, the same week we put a cheque out for \$5.3 million to the Winnipeg Jets hockey team.

How do we justify the morality of decisions that are being made by this government of cutbacks in one area and operating blank cheques in another area? That is not an education vision. That is not a fair vision for the future.

Mr. Speaker, this government has had three priorities in education. One has been to reverse the grassroots democracy of school boards which they have done through legislation. Two, they have had the vision of moving toward a two-tiered education

system where certain kids who have financial abilities get better education and better opportunities than other children. The third criterion or priority this government has had is that education is a cost.

Mr. Speaker, we believe the public education system is not a cost. We believe it is an essential investment and we believe that we have to really provide an action plan, a real action plan to invest in our kids so they are able to meet the challenges of the 21st Century. This government has failed to do that and we believe our kids deserve much better. Thank you very much.

* (1345)

Mr. Paul Edwards (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, we, of course, are going to read more thoroughly as time will permit the blueprint that has been tabled for the first time here today by the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness), so I do not intend to purport to be able to go through it line by line and indicate what is positive and what is negative.

From the minister's early comments introducing this, I must say, and as the Leader of the Opposition has already indicated, certain thrusts of this blueprint look very positive indeed and long, long overdue. The reaching out to the parents and the community members in new and innovative ways in a spirit of partnership, trying to build a community effort to better serve our students and their parents in our school system, is long overdue. Around this country, increasingly jurisdictions are moving to involve parents in new and different ways and the responses are good. It is an appropriate way to move and it is something that our caucus has been outspoken on for a long time, including placing before this House various resolutions and bills to that effect.

Mr. Speaker, what is interesting about this is that it has been six and a half years since this government took office, and what is interesting, if you look at the minister's comments, he talks about specifically that all citizens will know that by the turn of the century our education system will truly be the best in the world. Coincidentally, that is about six years from now and this

government has been in for six and a half years. Had they started with any idea what to do about education in this province, we would have that education system now.

Instead, in their two terms in government, what they have done is everything possible to erode and undercut quality public education in this province. The result today is that on the road, apparently, to Damascus they have had a conversion and they are going to come up with a blueprint for action, they say. Where has the action been to invest in our children? Why, for six years, has this government seen and portrayed education as a social cost rather than an investment? That is the way they have portrayed it and their actions—and this is laced with that word “action.” Well, their actions in the last six years have spoken louder than the words today can get rid of. Those actions have meant that more and more people are losing faith in our public education system and moving toward independent schools. That is the wrong way to go.

Mr. Speaker, I was particularly interested to see that this talks about working together in partnerships. Where has that spirit been in the last six and a half years? Why has this government and this minister, in his short tenure in this position, done nothing but draw lines between the people in our community who have an investment in education, draw lines between teachers, trustees, government, parents and their children?

The approach of this government has been one of division, and it has been an adversarial one. Today, they are reaping the results of that attitude which is that we have a divided community. Surely, today we know more than probably at any time in our history as a province that the key to successful government is not just understanding that we need to change but managing change, and you cannot manage change when you divide people.

* (1350)

That is what the government has done for six and a half years. Now they talk. Now they talk, when they will not have to implement this in the next—they are talking about, in the fall we will come forward with time frames; in the fall we will

come forward with these things. Maybe we will have a good education system by the turn of the century. Well, Mr. Speaker, that is not good enough.

In conclusion, we will, as I have said, study each and every recommendation that is put forward in this blueprint. What I look for from this minister to do and, believe me, because of the last six and a half years it is certainly not too late for him to turn the page and perhaps—perhaps—that is what he is saying in this ministerial statement. We will look forward to him turning and building bridges, but it is going to take not just a change in policy but a change in attitude. Thank you.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Energy and Mines): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table, on behalf of the Manitoba Round Table on the Environment and Economy, the "What You Told Us" document on energy.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 225—The Public Schools Amendment Act (2)

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, I was wondering whether you would petition the House for unanimous consent to introduce Bill 225, The Public Schools Amendment Act, at this time, a private members' bill.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to allow the honourable member for Emerson to introduce Bill 225, a private members' bill, at this time?

Point of Order

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Second Opposition House Leader): On a point of order, it was brought to our attention last night that the member was wanting to introduce a bill.

I think it should be noted that we are doing it on leave for first reading so that we can at least hear where the government, particularly the Minister of Education and Training (Mr. Manness), is coming from on this particular bill, because it is somewhat, potentially, a very controversial piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am simply asking a question now. Is there leave to allow the honourable member for Emerson to introduce Bill 225 for first reading? Leave? [agreed]

Mr. Penner: Mr. Speaker, this bill—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member, kindly move your bill first, sir, and then you will have an opportunity to tell us the purport of the bill.

Mr. Penner: I move, seconded by the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau), (by leave) that Bill 225, The Public Schools Amendment Act (2) (Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques), be now introduced for first reading and read a first time.

Motion presented.

* (1355)

Mr. Penner: Mr. Speaker, my comments will not be very long. I have been asked continually by people all across this province why it is necessary for parents to petition annually school divisions to allow for religious exercises and/or prayer to be held in schools, and the annual requirement is what the concern has been.

This bill will negate the provision for annual petition requirements and include in the bill a provision that will allow the parents to sign a petition and/or sign a document indicating that their child would be allowed to, or not allowed to, participate in religious exercise and/or prayer in school.

Some of us happen to think that no matter what religious denominations we are from or what part of society we are from, children should have the same rights as adults do in public participation in either religious exercises and/or prayer, specifically prayer in school.

Whether we as a society congregate and say prayers of thanks, and we do as a society, or whether we ask for guidance, as we do in this Chamber virtually daily, it is our right as human beings and as a society to jointly do that. This bill simply would indicate that the parents have the

right to indicate when their children enter school to allow them to do this over a period of time.

Motion agreed to.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery, where we have with us this afternoon His Excellency Noboru Nakahira, the Ambassador of Japan to Canada.

On behalf of all honourable members, I would like to welcome you here this afternoon.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Education System Violence Prevention Programs

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier.

After six and a half years and three Ministers of Education, we have a document here today. We have noted the three promises the government has broken in terms of education over the last six and a half years.

Mr. Speaker, a concern we have had that we feel is neglected in the statement from the government is the whole issue of violence in our schoolrooms and the whole issue of safety of our students and teachers in the classroom. It is certainly an issue that has developed more and more with the parents we are listening to, with the teachers we are listening to, the trustees and students.

Obviously, the funding reductions have put greater pressure on the teacher-pupil ratio. Incident reports indicate an increase of some 43 percent in the number of weapons-related suspensions in the Winnipeg School Division, and 47 percent of the teachers in the Manitoba Teachers' Society report increased physical abuse situations in the classroom in the '92-93 school year.

I would ask the Premier, why is there no specific action plan on dealing with a safe school environment, which is certainly a priority of the parents whom we are listening to across Manitoba?

* (1400)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the issue of youth violence and violence in the schools is one that obviously is of great concern to all of us.

I point out to the Leader of the Opposition that he throws in gratuitous comments and remarks indiscriminately, such as alluding to the fact that this has something to do with the pupil-teacher ratio.

The pupil-teacher ratio in Manitoba is one of the lowest, if not the lowest in the entire country—

An Honourable Member: It used to be.

Mr. Filmon: Is, is, is.

So he has no solutions. He just has a lot of problems that he throws on the table.

Our Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey) got together people from a wide cross section of the community, teachers, parents, students themselves, people from Corrections, counselling people, all sorts of people throughout the community, Justice people, to work on solutions. They put forward solutions, many of which are now being implemented.

We have always held ourselves open to potential solutions to be brought forward. [interjection] Mr. Speaker, we have always put ourselves forward to solutions put forward by those who want to do that, in a positive way, not just in a way of bringing it forward for political sake.

The Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) has met with the stakeholders consistently over the last six months to listen to their concerns, their ideas and their proposals on how to solve education.

Mr. Speaker, there is a difficulty, and we will be open about it. The difficulty is that there are competing interests. I know from having met with the Manitoba Teachers' Society executive four years in a row that the only topic they consistently wanted to talk about was the amount of money that was put into teachers' salaries—the only topic.

They did not want to talk about violence in the schools. They did not want to talk about all of these educational issues. That is a difficulty we are going to have to come to grips with. That is why this minister is putting forth a constructive

proposal, a proposal that involves all people from the community, to try and solve problems, not try and make cheap politics out of them, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Doer: I cannot count how many gratuitous comments were in the Premier's response, Mr. Speaker.

The government has failed to deal with the whole issue of violence in the schoolrooms. Talking to teachers, parents, pupils, it is a major concern. To have us now referred to the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey), who was the former Minister of Education who did nothing on the protocol in Education, you will excuse us if we are asking the Premier for some action and not for words.

Mr. Speaker, the government, the former Minister of Education, had a proposal from the school trustees, the school teachers, the principals, the superintendents across Manitoba, calling for an absolute protocol to deal with cross-government co-ordination to deal with problem children in our school system who are also in contact with the health system, the social services system and other systems. The government has promised us technical bureaucratic committees, but has promised no action in the community.

When can we expect from the Premier, who has had three Ministers of Education, a specific action plan and protocol plan that is in the communities and in the community schools on behalf of our kids in those communities?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, when we consult with the stakeholders, with the parents, with the various people who have an interest in education, we get criticized because we are not taking action. When we take action, we get criticized by the Leader of the Opposition for not consulting.

We have done both. We have listened, we have consulted, and the minister is putting forth some concrete proposals that will indeed improve the ability of our schools to function and will involve parents in the process to a greater extent than they have ever been involved before.

Parental Involvement

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): We have been calling for greater parental involvement in the education system for the last six years. [interjection] There are a lot of former Ministers of Education now saying a lot of things across the way, Mr. Speaker, who did nothing when they were in office.

In 1990, the Premier promised—we believe that some degree of local autonomy is important to school boards in dealing with expenditures of educational funds, leaving them to make the decisions locally and make them accountable to the local taxpayers and the local parents. Consultation is critical in ensuring this best education system with the local school boards.

Mr. Speaker, why should we believe the Premier today when he talks about involving grassroots parents when he broke his promise to allow for locally elected people in the school divisions to make the decisions back in the pre-election period in 1990? His word was not good then. Why is it good now?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, all of the decisions that are the responsibility of local school boards have been made by local school boards.

I will not apologize to the Leader of the Opposition or to anyone for having put in place legislation that limited the amount of increase of taxes that they could put on the ratepayers of Manitoba. If he counts that as unwarranted interference, he is out of touch with the people of Manitoba.

Home Care Program Drug Policy

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, throughout the government's so-called health reform, the government has said that patient care would not be impacted negatively by their changes, yet we see line-ups getting longer, patients complaining in hospitals, nurses laid off, home care cut back and more cuts coming down the road.

Can the minister explain—and we have government documents that indicate it—why he might be placing home care clients in jeopardy by invoking a new policy whereby home care attendants now administer drugs to patients, rather than nurses who used to administer the drugs?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, over the last number of months, there have been significant developments in the whole area of home care and also in the whole area of the responsibilities and roles of members of the nursing profession in which we take great pleasure.

I am sure that the 18,000 or so recipients of home care in Manitoba will be pleased to know that they have an independent arbiter when it comes to disagreements between themselves and the program with regard to levels of care, with regard to the kind of care they receive.

I know from talking with representatives of the Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses that the announcement made by the Premier (Mr. Filmon) at the nurses' convention with respect to nurse-managed care is something they look forward to developing with us under the leadership of Dr. Helen Glass and her committee.

So we have made significant steps forward, I suggest, in the area of home care and in the area of changes, improvements in opportunities, for members of the nursing profession.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, does one get the impression the minister is avoiding the answer?

Can the minister explain why the change in policy, why they are tinkering with home care again? We know what happens when this government tinkers with home care.

Why are they changing home care? This policy is frankly illegal, Mr. Speaker, and I will table the medical services act which indicates this policy of having home care attendants administer drugs is illegal. Why are they doing this?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Speaker, it is a pretty important allegation the honourable member makes. I will be certain to follow up and ensure, if something illegal is happening, that it be stopped, and if it is

not illegal, that the honourable member withdraw his comments in that regard.

I make no apology also for putting the patient first. I wish the honourable member would explain himself once in a while when he puts his clearly defined, vested interest ahead of the interests of the patients in this province. He is going to have a lot of explaining to do in that regard.

In any event, we also have a Home Care Advisory Council, headed by Ms. Paula Keirstead, whose recommendations we look forward to hearing and whose advice we look forward to hearing as they do their work, as well.

Again, I think that clients of the Home Care program would be pleased to know that such an advisory council is in existence, and we are inviting them, clients and staff of the program, to make their views known to the advisory committee.

* (1410)

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, the only person first in this government's agenda was Connie Curran, who was first in line to take her \$4 million down to the States.

My final supplementary, Mr. Speaker: This policy was put in place before the minister even put in place his advisory committees. Can the minister outline whether or not he talked to the College of Physicians and Surgeons, the Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses and all the other regulatory bodies before they put this policy in place, which appears to be very contradictory?

It is the government's own memo that indicates that they have put this policy in place. Why are they jeopardizing patients' health without consulting with the regulatory bodies that are supposed to be looking after patients' health, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. McCrae: I told the honourable member, Mr. Speaker, I would follow up on the one part of his question that actually was a question, and that was about the legality and the appropriateness of a particular procedure. I will follow that up, but when he wants to talk about who comes first, Connie Curran always comes into his questions.

He always forgets to mention Michael Decter every time he mentions Connie Curran. Do not forget Michael Decter is the person who sat around the table with the honourable member's colleagues when they were government here in Manitoba. Then he left his \$140,000-a-year deputy minister position in Ontario to head up all the Connie Curran operations here in Canada.

If the honourable member has any questions about Connie Curran, he can ask Michael Decter, his friend.

Education System Social Programs

Mr. Paul Edwards (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education.

I have now had a chance to review briefly the document, leaf through it. What was interesting—[interjection] Well, it did not take long. It is not much. It did not take long.

My question for the Minister of Education: What has often been said by teachers and trustees—they have told us, and I am sure they have told the minister—is that, increasingly, health programs, social services programs and other social programs which government offers are having to be offered through the schools. These things are being loaded onto the school system increasingly, and teachers and trustees are saying it is taking away from their teaching ability, because they simply do not have the resources to offer all of these programs.

That has been a constant theme in the last few years of discussions with those groups. There is not anything that I can see in this blueprint which speaks to that particular issue, and a real concern of all of those involved in the education system in this province is, what is the role of schools going to be as a community centre for the delivery of those services, and where will the resources come from to deliver those services?

What partnerships, what reaching out is the minister going to do to those various departments in his government, to those sectors of our society,

as they increasingly become participants in our education system?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, the member may want to pass judgment on the length of the document, but I want to assure him that six painstaking months were put into place with tremendous consultation across the piece to arrive at the document that was tabled today, in keeping with what the members, of course, have been calling for year after year, and that is, of course, greater consultation.

I am troubled by the lack of statesmanship approach brought forward by both Leaders of the opposition, because if anybody does any reading with respect to education reform, one of the first commentaries is to stay away from the politics of blame, because, of course, the politics of blame, in reality, do not do an awful lot to help the students in the public school system today. I have tried to do that.

Mr. Speaker, the focus on the document put into place today is literacy. It is academic achievement. It is being able to comprehend and to read and to write.

The question brought forward by the Leader of the Liberal Party is no different from the question that had been put forward by his party before, the member particularly for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray), who has asked the question over and over again—the protocols with respect to the departments and how it is we deal with students who are medically complex or those who are overly aggressive in the classroom.

Mr. Speaker, as I have suggested many times, that protocol with respect to departmental review of this subject is in place. I have seen a near-to-final draft on my desk as of last week. Again, we are going to try and release that this summer. That is the same answer to the same question that I have given over and over, over the course of the last two months.

Parental Choice of Schools

Mr. Paul Edwards (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of

Education says he and his department have put six hard months into this. He will pardon us if we do not have a lot of sympathy. Maybe they should have put six hard years into this, which they have had and did not do.

My second supplementary question for the minister—and I will look forward to that report—is specific to his Action No. 9, which is in the document and indicates that parents will have increased ability to enable parental choice, within limits, in selecting the public school best suited to their child's learning requirements in order to increase flexibility of parental choice.

Can he be a little more specific on that? Is he talking about across-school-division boundaries? What happens to transportation costs in that regard? What impact is Mr. Norrie's commission likely to have or potentially going to have on that type of an action plan?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, before I answer the question, I feel compelled to acknowledge an awful lot of work that has been done by my predecessors in this government, who, through task force and indeed consultations, have gone throughout the education community to bring forward an awful lot of information that, again, is reflected in part in this document.

Furthermore, specific to the question, the member wants to ask about the question of greater flexibility. We anticipate that, in some settings, there will be a reduction in the number of school divisions and that there will be larger districts and divisions, but within that, we sense that students and their parents should have greater access to choice, but, Mr. Speaker, that does not mean free choice.

That means, in some cases, that if there is some additional cost, particularly associated with transportation, there may be some incumbency upon the parent to recognize part of that cost. That is what we are talking about. Choice cannot always be free.

Distance Education Advisory Council

Mr. Paul Edwards (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, one of the chapters in this, Chapter 5, is Distance Education and Technology. We had a very thorough report done by an advisory committee which was released last December, in December of 1993. This report, in its Action No. 14, calls for the establishment of a provincial advisory council on Distance Education and Technology.

Mr. Speaker, it strikes me, without obviously having details, that we have had that committee, and they produced a report which was, in effect, a blueprint and set out key goals and time frames for distance education in this province. Why are we doing this again? What is going to be the new role of this new advisory council?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, the member is not even part right.

On this, there was a task force that was in place that brought forward recommendations. One of the recommendations was that this advisory group be put into place to give recommendation to the government as to how the advent of distance education be brought forward into the future. That was put forward by the task force purely within the field of education.

What we have had happen over the course of the last two years is an incredible add-on with respect to other government services and indeed nongovernment services that all want to share the information highway. So we are trying to integrate this whole process through various ministries, but still within today's world, the advisory council with respect to education will certainly be put into place to focus purely on education.

Domestic Violence Court Backlog

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey).

Delays in the justice system in dealing with charges of domestic violence, which are almost

always against women, are of serious concern to Manitobans. On May 27, the Minister of Justice advised the House that the backlogs in the Domestic Violence Court were four and a half months, all in light of an objective of this government of a three-month backlog in that court. At the next sitting, the very next sitting on May 30, the minister said that they were actually eight and a half months. That is a difference of four months.

Now, yesterday, in an affidavit filed in the Court of Queen's Bench executed by Judge Giesbrecht of the Provincial Court, there is evidence, referencing a transcript from the court, showing that a man charged with domestic assault, September 25, 1993, will not face trial until September 21, 1994, a delay of one year, Mr. Speaker, almost to the day.

My question to the minister is, who are Manitobans to believe as to the seriousness of the backlog, a judge under oath or this minister?

* (1420)

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, given that the member has referenced a matter, a particular case which the judges' association is now pursuing before the courts with respect to Bill 22 and given that the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey), in her role as Attorney General, is not appropriate to be dealing with that matter, I will be responding to this particular issue, because it does fall in the realm of public sector compensation.

Mr. Speaker, clearly, what we have going on with the provincial judges in Manitoba is very much a dispute with money. I say to the honourable member—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, my question was as to the backlogs in the Provincial Court, not about judges, not about their compensation.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, clearly, backlogs, whatever their length of time in the court, are reflective of a labour relations issue that is now going on with provincial judges, and I think the statistics of court use support that.

Youth Court Backlogs

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): My question is to the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey).

Given that the Minister of Justice has argued in this House that the backlog in the Youth Court is just five months, and given that I brought into this Chamber an example of a nine-month backlog even with no trial, and given that Judge Giesbrecht swears in her affidavit that there is a one-year backlog in that Youth Court, who are Manitobans to believe?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I would reference the honourable member to yesterday's Free Press, where one Judge Ron Meyers in a particular speech indicated very clearly that because of their basic salary dispute with the provincial government, with this Legislative Assembly, they have, in fact, slowed down or are not going the extra mile to make sure that work is done.

I would just indicate to the honourable member that the number of hours that courts were sitting in March of 1994 ranged from 0.6 of an hour per day to a high of 3.6 hours in a day, and in April from 0.9 to 4.4 hours per day. Clearly—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, we are seeing a rather bizarre distortion of the rules when a minister—a minister is entitled not to answer a question, but it is rather unusual for another minister to get up and not only not answer the question but to deal with other matters.

The member asked a very specific question on court delays. I would point out that perhaps the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey) might care to

read *Beauchesne* in terms of the sub judge convention, which indicates that it does not strictly apply in terms of civil cases, and not only that, *Beauchesne* Citation 510, which indicates: "The Speaker has pointed out 'that the House has never allowed the sub judge convention to stand in the way of its consideration of a matter vital to the public interest or to the effective operation of the House'."

I would submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that it is quite in order for our member to be asking about court delays, and it is incumbent upon the Minister of Justice to provide answers in the public interest.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised, the honourable member does not have a point of order.

Beauchesne Citation 420: "The Speaker has stated, 'Of course, the Chair will allow a question to be put to a certain Minister; but it cannot insist that that Minister rather than another should answer it.'"

Mr. Mackintosh: It is fascinating to see how this government deals with its gross mismanagement of the court system, Mr. Speaker.

Provincial Court Vacancies

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, given that, unfortunately, there are seven new judge vacancies on the court brought by this government as of last Friday and in light of the backlogs, my question to the minister is this: When did this government, now near the end of its mandate, plan to refresh the bench?—the minister's words. When does the patronage really begin?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, as I have answered in this House previously, there were three vacancies and, as the members know, I have reported in this House before, there are judicial nominating committees which are already operating to deal with those three vacancies.

When I receive information from the chief judge regarding where the needs will be for other members of the judiciary to be appointed, to have

the judicial nominating committees appointed, this government will be acting.

Youth Care Workers Training Program

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Family Services will know that Manitoba is one of only two provinces in Canada that does not have a youth care worker training program in spite of the fact that the community has requested one. Red River Community College rated it No. 2 in their priorities for new programs, but it was not approved.

Given that there is an increasing need for this professional training for youth care workers, can the Minister of Family Services tell us why this program was not approved, and what her government is going to do to see that it is approved for this coming year, or next year at the very least?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, I have to say that I thoroughly enjoyed the last 10 months with my responsibility as Minister of Family Services. There has to be an understanding that it takes a little while to get up to speed on the issues in the department.

We have had a three-month session. It is really nice to know that the session is coming to a close, so that we can look very proactively into the future and look at all of the issues that need to be discussed, the issues that need to be reviewed and decisions that need to be made.

So I look forward to the time between the sessions, when we can look at the issues surrounding youth workers and see what the future might hold.

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Speaker, that is a very disappointing answer, given that one of the senior officials in her department endorsed such a program.

Group Homes Closure

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Two youth group homes have been closed in recent months. Two more are going to be closed.

Can the minister tell us where these youth are supposed to go? How can she rationalize a system that has fewer spaces, instead of more spaces, to deal with troubled youths in our society?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): Well, Mr. Speaker, I have indicated many times in this House what our vision is for children and for families in the province of Manitoba. That is a vision that looks at family support, family preservation and family responsibility.

We have put in place within the Department of Family Services, in this year's budget, a special family support fund of \$2.5 million that will look towards keeping families together.

I know there is an issue with those who are presently within the system that we are going to have to deal with, but what we want to do is focus on the future of the children and the families in Manitoba and try to make Manitoba a better place in which to live, reduce the number of children that have to be taken into care by providing the supports right within the family for the children's sake.

Prime Motor Oils Environmental Cleanup

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, the people of Manitoba, especially the people of northeast Winnipeg, have had enough of hazardous waste management by Solvit and Prime Oil. I have photographs with me that show that the Lexington and Paris site has standing water and oil and unprotected hazardous waste in barrels, and an insecure area which allows access, where young people are known to be going into the site.

Mr. Speaker, this area or site for Prime Oil has had a work order mentioning it since December 1991, and I would like to ask the Minister of Environment, given that he said on May 24, '94, that: "The whole area is being evaluated quite carefully to make sure we do not inadvertently overlook something", I would like to ask the minister, why was this Prime Oil site at Lexington and Paris Streets not included in the work order that I mentioned in 1991, which required a cleanup of all Prime Oil sites?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, if the member would care to share her information with me, I could get her a more detailed answer.

* (1430)

Ms. Cerilli: Mr. Speaker, this minister said that he was going to get tough on this issue in May, and we are still getting phone calls asking, for the neighbours of the site, when is it going to be cleaned up.

Why, I ask the minister, has this site not been cleaned up, as the minister has been saying since 1991?

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, a very extensive classification of the material and site was done to make sure that it was categorized and removed appropriately and not mixed in a way that would create additional problems to those we already had. Unless the member has new information that I am unaware of, evaluation of the original Prime Oil site has indicated that while we have a cleanup situation on our hands, we do not have an immediate and emergent problem.

The contracts—we have been seeking to have the material cleaned up and have an estimate on the cost of cleanup of the land, and that will be followed through appropriately.

Ms. Cerilli: Mr. Speaker, the issue is, why is this minister not aware of this contaminated site in northeast Winnipeg, when it is mentioned in the work order that was issued in 1991? What is going on in this Department of Environment, and why—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member has put her question.

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, the member has been known to bring information to this House before that was incorrect, when she reported a spill at Pine Falls that never occurred.

Mr. Speaker, I will do my best to ascertain the validity of her concerns, and we will deal with them.

New Directions Report Implementation

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education.

If you take a look on page 34 of the blueprint on education changes, it states that changes will be incremental over the next six years. Implementation of some actions will be taken immediately.

My question to the Minister of Education is, can the minister indicate to us today what actions the government plans on taking immediately, in particular for this coming September, the beginning of the school year?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training): We will be beginning work on curriculum issues immediately, starting with the development of the curriculum framework K to Senior 4. Upon completion of the framework, work will begin in the K to 12 curriculum areas, core subjects, and essential curriculum learnings will now be new or revised and will be based on the framework.

Work will begin immediately to develop the Grade 3 diagnostic test, with a target for implementation for the '96-97 school year. Work will begin immediately to provide schools and parents with information about the establishment of advisory councils for school leadership. A handbook will be available this fall. We will target it for release in October.

We are working with a western consortia of provinces in the development of a common math and language arts curriculum, and we will be doing a special review of special education programs starting in September of this year.

Mr. Speaker, there are another three or four items. The member may wish me to provide them in a subsequent answer.

Student Consultations

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if the minister can indicate to the House, because there are going to be some changes coming up for the September school year, what consultation there will be between now and then in terms of what the government's plans are, because the minister, in previous questions that I have asked him with respect to students and input for the

students, had indicated that the students would be able to have input after the blueprint was tabled.

I am interested in knowing if the Minister of Education has anything that is going to be happening between now and September in terms of meeting with his partners and the students of the province.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, this is the dilemma a government has, and, of course, opposition can have it both ways. Just a half an hour ago, they were screaming at us because we were consulting too much and not acting. Now they want to go back to consult.

The reality is, we did take into account some of the preliminary findings as a result of the student survey. That is why we have delayed, basically for the last week and a half, releasing the report.

The member wants to know exactly, and I can tell him specifically the emphasis. Students have called for a greater emphasis on English and language arts, more so than the members opposite. They did not even draw it forward in questions today, Mr. Speaker.

Academics and literacy never came forward today in questions, but with the students, it is a big issue, and the whole reform document is based on that fact.

Hiring Policy

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, on page 22, it recommends in terms of the yearly school plan parental and community involvement, including involvement in hiring and assigning teachers, developing the school plan and the school budget.

Is the government suggesting that local school advisory groups will be responsible for the hiring and the discipline and firing of schoolteachers? Is there, in fact, some sort of a check?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training): There can only be one employer. There can only be one employing authority, and that will remain the school division, yet the guidelines that will be in place will call upon the local parent-community advisory group to have

some strong influence on those decisions at the board level.

Winnipeg Airport Upgrading Costs

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, the Winnipeg International Airport activity creates some 9,000 direct and indirect jobs and contributes over \$430 million a year to the provincial GDP.

The federal government is negotiating with local business interests to turn the airport operation management over to a local airport authority under a 60-plus-year lease arrangement. Some other Canadian airports have been transferred, including Vancouver, which now charges passengers a departure fee of between \$5 and \$15.

My question is for the Minister of Highways and Transportation.

Since nearly 50 percent of all Winnipeg airport aircraft movements are cargo-related, has the Minister of Highways and Transportation raised the issue of fairer portioning of the local Airport Authority improvement costs, so that the travelling public will not be responsible for 100 percent of the future capital and operational costs of the local Airport Authority?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, the member full well knows that we discussed this in the Estimates process. He knows the answer. The Winnipeg Airport Authority has been put in place. It is an interim committee that is dealing with the issue.

The federal government has put the whole process on hold, even though Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver and Montreal have airport authorities and are competing with us and are beating us right now. If the federal Liberal government get on their way and get the new airport authorities in place with whatever new guidelines they want to have in place, get on with it, the Airport Authority can get on with the question the member is talking about.

Mr. Reid: Mr. Speaker, since there are over two million passengers a year and thousands of airline industry employees utilizing the Winnipeg International Airport, has the Minister of Highways and Transportation raised with the

federal government the failure to include consumer and employee representatives on the local Airport Authority board during and after negotiations for transfer of the airport? They are not currently included on that board.

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Speaker, I am sure the member knows that I am leaving this evening or tomorrow morning to meet with the federal minister and other provincial colleagues. Clearly, this issue will be on the table for discussion.

Mr. Reid: Mr. Speaker, I am glad it will be discussed.

Winnipeg Airport Authority Transfer Agreement

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Since taxpayers have already paid for the airport operations, will the Minister of Highways and Transportation ask the federal Minister of Transport, when they meet this week, to release the complete details of any transfer agreement of the Winnipeg International Airport to the business interests?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, the Airport Authority had a public meeting approximately a month or six weeks ago, where they discussed with the community items of interest to the community. That will be an ongoing process if the Airport Authority is approved in the future. I think it will be very important to expanding the economic activity, both cargo and traveller activity, through the airport in Winnipeg if that Airport Authority can get underway.

I hope that the federal government will see the light and create the opportunity for the leaders of the community in Winnipeg to have their airport be very competitive in the opportunities of the future.

Port of Churchill Government Commitment

Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupertsland): Mr. Speaker, my questions are also for the Minister of Transportation.

Repeatedly, we have raised questions during the session concerning the western grain transportation system and also the Port of

Churchill. As of this morning, again, there is no grain committed to the Port of Churchill, making it appear that Churchill may get even less grain this year than the levels in the past four years.

I would like to ask the minister or the Premier (Mr. Filmon) whether or not either one has contacted the Canadian Wheat Board. If so, what commitment have they received from the Wheat Board so far this year?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, our information at this time is about 190,000 tonnes of grain has been committed through Churchill to South Africa. We also hear there are rumours of other potential sales.

We certainly hope that they materialize, so that we can have 400,000 or 500,000 or 600,000 tonnes of grain moving through Churchill. We certainly have written the federal Minister of Agriculture saying that the Manitoba Liberals had committed a million tonnes to go through the Port of Churchill, and we expect them to be able to achieve that objective.

Thompson Airport Government Commitment

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, the federal government's policies on transport are causing major concerns, not only in terms of Churchill, but in terms of airports. In fact, the Minister of Transport federally is talking about a scorched-earth policy in terms of transportation, and it can affect Manitoba, including, in particular, the Thompson airport, which right now is on the chopping block when it comes to the air traffic control tower.

I would like to ask the minister, as I have done previously on this, and perhaps ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon), as well, if the provincial government will take a strong stand against the devastation that would be wrought by the federal Liberal government's policies in terms of transportation.

Will they take a strong action to defend the Thompson airport, the Port of Churchill and the many other vital transportation services in Manitoba?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, I can certainly assure the member for Thompson that we do take a very strong position and try to defend the interests of Manitoba on all the various issues the federal Liberal government are undertaking that will negatively impact us.

I want to assure the member we have written the federal Minister of Transport saying that for the good of safety and for economic development in Thompson, there is strong support for maintaining that tower. I do not know what the federal decision will be. The Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) has also written the federal Minister of Transport on the same initiative.

We are very disappointed, because we are not getting answers to any of the letters we have sent to the federal government. I have sent some 15 since I have got into this portfolio. I have only got answers to four. As we well know, we sent a fairly strong letter on the 9th of June, and they have not even acknowledged it yet.

So if that is the way they consult with the provinces, that is not a very good way to govern, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

House Business

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, in discussion amongst House leaders, we have agreed to go into Committee of Supply to continue to consider the concurrence motion in Committee of Supply.

So I would move, seconded by the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson), that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Motion agreed to, and the House resolved itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty with the honourable member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) in the Chair.

* (1440)

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Supply—Capital Supply

Madam Chairperson (Louise Dacquay): Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. The Committee of Supply has been considering the following resolution:

That the Committee of Supply concur in all Supply resolutions relating to the Estimates of Expenditure for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1995, which have been adopted at this session by the two sections of the Committee of Supply sitting separately and by the full committee.

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (River Heights): Madam Chairperson, I have a question that I would like to ask of the Minister of Highways (Mr. Findlay). I have over the last few weeks had a number of letters from constituents with respect to the underpass on Kenaston. Some of them have been in favour; some of them have been opposed. What has been consistent through letters, however, was their desire for some kind of process that they could indicate clearly, that they could have their input into this final and ultimate decision of this construction. Will the Minister of Highways outline for us this afternoon exactly what stages of public involvement will be required in the final decisions to build the underpass?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Madam Chair, the member puts me at some kind of a disadvantage to ask me to answer that question because it is really an Urban Affairs issue. The Minister of Urban Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh) deals with the city on any matters related to the provincial government and streets and bridges inside the Perimeter. The Minister of Highways deals with those roads that, as the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) knows we have had that discussion in Estimates, are outside the Perimeter primarily. Yes, on occasion we get involved in cost sharing with the city on specific items like that portion through St. Norbert and the bridge over the La Salle and the four laning of the Brookside portion close to the Perimeter. That is the role the Minister of Highways plays.

But it is an infrastructure decision involving the three levels of government: city, province, and

federal government. The relationship in terms of what to do and how to do it between the province and the city rests in the Ministry of Urban Affairs. So it does not help the member, but that is the jurisdiction of responsibilities we have in this government.

Mrs. Carstairs: Madam Chairperson, it is very clear that substantial amounts of provincial money are going into this project. In addition, during the Highways Estimates the minister indicated that his department was consulted and would be consulted when infrastructure projects specifically deal with roads and that type of project, which this certainly is. Now, the Department of Highways itself does have a series of protocols. It has public meetings, it ensures that there is an environmental impact assessment if one is warranted. Will those kinds of controls still be put into place in this particular project?

Mr. Findlay: Madam Chair, I cannot answer much differently, other than to expand a little bit to the member. Yes, we were involved in some technical aspects, but the city engineers ultimately are responsible in this situation, and I cannot say specifically who or to what extent we were involved in any consultation process with the city engineers. It would only be in a secondary position with them.

With regard to environmental process, again you would have to ask the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst) or the City of Winnipeg. We have a process with our roads that are under our jurisdiction. Yes, where an environmental license is needed we obtain it. There are several steps along the way to make a decision to get to the construction phase.

I am sorry, although it might sound like a cop-out it is outside my responsibility and jurisdiction. We are only called in on some basic technical aspect, and in terms of whether—the member wanted to ask whether I think a project is important to the overall transportation sector for Manitoba—I would have to say focussing on getting traffic to and from the airport and to our trucking terminals and to our intermodal centres is very important in a transportation sense. Now how

that is done, that is a broad question, involves a lot of players.

Mrs. Carstairs: Well, this is exactly the concern that many of the people writing to me have, that the Department of Highways is not going to do its normal processes that they would do in a provincial highway setting, that the City of Winnipeg does not have the same sorts of rules and regulations guaranteeing that there will be the public meetings and the environmental assessment, nor does the federal government, because it is monies that are going to be used in the City of Winnipeg. So the concern is that the whole public participation is going to fall through the cracks, that no level is going to conduct it.

Can I ask the Minister of Highways if he will take it upon himself to meet with the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh) and the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) and if so possible, lay before the City of Winnipeg their concerns that public processes be put into place to guarantee that there is public participation.

Mr. Findlay: Madam Chair, again, I just want to remind the member we are not dealing in a provincial highway here, so we cannot institute our processes on them. I will follow up what the member suggested, that between Urban Affairs and Environment and Highways we should look at the issue. It is probably fair to say that there might be something falling through the cracks here, and we will discuss it and look at how the process will be handled from here on.

Mr. Clif Evans (Interlake): Madam Chair, leading off with the Minister of Highways, I would just like to refer back to Estimates what was discussed during Estimates with regard to Riverton Boat Works. I have read through Hansard and also had an opportunity to meet with the proponents, with Mr. Thorsteinson and his family, with regard to the Hansard and the documentation. Mr. Thorsteinson has indicated that he would certainly appreciate meeting with the previous minister. He also asked me to pass on his comments to the previous Minister of Highways who did what he could to assist Mr. Thorsteinson, and they are very, very grateful for that.

However, this is an issue that has been longstanding. The previous minister who is well aware of it, and my colleague who I thank for bringing this matter up to the now-Minister of Highways (Mr. Findlay), Mr. Thorsteinson would in fact like to discuss the different possibilities, and after reading Hansard, that there may be. We do want to get the federal people to the table and that has been the difficulty. The minister may not be aware of the fact that the federal member of Parliament for Portage-Interlake has also been made aware of this. Riverton Boat Works has not received the answers that they are looking for from his office. Whether the minister is aware of that, whether there has been any correspondence from the member of Parliament for Portage-Interlake or not, I would certainly hope there might have been; if not, I do have some correspondence that I would like to share with the minister. The now-member of Parliament, Dr. Gerrard, had indicated throughout the pre-election days that they were going to resolve this matter once and for all and bring it to light.

I would like us to work together on this with the minister, and I think that a meeting between the Minister of Highways and myself and the Riverton Boat Works and a member of Parliament that if we can get together and somehow look to resolve this whole matter and bring everybody to the table, put the questions and the answers together about how we can do it, I think it has been too long standing of an issue, people's lives have been altered because of this issue. I certainly feel that support from this minister and perhaps getting with the member of Parliament to enlighten him even more as to what can be done, I would appreciate comments from the minister.

* (1450)

Mr. Findlay: Madam Chair, I became aware of this issue through the Estimates process, and certainly the former minister, Mr. Driedger, was involved in terms of discussion and ongoing process here. What I have learned is that it is certainly a very difficult situation for Mr. Thorsteinson. I am sure the member opposite is fully aware that the province is not involved in any direct way in this circumstance. Mr. Thorsteinson

had a direct contract with Public Works Canada, in other words, with the federal government, and he has made certain allegations, comments, and I am sure they are true or very close to true, that design specifications were not what they should have been. He incurred certain expenses, and when he tried to get reimbursed from the federal government, the dispute started to arise. As time went on, it would appear that Public Works Canada either stopped talking or never did talk to Mr. Thorsteinson in any constructive way about trying to resolve the circumstances that he was in with the contract that he had for building a tug.

The situation, as I know it right now, is that Mr. Thorsteinson has launched legal action against the federal government. But the member for the Interlake (Mr. C. Evans) is saying he would like to still talk to the federal government, and, yes, I am sure that Mr. Gerrard made all kinds of promises during the election period. Now all of a sudden he is elected, and what is he doing to follow up on his promises to have it resolved? [interjection] Yes, zero. I am not aware that Mr. Gerrard has responded to us as a department directly in any sense, and it is difficult for us to get involved if the federal government will not come to the table because they are the people that have the issue with Mr. Thorsteinson and Riverton Boat Works. I am prepared to work with the member opposite to see if we can do something to bring the federal government to the table.

I do not know what all the truth and facts are here. I certainly know that Mr. Thorsteinson has been severely hurt financially because of this process, and I think it goes all the way back to 1987, if I am not mistaken, 1985. So we are talking close to 10 years now, and there has been an outstanding issue of monies that have been held back by the federal government as a result of the contract and the dispute, which is, I am sure, serious business for Mr. Thorsteinson.

So the department has, I can assure the member, tried in all its ways and means to achieve some discussion between the two parties, but the federal government, to my knowledge, at this point, have consistently and continually refused to discuss the issue at all, and whether Mr. Gerrard will become

active and try to bring the two parties together, I cannot comment for him. I can only say that we will continue to do what we can from my office to get Mr. Gerrard to take some leadership with his government to resolve the issue for his constituent, but, you know, I feel almost helpless, basically, in the circumstance, and I am sure the MLA for Interlake (Mr. C. Evans) also feels somewhat helpless. We have got a federal government that has dug their heels in versus a constituent who feels very frustrated in the process.

Mr. Clif Evans: Thank you for those comments, Mr. Minister. I would in closing on that topic, the minister is leaving tonight or tomorrow with respect to the ministers' meeting in Calgary, the opportunity, hopefully, may arise there to speak with the federal minister there on this topic. It would be greatly appreciated if the minister, knowing of course the schedule and the timetable that he has, could mention it and if he could agree, and I would be more than willing to do as much of the mediating between this minister, between Dr. Gerard and Mr. Thorsteinson, into getting together, at least as a start, with the four parties to see exactly what kind of a direction we can take.

I will contact the minister after he has returned from Calgary to see if he had any luck with the federal minister. I will also contact him to discuss perhaps—I will try and reach Dr. Gerrard and see if we cannot get together in a common place here or wherever and discuss this with Mr. Thorsteinson.

If the matter could be resolved, not only Riverton Boat Works, but the family itself could get back up on their feet. They are turning contracts down now. They are still being sought after to do work, and they cannot do anything because of this situation.

As far as the legal action goes, and we discussed it on Saturday, they are willing to negotiate that. They are willing to negotiate as far as putting it away as long as they have some assurances, put it off to the side until we get some assurances and then we can discuss it, and if nothing comes out of it, then go from there again.

I would like to very quickly go over some of the roads and maintenance—

Mr. Findlay: Madam Chair, the member has me at a great disadvantage. My material is back in the office, and he is going to ask some very technical questions. I thought I was on in a half an hour, and I was headed out to get it. If he would like to ask questions elsewhere for two minutes while I go get the information—[interjection] The Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger) is here to bail me out, so I will go get my material and I will be right back.

Mr. Cliff Evans: Madam Chairperson, I would like to ask the Minister of Natural Resources, while I have the opportunity, a few questions.

I would like to actually begin with the LGD of Armstrong. They have written to the minister and have sent a resolution requesting, resolved that council request the Minister of Natural Resources to determine a route for a controlled outlet for Dennis Lake.

I realize that we had met with the minister a couple or three weeks ago—I appreciate that—on peliukan bass drains in Netley Creek. In previous discussions with the previous Minister of Natural Resources, we had discussed an outlet for Dennis Lake. I think where council is wanting to move on this is to determine, with the government's help, where best an outlet for Dennis Lake could be achieved through the co-operation of water resources and the Natural Resources department and council.

The other issues and the other drainage issues in the LGD of Armstrong, of course, are important and are still important. The minister, in his discussions with the reeve, had indicated just which way they are going with this, and council is satisfied with that. The latest resolution, and it was something that was brought up again to the previous Minister of Natural Resources—with a positive response, I may say. Now the question is, when all of this is going to get done and well and fixed, Dennis Lake outlet is still going to create a problem.

Has the minister discussed this part of the request with his department at all, and will he?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources): Madam Chairperson, normally when the member for Interlake asks a question, I usually say no first off, and then I will come back and get around to discussing it.

He makes reference to the LGD of Armstrong and the problems that they have had, and he is correct that we met in my office a while ago. Concerns were brought forward. There are portions of the Interlake where the drainage system leaves a lot to be desired, and a particular case with the LGD of Armstrong and Dennis Lake—a lot of history in many of these cases as well. I had indicated at that time to the LGD council that I personally did not feel receptive to taking the Dennis Lake flow and putting it into the Netley Creek.

The Netley Creek itself, Madam Chairperson, is a problem by itself. We are looking at a long-range capital program to start on the Netley Creek drainage system. In fact, I am waiting with staff, but we have not had time yet to develop the longer-term capital program in terms of how well staged some of these—I went through with staff the other day. We have approximately 20 of these projects that are sort of into the mix, half done. Washow Bay area is another one. We have the Dennis Lake issue; we have the Netley Creek issue. We have a series of them throughout the province.

Councils in many cases are rightfully getting frustrated because there is not enough capital money to take and, maybe, not even to do one total project because some of them are pretty expensive, so we try and do a little bit here and a little bit there. As a result, I am not satisfied with that approach necessarily. I think councils are entitled to at least know what the general picture is.

* (1500)

Having said that, I want to say that my personal preference is, in the Dennis Lake particular case, to take that water straight east and tie it into our drain system going east towards the lake instead of going into the Netley Creek process.

I will not arbitrarily just make that decision. I think when I met with the reeve and council, I

suggested we look at these options. I am prepared to define these options more specifically with the LGD of Armstrong, together with Water Resources, logistically looking at the thing from my perspective as a layman, unless my Water Resources people convince me differently. They have the same sort of feeling that I have, that we should take the Dennis Lake water east to the provincial drainage system. We have enough other systems that flow into the Netley Creek run, and those are the ones that basically affect the LGD of Armstrong as well. I personally prefer to have this split.

I am waiting for Water Resources to come forward with more specific recommendations, and I will not do that just arbitrarily. We will take and meet with the LGD of Armstrong again once we have a little bit more specific information, and we will respond to them directly by letter and carbon copy the member.

Mr. Clif Evans: Madam Chair, I want to thank the minister for that because about two and a half, three weeks ago I did go out with the reeve and some of the constituents who live in that area and who have lived there for ever and ever as they say, and that was discussed between council—some of the councillors were there and a few of the constituents and the reeve and myself, and we went over that whole area. What I am hearing in the minister's idea is pretty well close to being the same as what they are saying, and I think if the minister's staff and council or the reeve could get together on that, but also bring in the constituents whose ideas basically are the ones that we are throwing about with the LGD to bring to the attention of the minister. I would certainly want to see that.

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, I want to give assurance to the member as well as to the LGD of Armstrong that, as this session winds down and we have a little bit more flexibility in terms of our time, you know the ministers from their offices, that it would be my intention to go out first-hand and have a look at the situation. It is always easy to have resolutions on the desk and have people expressing wishes; I find very often

that by going out and looking first-hand you have a much better feel for it.

I want to assure the member that I will be out in that area during the course of the next few months and do a first-hand look at it. I will not do it quietly. I will let the LGD of Armstrong know, and we can talk about it. There will be action and a course of action developed, and I will let them know what it is.

Mr. Clif Evans: I just want to offer the invitation to the minister that if he is going to be coming out to look at the drainage systems in the Interlake, I offer him the invitation of stopping in and visiting with me, and perhaps I can show him a few other dandy drains that we have in the Interlake. The invitation is always open to the minister.

An Honourable Member: Give him a tour.

Mr. Clif Evans: I will be glad to give him a tour. There is no doubt about it.

On another matter, this is on fishing. The minister received a letter June 22, or the letter was sent June 22 to the minister's office from a Henry Traverse. It is with regard to a director's authorization permit. Can the minister enlighten me on these permits? Can he indicate just what has to be done by applicants to receive such a licence?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, the member has me a little at a disadvantage. I wonder if he could clarify the licence. He made reference to it the other day. I have been trying to follow up the correspondence in my office, which was faxed and not faxed. I did not have a copy of it yet, so if he could clarify this a little further, I am prepared to answer.

Mr. Clif Evans: Madam Chairperson, I will read the letter for the minister. It is from Henry Traverse. He is president of Goodman Landing Fisheries. His request is: your assistance in obtaining the permit declared above for the purpose of selling fish directly to the Gimli Fish Market. For your information, the four of us family members hold quotas on Lake Winnipeg, and currently there are no liens on any of our existing equipment that are provided by loans through CEDF.

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, the member is asking for my assistance; apparently, the individual is as well. I believe the individual probably knows that the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation is the one that issues licences to allow the sale of that. My department cannot do that, because that is under the jurisdiction of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation and licences of that nature have been issued.

If there is any further difficulty with it, they should apply to FFMC; and, if there is difficulty, they can get in touch with my office, and we will pursue it further. Licences of this nature have been issued. However, I have to say the member should possibly maybe check with FFMC himself. There is a lot of history with the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation in terms of the marketing schemes, the rough fish, the whole issue itself.

In fact, I just sent a letter to the federal Minister responsible for Fisheries and Oceans today. I just want to tell the member that I wrote a letter to the federal minister because we have a bit of a convoluted system in terms of authority for the administration of our fisheries. It is under federal jurisdiction, and for us to implement any changes at all, we have to apply to the federal government, the federal minister. It goes through the system there. It has sometimes taken up to a year before we have a decision.

In this particular case with the licence, if the member wishes to advise them, apply directly to the marketing board; and, if there are further difficulties, they can get back in touch with me or my deputy.

Mr. Clif Evans: Madam Chairperson, in closing with this minister on that, I discussed this with Mr. Traverse yesterday. He had indicated to me that he discussed it with the director of Fisheries and nothing of that was made mention. So, when I discuss this with my constituent, I will certainly mention what you have said and indicate what you have said, and we will go to Freshwater and find out.

If I could get back to the Minister of Highways (Mr. Findlay), I might throw a little bit of a curve

to the minister on this one. Some years ago, my honourable colleague the critic for Highways and myself had the terrific opportunity of going up to Steep Rock at the request of some constituents out there with respect to the turning lane and the curve approaching 329 to Steep Rock. Now I am not sure whether this minister—or his department has made him aware of the request—is aware of the correspondence or not, but it is the junction of 239 and Highway 6. Previous to the turnoff, there are some dangerous S's—curves—and, of course, with the development in Steep Rock, a wonderful development in that area, the traffic is increasing.

My family and I have the opportunity of going there now. We have been going up there for the last couple of years. I travel that road a lot, of course, and I find it very, very dangerous and treacherous. If the minister can enlighten me as to what his department might do on this or if the minister will get back to me on this one, I would appreciate one way or the other, or if he wants to ask further, ask me any questions.

An Honourable Member: First and foremost, how is the fishing?

Mr. Clif Evans: The fishing is absolutely excellent.

Mr. Findlay: Madam Chairperson, did the member say 329 and Highway 6?

An Honourable Member: 239.

Mr. Findlay: Madam Chairperson, 239 and Highway 6.

The member, I understand, is referring to the junction where you make a left turn or a turn to the west of Highway 6 onto 239.

An Honourable Member: Towards Steep Rock.

Mr. Findlay: Towards Steep Rock, yes. I would have to get back to the member. It could be in the program, but I would prefer to talk to staff about where it is at before I comment to him.

* (1510)

Mr. Clif Evans: Madam Chair, I did want to put it on the agenda for the minister's staff. It was on another piece of paper and I was not able to discuss it with his staff, but I definitely would appreciate an answer on that. This is since 1990-91 that the

request has been in, and it could be very, very dangerous.

I do have some questions. I have been bringing up some of the highways in my area to this government, to the previous Minister of Highways. I have done it through letter. I have done it through discussing it with him in private. I have done it through questions. I have done it through Estimates, and really not to the satisfaction of, of course, the constituents and myself. I would just like to question the minister on some of these and where it is it.

I would like to begin with Highway 234 from Highway 8 to Pine Dock. When the previous minister received the portfolio of Minister of Highways in the changes in the fall, I had indicated to the Matheson Island community and to the Pine Dock community and the community of Riverton that one of the ways that we should deal with this issue is to write to the minister requesting a meeting to get support from the different communities that are involved. Those letters and the petitions and whatnot were sent to me, and I brought them to the minister's office directly. I believe this would have been in early, early fall.

Madam Chair, I just want to enlighten the minister on 234. It is a road that was upgraded to Beaver Creek, widened and upgraded and left at that, but now the traffic on that road has increased so much over the years. The winter road service is used by that road. The people come from Bloodvein, from Island Lake, from Berens River. They use that road in the wintertime. The transfer company uses that road throughout the year. The communities are growing. They are using that continuously through the year.

There is a proposal in place that an entrepreneur is looking at building a fishing resort in the Pine Dock area. It is going to increase the traffic even more with tourism and that. Over the past three to four years the community has requested and requested to discuss this with the minister.

I understand that the response, after the minister received the letter and the petitions and whatnot, he had indicated to my office, I believe, and to the communities that there was going to be a meeting

with a certain engineer. In checking with his department I was led to believe or told that there were some personal problems within that, which is fine. This is going back some months now.

Again, I received calls, the minister's office received calls just in the last three days about the treacherous condition of 234 right today and last week. The strange part about it was I received some calls on Thursday, I called his office to express the wishes of the constituents, and as I get home they are pulling a truck, a three-quarter ton truck right up to the top, right up to the cab in mud, that they had to pull out of 234. They had to go out and get it, because that is how much it was stuck.

I know the minister hopefully has some answer for me right now on it.

Mr. Findlay: Madam Chair, I know the member has a lot of highways that he is concerned about. We are doing some work on some of them. The LGD of Fisher, we have certainly been meeting with them, and I think we have an agreement that is going to flow there. The one he is talking about, 234, I do not have any further comment or any other additional comment. I think I would like to talk to the member privately so we can get from him his version of where the major problems are, because we are talking a fairly long road here. We are probably talking—dare I say?—80 kilometres. It is a long road. I am sure before we are finished here today he is going to ask about probably another 80 or 100 kilometres of road. There may be justifiable reasons for raising all these roads.

I will give him some answers where I have information, but on this one I would prefer to talk to him privately about the conditions of the road to see if it jibes with the information I have received through the department so that we can apportion our scarce resources in a fashion that meets the greatest needs. Any MLA that comes to me on the roads, give me the road or the two roads that are the highest priority, the ones that must be done, because we cannot do four or five. There just are not enough resources to go around.

I would ask the member on this one—he is saying that the traffic count is way up. We always collect traffic counts every year. I will check

today. I do not have the numbers in front of me. I will check to determine whether those highway traffic counts have really gone up in reality or whether we have taken them in the wrong place. I would like the member's input on that so that we can determine where we would do some work if some work is not already being scheduled on 234. I know he has some more and we will have to determine where the greatest priorities are for those ones that are not currently on a program.

Mr. Clif Evans: Madam Chair, I will do that with the minister, but there were indications from the minister's office that there was going to be a meeting with an engineer—I do not have his name in front of me—to discuss it with the communities and myself, if so be it. Basically, what they are saying also is that the continued maintenance of the road is very important. They are not asking for asphaltting from Highway 8 to Pine Dock. They are looking for some improvement on the road, up to some provincial standards, so this is basically it.

I will be glad to get together with the minister, but I would appreciate the minister following up with his staff as to who was supposed to be meeting. The administrator of the Pine Dock community just told me last Thursday, she has not heard a word from anybody for months. The minister says that I have a lot of roads in my constituency and that is true. I have been asking on these roads since the very first Estimates process that we were able to do after the election in 1990. I am always asking and I will continue to ask the status or the proposals for these different roads.

I would like to come back to the Minister of Highways. I know some of my colleagues have questions. I have a meeting with some constituents and the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey) and the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) in a few minutes, so I would just like to ask the minister just how far the proposal on 325, the new portion that has been proposed from Highway 17 west, where is that at and how soon can we see progression on that new road?

Mr. Findlay: Madam Chair, I presume the member is talking about the proposed new extension of 325 straight easterly to Highway 17.

We met with the co-op in the area who is talking about putting a new location at the junction of 325 and 233. We have talked to him about the extension of the road and it would be about—it would look to me like about 10 miles from the existing 325 all the way east to 17.

I understand in the community there was some concern that we were not going to go all the way, we would just rebuild about three miles worth, but the commitment of the department is to build all the way through from the bend in 325 straight through to Highway 17. That is the process the department is on in terms of getting the environmental licence and then proceeding to land acquisition.

So the process to rebuild that road—and I believe it meets the desire of the community to do that—certainly the co-op wanted the first three miles built to their new location. Now if he is talking about a different section, you let me know.

* (1520)

Mr. Clif Evans: Madam Chairperson, I am talking about the proposal not from 233 and a couple of miles that the co-op and other proponents are talking about, because 325 west of 233 is another matter altogether and is an issue that the R.M. of Siglunes and LGD of Grahamdale are looking at. We are talking about the proposal that has been to the minister previous and now. The minister's staff has been discussing this with Mr. Ernest Abas and Mr. Mel Ross about from Highway 17 west, connecting it to 325 there, a straight new road being built directly through.

Mr. Findlay: That is what I am talking about.

Mr. Clif Evans: Yes, but you are talking about the other side, coming the other way.

Mr. Findlay: Madam Chairperson, he is talking from 17 east. I am talking from the west side going to the same location. We are talking exactly the same portion of road. If the member had a map in front of him, he would see there is a jog in 325 straight north of Sleeve Lake, and from that point all the way to Highway 17 which I think he is talking about, we are committed. We are in a process of trying to obtain an environmental licence, and then if we obtain the environmental

licence, you move to land acquisition on that new road.

An Honourable Member: . . . thought that was done already.

Mr. Findlay: No, I am telling the member that is the process we are in at this time, acquiring environmental licence, which should not be too difficult. Then we get into land acquisition for the new road. It is a road that currently does not exist. I am sure we are talking about the same stretch.

Ms. Norma McCormick (Osborne): I have some questions for the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger). I would like to follow up where we left off on the Land Information Centre in the Estimates process. I want to get some specific information on Remote Sensing and the Land Information Systems outlined in the appropriation.

I am interested in finding out what is the duplication, overlap or co-operation between the work of the Linnet Graphics group and the people who are currently in the department doing what appear to be some related activities. Can the minister advise me, what is the relationship of these activities within the department to that which is conducted by Linnet Graphics?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, I will try and do a little bit of background history here for the member. The net concept was developed I think—and the reason I have a recall about basically how this thing evolved was because we did an opening yesterday in the town of Steinbach of a geographical information centre, a very positive thing, but the concept with Linnet was developed, oh, I think in the '70s. In 1986, this concept was actually developed a little further in terms of establishing a geographical information system. Other provinces have tried it at various levels and it has not been successful. They have failed.

Since '86, this thing has evolved to some degree where ultimately there was an agreement that was arrived at between Linnet and the provincial government. The provincial government is a 24-percent shareholder in the Linnet operations. We have input in terms of how it is run, and there is some funding that is indirectly involved through the departments.

It used to be basically under I, T and T, the Information Services component with Linnet, and during the last budgetary process, the decision was made that it would be transferred to the Department of Natural Resources.

Since that has happened, we think—and this is not patting the department on the back, but we have been very positive in making progress in terms of where we are going with the whole information system to the point where the individual from the Crown Lands Branch, my director, Jack Schreuder, is the one that is basically co-ordinating the information system. By and large, why the decision of government was to move it into Natural Resources was because of the Crown land component and my department who basically have a lot of this geographical information. So since that time it has evolved in my view very positively.

We have a specific direction. We are trying to get other departments. We have a committee set up of deputies that basically are working at getting all the various departments to sort of be a player in this. There has always been a certain sensitivity in the debate over the period of time in this House about the information that basically with Linnet is going to be public information, does anybody have access to it, and that. That is a thing that has been dealt with because the information can be put into the system and it is still the control of the department. No information will be released until the department feels it is proper to release it.

This was a concern as we went into that system all the time, and departments are very possessive of their information, but basically the concept from my layman's point of view in terms of what is happening with the geographical information system is that—I will just try and give an example. We have Manitoba Telephone, we have Manitoba Hydro, we have the Department of Highways, the Department of Natural Resources, Energy and Mines. Each department has accumulated their own information base, you know, geographic information, et cetera. Actually it seems as if it is duplication and the information is not available for those that need it and that is why I, like I say again,

from a layman's point of view feel very enthusiastic about the approach of what we are doing with Linnet and this information system because it is now put into a general system.

The departments still have control over it, but at least it can be accessed by municipalities, by governments, by individuals, that information which is available to the general public. I am just trying to give a little bit of background because when I first got into the department and I was handed the responsibility of Linnet or the information services, I was in a jungle. I did not know what I was starting with, but I feel much more comfortable now. We have very qualified people by the name of—the Director of Crown Lands, like I mentioned Jack Schreuder, and Alvin Suderman who has also been very busy with developing the information system. So when we did the opening yesterday in Steinbach, in the environmental office, everybody was very enthusiastic.

The agricultural component which also ties into this system has been opened up in Carman. We are looking at establishing a few of these information systems in the Department of Natural Resources, so the system is moving forward and the positive side is that, by and large, Linnet is out there marketing it to the general public. We have sold the information system to Saskatchewan. We have Alberta and Quebec on-line that want to buy into our system and buy the technology. It is being marketed on the international basis, where we have big customers in the Asiatic countries that are basically looking at buying this technology and into the system. So after what has seemed a very, very long slow start, we are at the stage where progress is being made and as more acceptability of all components and departments, in terms of what we are trying to accomplish with it, I feel pretty good about it.

Ms. McCormick: Thank you to the minister for that history lesson, but I am still confused about the relationship between Linnet and, for example, Remote Sensing and Land Information Systems. These are still a department of the Natural Resources department. How does Linnet serve the Department of Environment, for example,

Department of Natural Resources and the utilities you have spoken of? Does government purchase service from Linnet, or how are those relationships defined?

* (1530)

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, I certainly am not critical of the member for raising the question as to the relationship because that was one of the confusing points that I had. With us having 24 percent of the equity into Linnet, and Linnet is basically an arm of another company, it is a complicated structure. By and large the arrangement, we are on the verge of signing another agreement again, another year's agreement with Linnet as we do on a yearly basis, where we work out a working agreement between government's Economic Development committee, my department and Linnet. It is based on providing information, feeding information into the system and providing certain funding for that.

For that funding that goes into it, we get information and do not have to buy it, but Linnet basically, when they market this, we get that percentage of equity that we have. We get some of that money back. The whole purpose initially was to establish a good information system plus a big job creation factor, I think.

I will try and get the specific information as to the number of employees because I do not have my staff here, but ultimately the target is something like 200 people will be employed under the system here in Winnipeg. It is supposed to be a very beneficial program and, at the same time, have major economic benefits job-wise as well as something that can market and get money back from elsewhere. Each department is challenged for a component within their budget, I believe, that should tie into the information system to provide that to the major control system of information, which basically is Linnet.

I do not know how further to explain the concern as to the agreement unless I basically bring forward the total agreement and that is being worked on right now.

Ms. McCormick: In preparing for the questioning in this area I did search through the Corporations

branch, so I have a fairly clear understanding about Manitoba as a minority shareholder, about I.D. Systems and the other sort of principal shareholders, but what I now thank the minister for having a better sense of is the access of information that is gathered under the umbrella of Linnet is now available to Manitoba. It is almost a quid pro quo that you put information in and you get it back in a better form.

Another area though I am curious about is the direction that the department is then moving. Is it likely that some of these activities that are currently done under the auspices of the department will eventually move out of government into Linnet, or do you see that we will retain things like the land information system, the remote sensing, that government will still continue to do some of this, or will it be progressively devolved into the external corporation?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chair, the way I see this evolving is, it is an ongoing thing that will never really stop. The realms of possibility are endless in terms of what you can feed into the system. For example, if you take the city of Winnipeg, ultimately the whole infrastructure system, their sewer, their telephone lines, hydro, everything ultimately can be there; and, for example, if somebody wants to develop a business, whatever the case may be, they can go and buy this information, a private corporation or a municipality, and get all the information they need related to ground, to water aquifers. This is what we were stressing yesterday in Steinbach when we did the opening.

Where we have a lot of interest in establishing hog operations, the individuals or the municipality can tap into this information and find out where the water aquifers are, all the information on that, the soil types in terms of developing a storage facility, and ultimately this just keeps building. Where it ends, I do not know, but there is tremendous potential in terms of this thing evolving further. I could see an ongoing role for government to continually be part of that, because we have the information base that basically is required in a lot of cases.

Ms. McCormick: You talked about a growth of employment within the Linnet system. Are there currently provincial civil servants seconded into Linnet, or is all of the staff year growth to be outside of the Civil Service?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, initially, there was not secondment, but I think some of the information people went to work for Linnet and are paid under their structure. At the present time, for our participation in the development of the information system with the Linnet, my director of Crown Lands is playing a very active part, as well as Mr. Suderman, so we have people who are basically working with them. So part of the contribution is in kind in terms of participating with the company.

I am not trying to oversimplify it. It is relatively complex, the kind of agreement we have, but from the average layman's approach to it, without getting into all the details, I think it is very positive. I repeat again, the potential for this thing as it evolves is just in my mind very positive and limitless in terms of what can happen there.

Ms. McCormick: Madam Chairperson, I just want to move on to a question about the Remote Sensing unit. The objective of the unit is: "To provide a Provincial Topographic Information Program in support of management of provincial natural and related resources and the carrying out of environmental assessments."

Now, for example, an activity like this, who would do it? Would it be the staff in the Remote Sensing unit who would actually perform this activity? Or would there in some way be some link back with Linnet for that?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, I am not quite sure if I understand the question correctly. I just want to say that the information from my department, for example, resources in terms of especially my Crown Lands people, the geographic information that we have on file—I mean, it is not like we are starting something new. There is information that has been developed over a long period of time, and this information, then, is basically fed in.

The system is only as good as the information that it gets, and this is where from our department being very supportive, we are feeding all the information that we basically have into it and encouraging the other departments to do the same thing so that we have a complete network.

I might just say that initially, people like maybe Hydro and Telephone were a little hesitant about whether they wanted to play a role in this, but after the announcement yesterday in Steinbach, the people from Hydro were very enthused and feel that there is a tremendous advantage that can be gained by everybody using the same information database.

As more feed into this system, and they still have control of it, much of this information, by and large, is for everybody's use. I mean, it is not something that—why would Hydro not want to share much of the information that they have with Telephone, or vice versa, or with other government departments, when people need information? It is an evolving thing, by and large, but it is getting to be more positive all the time.

I do not know whether I have answered the question really in terms of everybody has to give information into there. My department gives what it can. Other departments do the same thing.

Ms. McCormick: I think we are getting closer here. What I was trying to ascertain by using the remote sensing activity as an example is how the information gathered through Natural Resources activity is then fed to Linnet for the benefit of private industry and for other government activity, so I am getting a sense or at least a better sense, that the activity which goes on within the department becomes part of the broader information base that is amassed by the Linnet system. So I am prepared to let it go at that.

I would just like to ask another couple of questions with respect to the progress of the tender package on the Manitoba Lowlands project. I am just curious if the minister can advise me of the status of the joint advisory committee and the selection of the tender for the contract for the Manitoba Lowlands.

* (1540)

Mr. Driedger: Can the member indicate, is this related to the next national park that we are looking at, the options that are there?

Madam Chairperson, I want to say to the member that initially there were three proposals that were being sort of considered. A committee was set up between the federal and provincial governments, and they ultimately reported to the provincial deputy minister of my department and the deputy minister of the federal government, who then basically, based on the report that was made, then made recommendations to myself and to the federal minister as to which areas were to be considered.

When the reference was made to the park in the Williams Lake area, which is one of the areas for consideration, at that time the group, as this information came forward through the system, felt that because the Williams Lake area specifically as part of the Thompson nickel belt that goes right through there—and I want to say that by and large the nickel finds in that particular area in Williams Lake, first indications are that is higher of quality than even at Thompson. So the challenge, I guess, that government of the day faces federally and provincially is where do you basically—to me it is not a competition between environment and the mining industry but people perceive it to be that. That is not the case.

Rather, anticipating the controversy that it could have gotten to be, if we had not excluded a portion of it, not all of it, but that portion which is part of the Thompson nickel belt, that we would exclude that portion of it to avoid the kind of conflict, because first of all, the federal government in establishing a national park is very sensitive that they do not get into all kinds of big rhubarbs. We are in the process of establishing the Churchill Park national park; even that is moving very slowly because of all the things that have to be dealt with.

So it was felt by everybody through the system that we should exclude that portion that has the high nickel quality in it and, at the same time, realizing that within certain areas there we have the bat caves, certain very special areas that we

will be designating under the Endangered Spaces program which, you know, based on my advisers, we can take and isolate those and put them aside. So it is a matter of basically evolution to this point. I get criticized severely by some of the environmental groups that we have just caved in to the mining industry. That is not the case at all, but I think in the best interest of moving this thing forward, I think the course of action that we have taken is justifiable, at least I have a comfort level in terms of using a common sense approach to it.

Ms. McCormick: It seems to me, Mr. Minister, this is one area where we have the tremendous potential for using the geographic information system data which is gathered up in terms of laying out the technical requirements for the selection of a site.

My question was intended to elicit information on what is the status of the process for tendering the Manitoba lowlands criteria, and who is in fact in control of that process? I have a sense now that you are saying it is quite a slow process, but I was just curious about finding out from the minister if in fact that joint advisory committee has a mandate to continue, or is it now a process which is back in the control of the federal and provincial governments?

Madam Chairperson: The honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, I was not trying to play favourites here by talking with Mr. Speaker. Because he is a gentleman that basically calls the shots in this House, when he asks a question I feel compelled to sort of give him a short answer.

To the member and her question, the next step that basically is taking place after the recommendations came forward, both my provincial department and the federal Parks department have put out a tender for consultants. That process has just basically concluded and I am waiting for the recommendation to come forward in terms of the consultants that will do the next stage of the studies, basically.

So it is moving forward. I believe because the federal government was involved, we had to tender

this on an international basis, and I think we even had some consultants applying from as far away as Mexico, et cetera, but I just have a preliminary indication that there is a variety of applications that came forward and a recommendation will be coming forward to me, I expect, within the next 10 days for the consultants who will then continue on in terms of doing what has to be done.

Ms. McCormick: That is what I was looking for in terms of an update of that process.

Now, just one other area, I wanted to question with respect to the status of the agreement between the Department of Natural Resources and the association of private landowners in provincial parks. Can you give me some indication as to the progress of the negotiation of an agreement with respect to these services that these people get?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chair, the member opens a whole Pandora's box here with the kind of question, a lot of history that has basically been involved here with the private landowners and provincial parks—this is what we are talking about, right?—because some of these people have been living there for a long, long time before the provincial parks got established.

When I took over this department we had—what happened is 10 years ago the department decided, because these people lived in provincial parks and were privy to some services, whether it was roads, garbage or certain services, that because they did not pay any taxes to any municipality because they did not belong to a municipality, they should pay certain fees for services rendered. The billing started approximately 10 years ago. At that time the majority of the people basically paid. Ultimately, some felt it was not right because they felt they were paying without having the services defined and thought it was not right to do this. Ultimately, the thing ended up in court, and then two years ago or something like that there was sort of not a clear decision by the court in terms of whether they were liable or not liable.

Ultimately The Parks Act that was brought forward by my colleague—the now-Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) brought forward The Parks Act, and under that act that we passed last year

there was provision to bill and back-bill, basically, for these services. It has been a matter of controversy with the private landowners association, with whom I have met, who basically have been meeting with my parks people to try and establish an agreement, and we have not made that much progress with the agreement. I have to tell the member though that the decision was made that this was not fair because over half of the people were paying the service fees and the other half were not.

Subsequently, after many meetings and discussions, a decision was made that we would take and everybody is going to pay. We cancelled the interest and we are going to be adjusting the fees of certain individuals, or all the individuals, based on the best records that we have for services provided, and now we are going to put the hammer down. We have cancelled the interest. In fact, where we were approximately \$395,000 in arrears from all these people, we will be collecting approximately \$100,000. Those that have difficulty with the fees, they can come and we will make adjustments with that, but everybody is going to pay.

Now some of the private landowners association feel that they still do not want to pay until they have an agreement, but in my discussions with the individuals they feel that they will tell us which services they feel should be entitled to do it, and somewhere along the line without being, you know, autocratic or too domineering, the decision ultimately will still be the government's as to how much they charge for what services.

* (1550)

Now, we have never had a good system in the Parks department in terms of specifically a breakdown of the services. We are trying to establish that, but in the meantime they will have to pay and we will continue to meet with them to try and see whether we can come to some agreement. Some of these individuals, you have to understand, have a pretty strong opinion that, you know, they were there, they should not really have to pay, and here comes government levying now. If you own property, I firmly believe this in

principle, that everybody should pay certain fees for service of property, whether it is roads, whether it is hydro, whether it is—you know, somewhere along the line you have to pay if you own property.

They do not quite necessarily see it that way. They feel that their grandfather has rights because he lived there, but that is not the reality I like. We do not expect them to necessarily pay for schools, but you have to understand that those who are living there, some of them are living there on a permanent basis. It is not just a cottage that they have on private land. They live there and then they want certain services. It is not an easy question to resolve, but I am prepared to work with them.

Ms. McCormick: I would like to ask the minister, Madam Chair, if you can give me some optimistic estimate as when you think that this agreement might be concluded.

Mr. Driedger: Well, Madam Chairperson, I will try and be as forthright as I can. This issue has been in the mix for 10 years, and they have not made much progress yet, but I do not know whether the member knows Mr. Ryback who is a pretty determined individual and the chairman of the private homeowners association. I have had occasion to meet with the cottage owners association from the Whiteshell and other associations as well. My Director of Parks, Gordon Prouse, and some of my other people within Policy have been meeting with them. I would like to think that unless things get very ugly in terms of the settlement and people paying their fees, I would like to see this resolved before we do the final proclamation of The Parks Act which we are in the process of developing.

Now that is not a definitive answer. I cannot give a definitive answer, but I have to say that I am receptive to continue to working towards resolving this and not leave it sit out there.

Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupertsland): Madam Chairperson, I just have a few questions here for the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Findlay). This afternoon during Question Period we asked a question on the Port of Churchill and the western grain transportation system, particularly as it relates to the Port of Churchill. My question to the

minister this afternoon was whether he or the Premier contacted the Canadian Wheat Board and what commitment was received by the Wheat Board for this year with respect to grain movement through the Port of Churchill.

Now the minister indicated 190,000 tonnes of grain has been tentatively earmarked to go through the Port of Churchill. However, the minister also realizes that in order for the Port of Churchill to break even, at least 700,000 tonnes of grain is needed, and last year nearly \$2 million was lost because of being unable to meet that limit.

I would like to ask the minister what plans there are by this government with respect to—I know that there have been a number of letters sent to the federal minister concerning the Port of Churchill, and I want to commend the minister and also the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) for doing this on behalf of the Port of Churchill and the ongoing life of it, but I want to know what alternative plans there are with respect to ensuring that at the very least Churchill will realize the 700,000 tonnes and, quite possibly, the one million tonnes that were promised by the Manitoba Liberals in last year's federal election.

Mr. Findlay: Madam Chair, the member maybe should ask his M.P. from Churchill what he has done to determine if there is going to be a commitment from the federal Liberal government to get more grain moving through the Port of Churchill. I confirmed to him this afternoon that our information is 190,000 tonnes going to South Africa. The Port of Churchill, Ports Canada, Canadian Wheat Board are all the complete and 100 percent responsibility of the federal Government of Canada. I have told the member on more than one occasion that the consultation or the answers to letters that we get from that government are anything less than satisfactory, very unsatisfactory.

Now the member asked, what are alternative plans? We will continue to maintain the pressure on the federal government particularly the M.P.s of Manitoba who have indicated there should be a million tonnes move through there; that is something we would support. A 190,000 is not

anywhere near close to it; it is less than 20 percent. I hope that they understand that the public of Manitoba, the government of Manitoba will hold them accountable if they do not achieve the objectives that they used through the election campaign. I think the member is fully aware that the federal government has not fulfilled all its commitments; in fact, it has changed its position on many of its promises during the election. I hope this does not fall into that same category.

I think the member is fully aware that when we have a federal responsibility, the federal government must live up to it. There is no way in the world that we can financially accept the responsibility for jurisdictional activities under their jurisdiction. There is just no way we can take the offload. We all want the Port of Churchill to survive, and we certainly in the future see additional opportunities of marketing grain into Europe. The big wall that was built there by the European community over the years seems to be opening a little bit, and for certain commodities Port of Churchill certainly is a port of export that has some potential in that regard.

The future opportunities in regard to Russia, very hard to judge. It looks like they are not going to be buying any grain this year, period. These are the comments that come out of Russia; that does not bode well for Canada in terms of serving that market or any port on the eastern side of Canada or Churchill.

So, Madam Chair, I have told the member what we know at this stage. We must all maintain our pressure on the M.P.s involved, particularly the 12 Manitobans who are elected as Liberals to fulfill their promise, and I will be meeting this week with the federal Minister of Transport. We will certainly maintain our position with them. We all know that he has made some very strong comments that are not supportive for his continued commitment to transportation sector, period, in this country.

Mr. Robinson: I, too, look forward to the results of that meeting with federal minister in the next few days. One of the suggestions that I made to this minister, the Manitoba Minister of Transportation

(Mr. Findlay), Madam Chairperson, is whether or not he would explore the possibility down the road, in the event that this meeting in Ottawa does not turn out in favour of the Port of Churchill, and consider an all-party committee, being that they were all agreed in this House on the viability of the Port of Churchill.

Mr. Findlay: Madam Chair, the member obviously believes an all-party committee would have more impact than the government doing its lobbying with the federal minister, or either the two opposition parties doing the lobbying with the various M.P.s that they have contact with. I have seen several delegations go to Ottawa. I have not seen a lot of positive response to it. I think the most productive way to be sure that we get our message across is continue to lobby, through letters and in terms of personal discussion with the M.P.s involved, and I stress the personal contact with Elijah Harper, the M.P. for Churchill, with Lloyd Axworthy, a lead M.P. federally for the province of Manitoba. They have both made commitments to citizens of Manitoba that we must hold them accountable to.

We must communicate directly with them, and I would recommend that the MLA for Rupertsland speak to the M.P. for Churchill to be sure that he understands that we have not let up in terms of the promise. All three parties in this province are on the same wavelength on this issue, and the federal government owes it to Manitoba, western Canada, to maintain Churchill in a viable position and maintain the rail line to Churchill in a viable position for future economic opportunities for the northern parts of Manitoba, in fact, for all Manitoba.

* (1600)

Mr. Robinson: I think that I am in agreement with the minister. No doubt, I think that every effort should be made to ensure the ongoing life of the Port of Churchill, and I do believe in what he was saying, that we should make every effort, no matter what our political stripes, to try and secure the future of the Port of Churchill.

Certainly we have done our work, and being the MLA for that area, I have contacted the federal

transportation minister. Like the minister, I have not received an adequate response for myself to report back to the constituents that rely on the Port of Churchill. As well, I have contacted the local member of Parliament, and local officials in Churchill have also been in touch with the member of Parliament for Churchill to express their concern on the uncertainty of the future of the Port of Churchill.

So, yes, we are as well doing what we can, Madam Chairperson, with respect to trying to assist in ensuring that the Port of Churchill will be there in the coming years.

Another question I have for the honourable minister is recently, on January 24, 1994, the producer payment panel issued a report. Has the minister expressed his opposition to the producer payment panel report which, in my opinion, contains a number of false statements concerning the Port of Churchill?

Mr. Findlay: Madam Chairperson, the member, did I hear him say January 24 of 1994? That was the preliminary report from the producer payment panel and they have just in the last two or three days released their final report and recommendations to the federal minister. It certainly is an item of discussion at this moment at the Ministers of Agriculture meeting which is happening here in Winnipeg. All provinces and the federal government are at the table discussing the report as it has been put in front of them. To what extent there is something different in that report relative to January, I have not had an opportunity to study the whole report. I have seen excerpts from it, but there is going to be a lot of discussion on an awful lot of items relative to the comments that are going to be in that report now. I think we should wait and see what comes out of the discussion involving particularly the western Ministers of Agriculture and the federal Minister of Agriculture on that final report that they now have.

Mr. Robinson: Madam Chairperson, to the best of my knowledge, one of the recommendations in the report of the producer payment panel was No. 9: It is recommended that the government complete an assessment of the future of the Churchill elevator

and the role of the Port of Churchill as a grain export route as soon as possible and issue a policy decision in order to remove the existing uncertainty.

Now the press release I have here is dated June 30, 1994. In the press release it recommends a line that Churchill be exempt from the branch line rationalization package but recommends an early decision on a future Churchill be made recognizing the cost of shipping grain through Churchill. I would just like to put that on record, and I agree with the minister. I would like to have the final look at the final report before making further comments on that. Certainly it is something that does concern our members and also our constituents in the community of Churchill.

One final question for the honourable minister, Madam Chairperson, is the Arctic Bridge agreement and the one million tonnes that the Deputy Premier promised would be shipped through this agreement. I am wondering when we will see something come out of this agreement or perhaps the government has given up on this proposed initiative.

Mr. Findlay: Madam Chairperson, the Arctic Bridge concept was discussed by the Premier with officials when he was in Russia in '91. The current Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), who was Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism, and I were there in '92 when a preliminary agreement was signed. Subject to that, a consultant was hired to explore opportunities between the Ports of Murmansk and Churchill, in other words between northern Russia and Manitoba. That report has still not been received by us yet. We are still awaiting that report.

In all due respect, Madam Chairperson, the reports we read about the state of affairs in Russia are certainly of grave concern to us in terms of ability for them to do business with us. Things are not as good now as they were in '92 would be my perception from what I read and what I see.

The comments from some official in Russia here, I believe I read them in one of the farm papers last week, were that they would be buying no grain, which is certainly not good news for

western Canada and particularly Manitoba in terms of opportunities to export some of that through Churchill.

We await the consultant's report. Caribou Ventures was the consultant.

I would just like to say something else to the member. The producer payment panel has put out its final report. It is recommending that the WGTA monies be paid to the producer. I can assure the member that there is nobody who is more astute about deciding what is to his cost advantage to do. In other words, a producer will analyze the options where he can export his grain at the lowest cost to him, in other words, greatest return into his pocket.

There has been lots of information supplied and generated over the last few years that would indicate Churchill could compete very, very well to attract activity. We have to be concerned about whether the people making the decision in the past whether to use or not to use that port really takes the true economic picture into consideration.

I can assure the member that producers are in a position in the future to have the power to decide where to spend their transportation money to export their grain. Churchill will look very attractive to them on the balance sheet. I think that is a bit of a silver lining at this time, because if the producers see an opportunity to export more cost effectively through Churchill, they will do what it takes to drive the decisions in that direction.

I think there are some positive opportunities there. We must all work together as we have in the past in this House to ensure that the positive opportunities in Churchill are not lost in the shuffle.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Madam Chair, I have a few questions to the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Findlay).

To pick up on where my colleague the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson) left off a moment ago with respect to the Arctic Bridge agreement, when we were in the Estimates process the minister made reference to the fact that there was around a \$100,000 contract that had been awarded or given to Caribou consultants.

Can the minister tell me how much of those monies have been expended for Caribou? Does he have available to him information relating to the amount of monies that have been expended or paid to Caribou at this point in time?

Mr. Findlay: Madam Chairperson, I do not have the exact figure. It is a portion of the total contract. It is not all of the contract. I would suggest it is in the ballpark of about two-thirds of the total contract. If I am not mistaken—I would not want to be held to this—but if I am not mistaken, the contract was a little less than \$100,000, and roughly two-thirds of it has been paid, is my recollection, but I do not have the figures in front of me.

Mr. Reid: Is it possible to get a copy of the contract that was awarded so that we can have an idea of what the terms of reference were? My colleague here has already asked the minister questions about any positive outcome as a result of any dealings with the Russian government to enhance export opportunities through Churchill to Murmansk, Russia, and vice versa.

So I would like to know what the terms of the contract were and, if possible, see a copy of the contract and also to find out whether or not we got good value for our dollar on this.

Mr. Findlay: In this contract, three departments are involved and I will inquire to determine if there is a willingness to release the contract so we know the terms of reference. I think the member will probably be quite happy with the terms of reference. Whether we receive the kind of opportunity we all want to receive is certainly an open question.

* (1610)

Mr. Reid: I look forward to any information the minister can provide on that and let me know, if possible, if not at some other time in this House, maybe in writing in the future as time progresses.

I have another question. I want to switch for a moment to the rail merger issue. I know that the minister has already indicated that this is going to be on the agenda for the transport ministers meeting that is supposed to take place in Calgary this week. We had Sypher: Mueller International,

which was a consulting firm that is supposed to be doing some work on the merger issue, and, it is my understanding, was supposed to report back to the ministers of transport prior to this meeting taking place.

Does the minister have a copy of the report that Sypher: Mueller International is supposed to have available for this point in time since the meeting, I believe, is supposed to take place tomorrow?

Mr. Findlay: Madam Chairperson, no, I do not have it, and I have not received it. It is supposed to be presented to us either tomorrow or the next day, I am not sure which day on the agenda. Certainly, three provinces, as the member knows, were involved: Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. As far as I know, we will be receiving the report in the next day or two from the consultants, and we will see what it says. I also understand, we will probably have some comments from the railroads in terms of where they are at. So we will certainly have a greater level of knowledge in the next two or three days.

Mr. Reid: I know that the time spent was not that great from when the consulting firm was hired—and looking at the news release I think it was June 3—so there is not a great deal of time in there that the company had to come forward with any recommendations or any advice for the government, but it seems that if they had been agreeable to the terms to undertake this work for the three governments, the government, the minister himself should have had some opportunity to review the issues or the items that would have been brought forward by this consulting firm. So I am a bit disappointed that the minister would not have had that opportunity to reference the document and to apprise the House of or make the House aware of any of the items in that.

Quite possibly, then, if the minister is agreeable, when the transport ministers' meeting has concluded at the end of this week, I would be interested to see a copy of the consulting firm's report, if the minister is agreeable to that, so that we might be aware of what issues were identified by the consulting firm that the three levels of

government should be raising in their meetings that are going to take place.

Mr. Findlay: Well, Madam Chair, certainly I will consider the member's request. I am not 100 percent positive we will see the report. We are expecting it. It is supposed to be there.

The member says why would we not have seen it before we go? Well, things happen fast and you have got to think on your feet in this business. Unfortunately, there is an awful lot on our agenda. I can assure the member the time allotted for the agenda items that we all have on our table right now is about a quarter of what we really are going to need.

I am a little disappointed that the federal minister has not allocated more than two hours in one afternoon to talk with us with a wide variety of issues that he has opened up in the last few weeks with his comments, let alone the issues that are already on the table that the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson) has raised and a number of other ones. If he is expecting great success out of our meeting, I have to caution him ahead that enough time has not been allotted to have the kind of in-depth discussion with 11 ministers that is needed. My experience tells me that this meeting will open up a lot of maybe—dare I say?—some wounds that are going to have to be worked on to get some resolution to some of the issues that are in front of us, but most of them are not easy.

Clearly, I think I have said before that the CN-CP merger is an issue that is on the table out of necessity, and both railroads are losing money far faster than they can ever afford to do. Eventually it comes back on the user and the taxpayer in this country to eventually pay those bills. They have got to change the way they do business in some fashion to move goods in this country in a fashion that does not allow them or cause them to lose money in the process. It is going to require significant adjustment, and adjustment is always painful, but we want to be sure that, whatever adjustment process occurs, both of those competing railroads survive for the good of all Canadians. We want to be sure that it does not

have an undue negative impact on Manitoba that exceeds our ability to absorb that impact or we are treated unfairly in the process.

I think I have also said to the member previously that there are certainly reasons to think that we will come out ahead in this process relative to other regions of the country, because this is always going to be a hub, east-west, and the opportunities that are going south.

The member probably saw very recently that one of the major commodities that railroads move—now the biggest market for Canadian sales of cereal grains, in fact, all grain commodities—oilseeds, cereal grains, special crops—is the United States. I remember standing in this House receiving questions from the opposition in the former responsibility saying that the Free Trade Agreement was important to us, opened up opportunity, not that we did not already have free trade in agriculture in most of our commodities. I said it creates an atmosphere and attitude that more activity will go south, and clearly that is what has happened, much faster than we ever expected. I remember standing here and saying the U.S. has become more important. It is now the sixth biggest market for us. Well, last year it was fourth and now it is first. So what this really does is change the direction of commodity movement. It requires great change in the way the rails are operating in western Canada, in fact, North America.

The member is, I am sure, aware that CP now has 30 percent of their trackage in the United States; CN, 10 percent. It certainly does not serve all the market areas in the United States, but they have some doors open to them in terms of running on certain trackage, and I hope they have other agreements to move to other trackage within the United States. The direction of trade is changing, and the world is changing. We must adapt. We must adapt in the fashion that is economically viable for not only the railroads but for the entire industry, and I feel we are moving in that direction, but the member must be prepared to accept some change in the way things are done for the betterment of all in the long run. Sure, there is going to be some hurt along the way, there is no

question. The government's job is to try and mitigate that hurt and be sure that we are doing the right things for the right reasons, and he can depend on us to try to achieve that.

Mr. Reid: Well, the minister raised a lot of points in his comments. He talks about hurt and I will pick up on the hurt. One of the unfortunate parts, though, is that a lot of the people that are going to be hurt by any of those changes, in any of the shift of the operations from rail to trucking, are going to be people of my community, and my job here is to represent a lot of those interests. Even though the minister says—and the former Minister of Health laughs at the fact that I raise the issues to represent my constituents. It is something that I have to do. I have to do that because these are people that—

Madam Chairperson: Order, please.

Point of Order

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Energy and Mines): Madam Chairperson, the member for Transcona has just made a remark that reflects his immaturity and his inaccuracy in statement. I would ask you to ask him to withdraw it and stick to the facts instead of this silliness.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Madam Chair, I cannot raise a point of order on a point of order. First of all I do not believe it is a legitimate point of order, but I think whatever the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) said was made mildly in comparison to the statements that the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Orchard) made, and I would perhaps urge the minister to withdraw some of the comments he made. I do not think this is in the best interest of anyone to get into the kind of comments the minister made back and forth in the kind of personal insults.

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Energy and Mines did not have a point of order.

* * *

* (1620)

Mr. Reid: Madam Chairperson, even the CEO of CP Rail is saying that there is going to be some impact when we change the method of payment. The minister has talked about significant changes

in the direction that grain traffic has been flowing. We have seen huge increases in traffic flows to the U.S. We were concerned in the past and we have raised the issue in the past about the impact that there is going to be on the Department of Highways and Transportation if we shift from rail to trucking. It is going to cause a squeeze on the finances available as we try to maintain and improve the highway systems. So that is another reason why we changed.

I know this is a double-edged sword that if we improve by changing the method of payments, we improve the opportunities for the Port of Churchill to export products through the port, because producers will then have the chance to choose. It then takes away, because even the CEOs at CP Rail now say there are going to be some impact by the change in the method of payment where they are going to have to rationalize their network. With the rationalization of the network go the jobs. So it is a double-edged sword here. If Churchill benefits by the change in the method of payment because producers select it, which I hope they do, then railway jobs are going to be put at risk. My job here is to represent the interests of the railway people in my community, and that is what I have done.

I am not sure if the minister is aware of this or not, but when we talked about the merger of the two railways from Winnipeg east, it is my understanding that just recently the CN Rail received approval from the NTA to abandon the Graham sub which is in northwestern Ontario. That is the link that goes between the CN north line and Thunder Bay, Ontario, which means that now the railway will not be able to ship grain products to Thunder Bay via the north line. It leaves them with the south line which runs through U.S. territory. So I am not sure if the CN Rail is planning on shipping all their products via the south line to Thunder Bay or they are even planning on abandoning or bypassing Thunder Bay. I am not sure what the long-term plan is there. I am bringing this up for the minister's information so that when he goes to the Transport ministers meeting that he is aware of this item.

Also, it is my understanding that when we talk about the merger of the two railway lines and you look at the logic of what the intent is, CN currently has, out of our regional headquarters here in Winnipeg and the employees that do the work here, we look after some 1,100 miles of rail network on CN line east of Winnipeg and only 145 miles west of Winnipeg. So when you take a look at what happens when you merge those two lines, there is potential for us to lose all of the CN regional headquarters jobs here in Winnipeg.

The minister, I am sure, already knows from his department staff how many jobs that we have to maintain and look after that 1,100 miles of line east of Winnipeg. So we have a lot at risk here by the merger of those two rail lines. It is not just the maintenance jobs and the rolling stock equipment through the Transcona main shops or the CP Weston shops. We have the CN regional headquarters here in the city as well, and maybe even the CP headquarters jobs, whatever is left of them. So I raise that with the minister, and I will leave that for the minister's information.

When I left the Estimates process, I asked the minister for some information relating to tolls. There are other jurisdictions in the country that have asked for or have moved toward private highway contracts, and there are going to be toll roads on those to pay for those highways. Are there plans by the Department of Highways to move in a direction where we will have private companies constructing and paying for those roads as we have seen in other jurisdictions?

Mr. Findlay: Madam Chair, the member, I know, in the interest of time, would like me to move on just to the last question, but he has raised a number of comments along the way. One of them was raised that I will try to quickly answer, give a comment here.

He raised a comment, and he used it again here, that CP executive individuals or senior executives of CP had made certain comments about change in the method of payment. My staff have inquired. They can find no comments from any senior executive of CN or CP with regard to that in recent time. They have contacted the public relations

department for both CN and CP, and they cannot find any public or media reports recording any such comments. Now if the member has something there, maybe he would let me know where he has found it. The member has mentioned that senior executives of the railway have said those, so let us see the evidence.

The member must be aware—he says he is concerned about jobs for his constituents. The MLA for Transcona, I am sure, has constituents who not only work for rail but also are employed in the trucking industry. If we look back, since 1940—and I have seen the statistics—there has almost been a doubling in the amount of freight handled by trucks and a reduction of the amount by rail by about half. So there has been a steady progression, for the last 50 years, of movement of commodities. What used to be hauled by rail is now hauled by truck to a greater and greater extent.

Now, one could argue all the reasons why that has happened, but it is a reality. The total number of jobs has certainly gone down in recent years in the industry because of efficiencies, larger units, computerization and logistics and all of those reasons, but the reality of their future is—just take grain. I mean, it is a raw commodity; it is going to have to be hauled by something. We will consume no more 10 or 20 years from now in Manitoba than we do today, and we do grow more and more. We grow a wider variety of commodities which require more specialized types of transportation probably, dare I use the word, a little less efficient way of moving the product because we do not have 100,000 tonnes of one thing, you have 10,000 tonnes of 10 different items. As we move more into the States, it take more trackage or more roads, longer distances, more jobs, in other words, of moving the commodities to market today than what was the case 10 years ago.

So the jobs are going to be somewhere in the transportation industry. Now the game is going to be, who can most cost effectively and performance-wise deliver the product from the seller to the buyer? But there are going to be jobs in between; no question there are going to be jobs, rail industry or trucking industry. [interjection]

The member says, how many? Well, it is going to be a matter of what is the most cost-effective way to do it, because you cannot say to the farmer he must pay more, more, more of his gross income toward transportation costs to guarantee jobs. The issue is, they must do the job efficiently, effectively toward their existence as a job. There is no question there are going to be products hauled. Now, we say in Manitoba, let us do more value-added activity, processing, conversion of the raw cereal grain into meat, processing the special crops, and on it goes, and haul more value-added commodity and create jobs here in Manitoba. In the broad sense of a raw commodity that is taken from the land, we do something with it.

I have to tell the member that exporting raw commodity is exporting jobs. We should be doing the jobs of value adding here. It creates jobs, and a job is a job is a job in my mind. Some of them are more higher value than others, but eventually, we export a product, we absolutely export a product. There are going to be real jobs, trucking jobs or air cargo jobs in that export business. There is no question, but we are definitely in an evolution to doing things differently. It is cost driven, and the producer is taking less and less in the form of income because of higher costs beyond his farm gate. They must come under control. So that is the broad picture.

The member is worried about loss of jobs. I say we must work hard to create opportunities for new jobs, new high-tech jobs, in one form or another. That is going to be our mission in the next few years. It is the mission of the entire industry. I think we can succeed at it, provided we get on the wavelength that the future is unfolding. There is an old saying: The highway to the future is always under construction. I think that is very, very true.

Madam Chair, now to get back to the basic question, private roads. Currently, I am not aware of any toll roads in Manitoba. How the public can afford to continue to supply the necessary resources to build all the roads that the public needs in the future is certainly a very open question. We support very strongly a national highway program so some of the \$4.5 billion of

fuel taxes the federal government collects is actually spent on some road somewhere in Canada. Currently, they spend about \$200 million on roads, collect \$4,500 million, so there is a big gap that they do not return to the road network.

In Manitoba, as we do the calculations, the total revenues collected from roads and vehicle registrations is very much in balance with our expenditure on roads in terms of construction and maintenance. So our record is clean in terms of, the revenues we collect go to the road system. Federal government has a very dirty record, and we want them to commit to a national highway program so that we can source some funds to do more construction than we do today, because as the member knows—I am trying to think of the right terminology. TRIP Canada has said that in order to maintain our roads, in terms of an analysis, we should be spending about \$136 million a year. We spend \$110 million. Now, I think that is pretty good, pretty close, but clearly the National Highways Program would supply to Manitoba something like \$30 million a year. There we could fill in. We could actually be keeping up in terms of maintenance and reconstruction, keep up with the need in the province of Manitoba. I do not think any other province is even as close as we are to achieving that. But, if we had some federal money, it could be done, and I think that is the right way to go if we are going to spend more money on infrastructure renewal and upgrading in the province of Manitoba.

* (1630)

Mr. Reid: I have put some things on the record to give the minister some notice about questions I had intended to ask when we moved to concurrence. One of the questions I had asked at that time had to do with graduated licensing because the department had given some indication that they were considering graduated licensing just a short time ago. I am wondering if there has been further work or there is further intent on the part of this government to move towards a graduated licensing system for Manitoba.

Mr. Findlay: I have looked at the statistics of our young people in terms of their record as drivers.

There is no question there is a higher accident rate for those under 19 than for say people 30 or 40 years of age. The purpose of graduated licensing is to restrict everybody getting their licence in some uniform fashion.

Madam Chairperson, I want to tell the members of the House that when we look at the statistics, the problem area is the young male between 16 and 19. The young female driver in the same age category has a tremendously better driving record. Now, the NDP is promoting graduated licensing and saying we should negatively impact all those young people at 16 who are entering their first opportunity for a driver's licence. I say it is unfair to do that. If we have people that are causing trouble, then let us focus our laws to respond to them doing something wrong, whether it is speeding or racing or whatever it is, as we did we with auto theft and auto vandalism in this particular session of the Legislature. I do not think that we should—and I speak for the young female drivers—subject them to more restrictions to obtaining their drivers licences, because their record is very good as drivers, very good, very responsible.

So I do not think that I want to be an advocate of the current definition of graduated licences, which says we will make it another three months, six months, or one year longer for everybody to obtain their first driver's licence. I say, let them prove themselves, let them go through the current process of a one-year probationary licence, then they get the full licence. But, if you do something wrong, whether it is alcohol or speeding, whatever it is, then invoke the laws and take away the driver's licence, but do not treat everybody negatively just because they are in a certain age category. That is where—although graduated licensing sounds like a good idea, think of how it negatively impacts those young people who have done nothing wrong.

(Mr. Marcel Laurendeau, Deputy Chairperson, in the Chair)

I believe in the principle "innocent till proven guilty." That is why we have done the auto theft/auto vandalism to attack a certain problem. I

think it is a good thing for society to do that. I hope it succeeds in reducing the incidence of those activities, but in terms of tougher drinking-and-driving laws, we have clearly done that, in terms of Bill 3—what, three, four, maybe even five years ago now. In terms of trying to be sure that the roads are safe, the statistics do prove they are getting a little bit safer.

I think the laws to restrict who drives should be targeted at exactly those people who cause the trouble. Graduated licensing, unfortunately, does not target exactly at the people who cause the trouble.

The circumstance—I think I have given the member the figures before—is that of 670,000 people who have licences in the province, at any given time about 27,000 are on suspension for one reason or another. That is an awful lot.

We do catch a lot of people along the way. Unfortunately, some of them still drive. That is a problem. How do you catch them? Certainly the police, in the process of doing their work, continually attempt to pick them off. Anytime you have the ALERT program, you sure pick some of them off.

Our position is, graduated licensing does not target the problem. Our position as government is, if there is a predicted problem, a certain action in society that is offending the rest, we want to target the laws at them.

Mr. Reid: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I thank the minister for the information, because I was concerned that when the department started talking about this issue some time ago that the government was actually going to move in that direction. I just wanted to clarify what their policy intent was.

Now that we have clarified that issue, the government now does not appear that they are going to be moving in that direction. I know the silly former Minister of Health thinks that these questions are not important, but I think that they are, and that is why I asked them. I am just trying to do my job to the best of my ability. Whether he likes it or not, I am going to continue to do that.

I had also asked some questions relating to the cost recovery for the Photo Licensing program and what monies are benefited or profited by the continuation of the \$4-per-year additional licence fee. I want to know which monies are reaped from continuation of this program. I had given that question to the minister by way of advance notice when we concluded the Estimates process.

Mr. Findlay: Hopefully, these are the numbers the member is looking for. Our total annual salary and expenditure cost for renewing the photo licences at a quarter of them a year, in other words, once every four years, is \$1.9 million. That is our cost. The revenue generated from the \$4 licence is \$2.68 million. So the government is recovering its cost.

Mr. Reid: I thank the minister for that information. The minister was also going to provide some information relating to carriers, trucks and trip inspection reports, facility audits. He was going to give me some statistics on that. I am wondering if the minister has that information available as well. Maybe if he has it, he could just send it across for my information.

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Deputy Chair, what the member is asking for is a little bit more than what I have right in front of me at the moment, so I would prefer to send it to him at a little later date. We will compile the information. He suggested trip inspection reports, costs and that sort of thing, so we will send that information over.

Mr. Reid: I am also interested in information relating to the Taxicab Board, and I had asked the minister for information relating to Bill 24 implementation. I am wondering if the minister can tell me what the plans are with respect to that piece of legislation and also if we are taking any steps to improve the safety for those that are currently driving taxicab vehicles in the city of Winnipeg. There still appears to be some safety concerns. There are some ways in which taxicab drivers that are in distress can signal, but I do not think there is a general public awareness of the process of utilizing the roof light on top of the vehicles. I am wondering if there are some means or some studies that the government is undertaking

to look at improving the safety for those that are operating those vehicles.

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member asks about proclaiming a certain bill that was passed a year ago. I told him in Estimates that as government we are relatively pleased with the improved attitude out there in the industry. The performance and some of the hassles that were there before are either diminished or maybe resolved, and I think a lot of the credit for that goes to the Taxicab Board and the way they are approaching things in terms of the input they are receiving from the taxicab drivers. Clearly, as long as things are going well, there is no need to rock the boat.

I think we need a little more time for the process of the new board to continue to do its work with the industry. In regard to personal safety—I think he is referring to personal safety of the drivers—clearly if there are ways and means to make things work better, the Taxicab Board is the jurisdiction to deal with. They can work with the industry to do certain things, to standardize the way things are done in some fashion, like the member says with the light on the roof or whatever. If there are ways to do things, I can assure him that the Taxicab Board is more than willing to work with the industry or with the local police officials to improve safety in the work environment for those individuals.

* (1640)

There is a retired police officer on the Taxicab Board at this time, and surely we have an opportunity through him to have input to, certainly, the Winnipeg police, who are the jurisdiction most responsible. So I think things have improved significantly, and I am confident it can continue that way because I like the attitude of the Taxicab Board. Truly, the less the minister's office is involved in this industry, the better everything is. The more the Taxicab Board works with the industry, the better it is for all the players. That is the way it is progressing, and I expect it to continue to work that way.

Mr. Reid: I am happy to hear that things are moving along relatively smoothly with the

Taxicab Board in its relationship with the taxicab industry. I think that was the general direction we wanted to go when Bill 24 was being debated in this House and when it was at committee. I hope that we do not have to implement that piece of legislation. I had also asked the minister to provide me with some information relating to the cost recovery for the Taxicab Board operations and the other board operations, including the Motor Transport Board, the Highway Traffic Board and the Licence Suspension Appeal and Medical Review Committee Board as well, because in the past Estimates, we had talked about moving the Taxicab Board itself to full-cost recovery.

It only seemed to me to be fair that if we are going to do that for one board, we can do it for the other boards as well instead of trying to single out one particular industry and the people that have their employment through that.

I am wondering if the minister has that information available, with respect to the cost recovery.

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, with regard to the Motor Transport Board, the expenditures are \$470,000, and the revenues and regulated fees—we are talking about the current budget—are \$158,000. So expenditures still exceed revenue by \$312,000 for the Motor Transport Board.

With regard to the other boards, I would have to get the information and send it over to the member at a later date.

Mr. Reid: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I look forward to receiving that information from the minister.

There were some grants that the Department of Highways and Transportation gives to various organizations in each budget year: Manitoba Safety Council, Canada Safety Council, Traffic Injury Research Foundation, and Society for Manitobans with Disabilities Inc. Does the minister have the information relating to the dollar value of the grants that were given this year for those organizations? It is my understanding that one of those organizations is receiving substantially less than they have in prior years, and

I want to know if the same applies to other organizations as well.

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the one is receiving substantially less. I am sure the member is referring to the Manitoba Safety Council. The amount of grant that they received was reduced 50 percent last budget, 50 percent this budget. [interjection] It was communicated to them two years ago, the former minister tells me, and at this current time in this budget, the grant to them is effectively zero.

They are an agency that we use very, very regularly, consistently through DDVL, the Division of Driver Vehicle Licensing, in terms of sending people over to take courses. The people that take those courses pay a fee, and the purpose, what we felt that the Manitoba Safety Council, in terms of the fees they charge, could cover their full cost. Clearly we send them the clients, and they set the fees in order to balance their budget.

The last time I talked to their executive director they felt they were doing okay in terms of living in the new environment without the provincial grant. They certainly were pleased that we continue to send them the clients in increasing numbers, and for public safety reasons we do that. They are charging fees appropriate with their costs and are able to recover through their fee schedule the costs of running their courses, in other words, doing their business.

So that is an agreement that was struck between the government, the department, and the Manitoba Safety Council. I think we have eliminated the subsidization of their operation. They have charged the fees so the people whom we send over as customers are paying the cost, and I think that is the fair and reasonable way to operate.

Mr. Reid: I am sorry. I did not catch the last part of the minister's comments, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. I had also asked the minister for information relating to grants to other organizations. I am wondering if the Canada Safety Council, the Traffic Injury Research Foundation and the SMD are receiving grants and what dollar values.

Mr. Findlay: I do not have the exact figures in front of me, but to my recollection, they are all the same as the previous year.

House Business

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would like to suggest that committee temporarily interrupt its proceedings so that Mr. Speaker may resume in the Chair so that we can determine whether there is unanimous consent of the House to waive private members' hour. If there is, Committee of Supply can immediately resume sitting to consider the matter now before it.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Is there leave then to allow me to call in the Speaker and temporarily interrupt proceedings, and then we will proceed after the Chair gives us leave? [agreed]

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

(Mr. Marcel Laurendeau, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): I believe, Mr. Acting Speaker, that there is unanimous consent of the House to waive private members' hour and to sit beyond 6 p.m. this evening.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): Is there leave to waive private members' hour and sit beyond 6 p.m.? [agreed]

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

(continued)

Supply—Capital Supply

Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau): The committee will come to order.

Mr. Clif Evans (Interlake): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would just like to finish up with the Minister of Highways (Mr. Findlay). I know my colleague from Swan River has a few points to make.

I would just like to put on record for the minister that I am requesting, if he wants to either take it from Hansard or make copies now himself, certain roads that I would like an update on and what the

department is planning on these roads. I would appreciate that instead of dragging this out now.

* (1650)

I was going to mention Highway 329 to the minister, and that is from Highway 326 west to Highway 17. At certain points that road is probably in the same kind of condition if not worse than 234 in certain spots. Highway 231 between Highways 7 and 17—and I do know that there are proponents, as the minister mentioned earlier—about Highway 325 from Ashern east to 329, the general maintenance on that road, and, of course, upgrading of that road.

Also, to the minister, I would like some response as to the condition and any proposed work and maintenance that has been or has not been done on Highway 513 from Gypsumville to the Dauphin River reserve. The calls are constant on that road, and I would certainly like to see the minister do as much as possible with the maintenance on that road and the upkeep. Perhaps we can see some projects down the road to improve further than what has been improved on that road.

I want to bring to the minister's attention also a letter that I received from the Little Saskatchewan Reserve from Chief Shorting. It goes back to June of '93. He had written to Mr. G.W. Stary in Dauphin in June of '93 requesting that certain roads, main market roads around that area are in bad shape. He called me just last week indicating that he has not received any word on his request to do something about the conditions of the roads in the area. He mentions market roads 52, 53 and 56 and that he had spoken with Mr. Stary and is waiting, waiting for an answer to his request.

On one last note, and I would like the minister to respond to this, Highway 417 from Highway 6 west to the main road on the Lake Manitoba reserve. The minister has received letters from myself, letters from the R.M. of Eriksdale and from chief and council from Lake Manitoba reserve requesting that this road be put back on the program and that the government of the day respond and do something about getting 417 back on line. I would just like to know what the minister is proposing to do about Highway 417 from

Highway 6 in Eriksdale and west to Lake Manitoba reserve.

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Highways and Transportation): I guess, if this was the world of magic we would instantly just fix everything overnight, but the member, I am sure, is aware of reality. It takes a lot longer to fix all the roads he just talked about. We will respond from Hansard with all the different roads he has mentioned with regard to an update and where things are at. Some of them are in various stages of activity.

I want to specifically mention just briefly to the member the situation around road 417. There had been attempts to do some work that was initiated way back in 1982. The request at the time—in order to widen the road through the reserve, they had to have access to the land. I do not know whether the member is aware of it or not, but the band consistently refused to make the land available. So the department's hands have been tied for some time in order to upgrade that road through the reserve. We understand recently that the band has changed its position and is prepared to make the land available. So the member can chastise the department for not doing something, but I want him to know the department is not completely at fault, okay?

There is a letter going out talking about the various sections of the road. I think the road is divided into three sections from Eriksdale, first 24 kilometres and the next 13 kilometres to the band office and then the remaining almost 5 kilometres to Highway 68. There is going to be a letter going out talking about each of the sections. Clearly, the member also has to realize that since we are on reserve land, for a good portion of this there is a cost sharing that must happen with the federal government.

The traditional cost sharing is 60-40—60 federal and 40 provincial. That is a requirement. We are not the only player in this game and we would certainly expect the federal government to participate in a positive sense with us. So we are proceeding now that we understand there is an agreement for us to acquire the land. We have to

proceed with the federal government to get them to cost share, and on things shall go.

I do not want the member to try to indicate the department is consistently at fault, not doing their homework. Their hands are tied in two different ways. One of the logjams seems to have been broken now. Maybe we can get on with doing some things that are good for his constituents.

The vehicle count on the road, the first section of the road west of Eriksdale, has been increasing. So it is starting to warrant activity. We do keep track of counts on a lot of roads. The member has a number of roads he has mentioned that maybe the number of vehicles per day is not quite what is necessary in competition with the roads in other regions of the province to have attention given to them, but we will send an update on all those roads.

The one that he mentioned, 513, is divided into eight different sections. Different portions have been constructed over the last five, six, seven years, but there is always another section that is urgent today. When somebody asks for it, they forget that we have already done two or three sections.

The member has to give us a little leniency in terms of being able to live within the restrictions the taxpayer gives us. I think we do spend a lot of money on capital construction of roads and on maintenance. We will never be able to satisfy everybody all the time, but we will always be prepared to discuss and compare options as to where we can most effectively spend our money to improve the roads for all Manitobans.

I will send the member an update on a wide variety of roads and am prepared to sit down and discuss with him, as I said earlier, where he believes the most urgent priorities are, and we will go from there.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I know we have spent quite a lot of time on highways, but I have a few questions that I would like to ask the minister about a few particular roads. If he cannot get the answers to me today, I would be just as happy if he would get them to me in writing.

There are a couple of roads in my constituency that I have written to the minister about, one of them being 269 in the Ethelbert area where they are trying to get a by-pass around the community. There is a dispute between Water Resources and the Highways department as to whether or not that by-pass should go ahead. It is very important because there is no alternative access out of the community if there should be a problem with the bridge coming out of Ethelbert which is a very old, narrow bridge.

I would ask the minister if he would look into that and correspond with me and with the community as to how this Water Resources, Highways department problem can be resolved.

In the Ethelbert area, there is also 273, a road that the R.M. of Ethelbert has been trying to get improved. Again the Water Resources department indicates that there is a problem with drainage.

It appears in both those cases it is a matter of one department passing the buck onto the other department. The improvements of roads are being held up in that area.

So, in both of those, I would ask the minister if he would look into those and correspond with me and with the R.M. of Ethelbert as to how those two issues can be resolved. Perhaps in the next year we can see both those projects go onto a road program, but they keep getting stalled because of a water problem.

* (1700)

The other issue that I want to raise with the Minister of Natural Resources is the road into Pelican Rapids. Two years ago the previous Minister of Highways had indicated that there would be continuous salt applied onto that road into Pelican Rapids. That has never happened. There has been some reason for delay of that, so if the minister can look into that, I would appreciate an answer on that.

As well, I read in a press release in one of the newspapers in Swan River that the Lenswood Bridge is going to be built this year, but when I checked with the department it is not going to be built. It is just a feasibility on the approaches. So if

the minister could indicate what the time frame is on the Lenswood Bridge—that has been a bridge that has come up, I think, for the last, about 15 years. It always seems to surface at election time, and it comes on as a promise again. It is not fair to the people that they should be delayed.

There is a desperate need for that bridge. I think the minister was out and looked at it. It is a very narrow bridge. People in that area are adding 15 to 20 miles in some cases onto their trip to another piece of land because the bridge is just too narrow for people to get their equipment on. With the change in equipment that we have right now, I think the minister understands why that bridge has to be looked into.

Those are the four roads on which I would appreciate some response from the minister, and, as I say, not necessarily today. The other issue is the Cowan subline. The minister said he would be communicating with the federal government, with the railways, on keeping that railway open or taking it off any list which might discontinue services. We have not heard from the minister whether he has had any firm commitment from the federal government on that.

I think the minister recognizes that with the activity that is going on in the Swan River area right now, this railway is vital to that operation of the plant should it proceed. We would like to know whether the federal government is committed to keeping that railway—or whether CN is committed to keeping that railway opened so that we can proceed with the economic development in that area, particularly with the proposed Louisiana-Pacific plant. If it is built, that railway is a vital part of it.

I would ask the minister if he could look into those few areas and respond, not necessarily today, but I would look for answers in those areas.

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I have noted the member's requests, five of them here certainly. On the first three, on 269, 273 and the road to Pelican Rapids, I will respond to her in writing. I do not have the information in front of me. I was not aware of the dispute she is referring to with Water Resources, but clearly we will

attempt to find out what the problem is, what the dispute is. Any dispute should have resolution, so we will communicate with her.

With regard to the Lenswood Bridge, the member is exactly right. I have visited the bridge. I have travelled it; I have seen it. I know exactly what she is referring to. With today's equipment, yes, there is a problem—a clear problem. The bridge is old, it is restrictive to what can get over it, and the alignment of the road is just not consistent with the kind of road we want today. It is winding, bending and I think certainly a safety hazard for anybody who is travelling. The majority of that road—what is the road number?—268. I have visited it, and we have it in the spring program this year.

I can assure the member it is a commitment that we have made that will be fulfilled, and the member can go back and say that. When something is in the spring program, the general process is it is announced, the industry knows the project is out there and it will be tendered sometime in the next year. It does not mean we instantly build it this year. There is a process of getting the specs, doing the tendering and then it happens. The member for Swan River can rest assured that we will follow through. I personally speeded it up to get it into the spring program for this year so that is a commitment to Swan River that is going to be kept. She can depend on that because we are the kind of government that does live up to our commitments.

I also would like to just briefly comment to the member on the Cowan sub. We have written letters to the federal Minister of Transport again and again. It is one of those letters that has not had a response. We do not know yet what position the federal government is going to take on it. Clearly, the member talks about Louisiana-Pacific and I think she used "should it proceed" or "if it proceeds." I think the verb is "when it proceeds."

When—because the rail will be important to Louisiana-Pacific in terms of moving product out of that particular plant and I presume also into the plant. We certainly raised that with the federal government. From when the original washout

occurred, that is kind of new information. Really we are talking initially about movement of grain, and now we are moving grain and other commodities, particularly associated with Louisiana-Pacific, so I think it adds further reason as to why that line should be kept. We hope the federal government will see it that way and respond in that context.

With regard to the first three, I will respond in writing to the member. I have given her a very clear, strong indication on item 4, and item 5, again, we will deal with the federal government.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I look forward to those responses. The minister says he is going to deliver on that Lenswood Bridge. I really hope so. He says he has made a commitment, and we will hold him to that commitment. The only reason I raised the election promises is because I remember, back in 1986, that bridge was promised, and the people of the area know that. They have had this bridge promised so many times and announcements made, and I would not want to see them disappointed. The minister indicates he is going to deliver. I hope he does.

With regard to the plant, I sincerely hope that plant is built. We are waiting to see whether or not. The only reason I say, if the plant is built is because we are waiting to see whether or not this government is going to issue them a licence to proceed. That is the reason.

The Environment Commission and ultimately the Minister of Environment, that is where it sits, so that was the only reason I said if. My hope is that very soon, we will see something. However, I have some questions for the Minister of Natural Resources. Just as with Highways, there are many important issues in rural Manitoba. The Department of Natural Resources has a great impact on my constituency, and there are a few issues that I want to cover off.

I want to talk to the minister, first of all, about the fishing industry. The minister was in Swan River earlier this year—I believe it was in February—to meet with the fishermen on Lake Winnipegosis, and at that time the fishermen raised some very serious concerns, and the

minister said he would address them. One of them was the restocking of the lake, and they talked about the low income that they make off that lake, the difficulties they are facing.

They talked about the Fairford dam. They asked the minister to look into that issue, and the fishermen also felt that they were not involved enough. They were being closed out of some of the decisions that were being made, and the minister had indicated that he would be getting back to the fishermen. A while ago, I had some of the fishermen call me and say that they had not had any response from the minister.

Now, I believe that the minister has met with the fish advisory board, but I do not believe he has corresponded back to the many fishermen who were at that meeting. So the question I have of the minister, first of all, is, what has been the result of that meeting, and what has happened with restocking of Lake Winnipegosis. I understand that there is some work that was done this spring.

I want to ask the minister who was in charge of that operation, of the work that was done there, what kind of work was done on Lake Winnipegosis as far as catching spawn, what is happening and how much money was allocated for the project on Lake Winnipegosis.

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I almost got away.

The member places some valid questions on the record, though I take some sensitivity in terms of the fact that communication has not taken place, because since that meeting where I gave certain undertakings—I thought it was a good meeting. It was an eye opener for me, of course, and the fact that the group up there felt very strongly. When things get tough, of course, they look for something to happen on the positive side.

Since we had that meeting, and they were critical of my biologist and some of the stocking programs that had taken place in the past, and I told them, well, I am prepared to entertain working together with them in terms of setting up a permanent fish hatchery for Lake Winnipegosis.

* (1710)

What has happened since that time is that—because the time was too short for us to set up a permanent fish hatchery for Lake Winnipegosis for the coming year—we had the advisory board basically take the initiative and make contact with the various fish hatcheries, and we released a whole bunch of spawn into Lake Winnipegosis this spring.

The member says there was no communication with the commercial fishermen. I just received a copy of a letter that was sent by Parker Burrell who has taken some of the ownership of trying to get some consensus from the commercial fishermen in the area and also is sort of the head push in terms of the stocking program that took place. The challenge I put before them was that, because they do not have much confidence in the way my biologists are running it, they should take ownership of the fish hatchery. My people will give their expertise and they are supposed to take the responsibility for it.

Like I say, we are looking at the possibility of having two fish hatcheries, one at the north end and one at the south end, that are going to be on a permanent basis that are basically going to be run by the associations. They are tying in also some of the other organizations like the game and fish associations who want to have a role to play in there as well.

What I have asked for basically is some financial participation from the commercial fishermen. I think a proposal has been floated around to them at the present time that they contribute a cent a pound maybe for pickerel and maybe half a cent a pound for the rough fish, other species, into a fund which I will participate in funding through the fish enhancement program and other programs and establish a permanent-type fish hatchery.

The cost of a permanent fish hatchery could be in the area of \$80,000 to \$100,000. To me this project is very, very crucial because I regard it as a pilot project. We are looking at doing this kind of arrangement with other communities as well where the interest is there to work in that direction.

I noticed the other day in my Estimates that the member for the Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans) already was alluding to the stocking programs. I am prepared to work with any organization to establish these things. My biologists, by and large, feel that stocking is not the most successful thing to do. I feel strongly that it is, and that is a personal view. If you look at what has happened in the States, for example, they have been very successful in stocking a lot of their lakes.

Whether it is for commercial reasons or sport-fishing reasons, many of our lakes are having difficulties. We are moving forward in terms of developing this kind of scenario. It is a shared scenario where basically they will take ownership of it together with as much expertise as they want from my department and funding through the fish enhancement program and whatever other programs I can get to try and establish these kinds of arrangements.

This has been communicated to the commercial fishermen in that whole Lake Winnipegosis area. They all have a copy of this letter. I saw a copy of the letter that has gone out basically outlining all of these things.

The other issue that the member raised was the Fairford dam. We have people from Lake Winnipegosis who, by and large, still challenge the government, saying that the fish ladder at the Fairford dam is not working well. We had them out there monitoring it, people from Lake Winnipegosis. We also had the people from Lake Winnipegosis involved in catching of spawn for the fish hatcheries.

In terms of the Fairford dam, it appears, and we are prepared to consider it, that maybe the fish ladder is working, but we think it is not maybe adequate enough. We might have to look at establishing another one. I have instructed my staff to take and work together with the commercial fishermen to see whether we can set up another fish ladder, because from the personal experience of the people that came out there and monitored it, they say they were backing up, they were backlogged on the fish ladder. We will try and resolve that as well.

The other issue that was raised with me at that meeting was the problem with the cormorants, the crow ducks. This is an escalating problem basically, because they are a protected species at the present time. I know there is a group that is wanting to raise the issue with the federal ministers to see whether we could give some discretion in terms of starting some control program. It always gets to be a very sensitive issue. I can remember the discussion between the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) and my predecessor the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) on the crow duck issue.

It is getting to be more of a problem. I just heard as late as today that on some of the Great Lakes the commercial fishery has really taken a nose dive. A lot of the blame is put on the crow ducks.

I know the sensitivity that the people feel about the crow ducks in the Lake Winnipegosis area. They feel that they have contributed to a great extent to the depletion of the fish and the lake.

Without trying to create a problem, but we had the same situation that basically developed with the beaver problems in the province, where all of a sudden they escalated to the point where there were over a million beavers. We had nothing but problems with municipalities, departments with the beaver problem. We are in the process of making the announcement for a beaver control program again.

Ultimately, I suppose, maybe I will try and work through the sensitive areas of maybe developing a control program for the crow ducks or the pelicans—not pelicans, cormorants.

I think, after the meeting I had with the group out there, which I considered, for myself, an informative meeting, letting them tell me what they want, what they need, I am prepared to give them a lot of ownership in terms of the responsibility of the lake itself and work together with them to see whether we can restore what used to be a very positive fish business out there. [interjection]

The member asked how much money was basically involved. At this stage of the game, for

this spring's program, they have identified certain rearing ponds or rearing lakes which at one time government was doing. We have given them some funding to take and do the necessary work on some of these rearing ponds, and I will allow them to do it instead of my biologists to do it. To date, I think we have expended something like \$25,000, but that is minute compared to what we have to look at in terms of setting up the fish hatcheries. That is being developed right now.

We are looking at seeing whether we can get various organizations to make applications under the fish futures program, under some of the other programs, with their financial participation as well. I mean, if it is going to work they have to have some involvement in it, other than just managing. They also have to have some financial involvement with it, and then I think it will work.

So we are evolving the plan at the present time, and I feel very positive about it. I want it to work. I have told them I want it to work. I regard this as a pilot project, because if I can make it work there, I can make it work in other lakes in the province.

Ms. Wowchuk: I thank the minister for that information. The minister indicates that the letter has gone, and if that letter has gone, I am pleased to hear that the other fishermen have been contacted. About two weeks ago, there was one other fisherman who contacted me who said he had heard that there was a program going on and that Parker Burrell was in it and Mr. Fleming was involved in it and they were getting money to do some of the work, but the other fishermen did not know what was going on. So I am pleased then that the minister has indicated—

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I want to just clarify that so there is no misconception. The information was not sent from me. It has been sent by the advisory group to all the commercial fishermen bringing them up to date as to what has happened and asking for their further input to the advisory committee. It was not myself who sent the letter, but the communication has gone out to the groups.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I will be back in contact with those who contacted me to see

whether they have received the letter, because I think that they should be all involved in it.

The issue of the hatchery is certainly something that the fishermen of the area have long wanted. I am pleased that the government is finally recognizing that the hatching of fish has to happen in the local area, and it should be a means of economic development for local people rather than having the stocks brought in and not handled properly as they have been in many cases.

* (1720)

The minister raised a couple of other issues that I want to touch on. He talked about the beaver control. The minister is well aware that the people in the LGD of Mountain are very disappointed in the decision that this government made. First, the previous Minister of Natural Resources put in place a program that was supposed to cover half of the costs of the beaver control, but there was no indication given to the LGD, or to other areas, that that money was going to be capped at a certain level.

Now I know that money is not open handed, but that was not the message that was given to the people in the LGD. They spent a tremendous amount of money and then they only got, I believe, \$2,500 from the government versus the \$30,000 that they had spent. They were thinking that they were getting half from the government.

Now this minister has changed his mind and has pulled back all that funding. The municipalities have been caught in a bind because they did not budget for—they were anticipating that half of these costs would be picked up by the government, as was promised by the previous minister.

There are a lot of problems with beaver control out there, and I have written to the minister asking him that he reconsider that position at least for the short term until there is a new policy out, because the municipalities have not budgeted for this extra money and they are going to be in an unfortunate situation.

I would hope that the minister indicates that there is going to be a beaver control program coming out very soon. I look forward to hearing

what that is, because certainly with the low prices of furs that we have right now, the beaver are becoming an increasing problem and one that the municipalities are feeling that they cannot bear the cost of.

In fact, the municipality of Mountain is saying, well, if the government is not going to give any money, we are not going to put any money into it, and the farmers and the local people are ending up picking up that whole cost, or having no supports there and we are having farmland being flooded.

It is like everybody is passing the buck. Nobody is taking any responsibility. I think that the government has to take some leadership here. If they are coming forward with a policy, I look forward to hearing that.

The minister talked about the management of, you know, involving people in resources in the lake. It is a good idea to involve other people, but I wonder where the government is on their co-management of resources. I know the minister has had a call from someone he knows very well, a Duane Whyte from Swan River, whom the minister knows fairly well, I believe, who has some serious concerns about how resources are being managed. He has asked this government to show some leadership in the area of co-management of resources, and this is something that the government has talked about since I have been here. Since 1990, I have heard them talking about co-management of resources, but they have not done anything. This government has not pulled people together, whether it be managing of the fish stocks, whether it be managing of the wildlife in the area.

I ask the minister why he has not addressed that concern of the co-management of the resources and pulled the people together to the table to deal with it. They have done co-management. We hear about the project in The Pas where we have co-management and it is working very well, but this government is not moving in that direction. I ask the minister whether or not he will consider it, and why he has not taken the initiative to set up co-management groups to deal with the various

lakes in the Duck and Porcupine Mountains and the management of wildlife in that area.

(Madam Chairperson in the Chair)

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, I think the member should be a little bit more cautious when she makes accusations about things not having happened. She covered a whole realm of things here, and I want to respond, but I will start with the last one first.

When she talks of co-management, we have approximately 20 co-management agreements in place right now, species specific. We are working, and I gave the assurance to the aboriginal people that we would be looking at expanding this on an ongoing basis.

We have 20 co-management arrangements in place right now through the province. I am very supportive of further developing that concept, because that is the only way, basically, that we can take, I think, and ultimately retain the wildlife resources, fish resources, that we have out there, because if you have the local people participating and being part of the program, then it is going to be much more effective than having the heavy hand of government telling them how to do things. So I am very receptive to that end of it.

I want to basically go back to the beaver control program. The member said that I terminated the program. I would like to maybe explain to her that at the time when my predecessor was there, it was almost an ad hoc program where they said, well, listen, there is a beaver problem; we will cost-share. But there was a limit of two and a half thousand dollars at that time. It was not an open-ended thing.

The concern and why I think there was a limit put on it was because what happened was that certain municipalities were sort of playing on the edge in terms of whether they were doing the right thing or not because councillors were putting in mileage to go and check to see whether there were beavers.

What had happened, because the beaver problem escalated dramatically and the Department of Highways and I, together with the

Manitoba Trappers Association and my department, developed a controlled program where we paid Manitoba Trappers Association \$35 for every beaver that was taken, providing that it was a problem beaver. They worked together with my department at that time, departmental staff, and the program worked well. There was a lot of money paid out through the Department of Highways, through the Trappers Association, to do that.

When the fur season started, we terminated the program, but we let the municipalities know that this is the deadline for applications. You know, they could put in their bills up to two and a half thousand dollars, and most municipalities did. However, at the time when I had developed a program under Highways with the Manitoba Trappers Association, the Union of Manitoba Municipalities also developed the same concept program with the Manitoba Trappers Association. There were only about five or six of the municipalities that ultimately utilized the program, and they were just getting into the swing of it.

What happened was that we felt that we needed a broader approach to this thing between the Departments of Natural Resources, Rural Development and Highways and the municipalities. We set up a working committee. We said the program would terminate at the time when the fur was prime and that I would have a program in place by the 1st of April in terms of the beaver control program.

Unfortunately, to the member, I have to say, we are way behind, but we set up an association between government people, the Union of Manitoba Municipalities and the Manitoba Trappers Association. They were supposed to work out a pact that was going to be acceptable. The Union of Manitoba Municipalities is really not that critical. If the member says some of her councils are unhappy with it, they should check with their people who are basically on the committee doing the negotiations.

Ultimately, negotiations broke down because the UMM basically said, we will not pay more than 30 bucks, and the Manitoba Trappers Association

said, we need 50 bucks as a bounty basically. I should not use that word, but 50 bucks. The discussions finally broke down and I have been trying to salvage the thing and am now going to be in a position where hopefully within a week I can announce a program. Unfortunately, it will not be including the Manitoba Trappers Association at this stage of the game because they have walked.

We will still be announcing a program and it is very necessary that we do. I have a request from the MTA to meet with them and we will meet with them to see whether we can still get this together. I told the Manitoba Trappers Association that it was not really a big money raiser for them, but at least they could make some money maybe doing that.

Incidentally, I might say that the fur prices are getting better. It is starting to strengthen and ultimately I think that will be more uptake in terms of the trapping because, when you see the increase from 300,000 to 400,000 up to over a million beaver, they are not a problem just in one or two places. They are all over, including in the city. In fact, the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) came up and said they had a problem with beaver right here on Omands Creek or something like that. It is all over the province so we are trying to deal with that. We are trying to develop a program that is going to help control to some degree until the prices come up. I was hoping the Trappers Association could maybe just see their way through to come to some agreement with the UMM for the bigger picture which is basically us working with MTA in terms of trying to promote the fur industry in Europe.

The program should be announced hopefully within a week to 10 days and UMM will then be making the announcement to all their members.

* (1730)

Mr. Clif Evans: I would just like to make some points with the minister and put on record and request that the minister respond to the points that I make here for him instead of prolonging this. There are other members who wish to discuss other issues.

I am pleased to hear that the minister is hopefully getting involved with hatcheries. It is a

very big issue, becoming even a greater issue in my own constituency. I have had responses from Dauphin River, Fisher River, Riverton, Waterhen area who want to begin this program again. It is extremely important. What the minister hears from his department on the one hand and what he hears on the other hand basically what I am getting to is to listen to the fishermen who are in the area. They are the ones who are in the know as to how much fish there are and what the future of fishing is around Lake Winnipeg, Lake Manitoba, Winnipegosis, et cetera.

But I would like to make the minister aware that I have been requested to ask this minister the background and the reasoning and what occurred to shut down the Dauphin River hatchery.

This community, Madam Chair, has been discussing this with me since 1990. I am a proponent of it, and I feel that it is very, very important. Just as the minister, I do not believe in what the bureaucrats say, I hear what the fishermen have to say. Dauphin River hatchery was going quite well. What happened to it is before my time, but I would appreciate the minister providing me with as much information as he has and can obtain on the Dauphin River hatchery.

The new chief and council that are there want to continue with this and want to get that hatchery. The building is there. There would probably be very little extra cost in getting that hatchery moving. So I would appreciate the minister getting back to me on that, and specifically what plans his department has for hatcheries and spawning areas.

I was pleased to see Natural Resources come to Riverton some weeks ago and just do that with the spawning and that in the Icelandic River, another important part of our system.

I would also like the minister—when I met with him some weeks ago I had written to the minister and asked him what he was going to do with the request by Mr. Gus Propkofsky [phonetic] on the level of Lake St. Martin. He indicated to me at that time that there was some legal problems or court problems and that he would get back to me on it the first opportunity available. This is going back about two months ago.

I would appreciate a response from the minister as to where that is. I have been getting calls and letters from Lake St. Martin Reserve, Little Saskatchewan, Mr. Propkofsky [phonetic], who support their proposal. They feel that the level of Lake St. Martin should be up a couple of feet. So I would like the minister to get back to me on that so I may respond to these people.

As far as Jackhead dam goes, I spoke to the minister a couple of days ago about the Jackhead dam situation. He indicated to me that he thought that something was happening. Well, the very same day, an hour later, I received a letter from the deputy minister to Jackhead. I have spoken with the Jackhead people this morning. They have indicated that as soon as they can get their council together to meet and discuss the whole situation that they would be requesting me to approach the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger) and the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Praznik). Let us finally get together.

Let us get this thing resolved, and let us go ahead with a very important proposal, again, for the Lake St. George area, for the Jackhead Reserve, for the fishing, for the cottagers and for the economic benefit of that community. So I would hope that the minister would be able to respond to these requests of mine at his first opportunity.

One last thing, and I would appreciate the minister's attention and response to this. I have in front of me a complaint about the fact that a wayside park, the Dawson Trail wayside park, a few years ago was put up for private tender to operate, to be operated by private individuals, something I am not in favour of.

It seems that the initial proponent, the initial person who put his proposal in, did not continue with the park, did not do anything with it. Subsequently, he, in turn, sold it to another individual who has since done nothing with the wayside park.

I would appreciate the minister making him aware of this complaint, and I would appreciate the minister looking into this. I will follow up with correspondence on this. If that is the case, if, in fact, there is a wayside park that was supposed to

be a wayside park, and the Natural Resources department wants to privatize these wayside parks, well, that is one matter. The other matter is the complaint of people, that the person who has purchased this land is doing nothing with it, using it for private land use only, and I feel that that is wrong. I will get more information to the minister, and I would appreciate his response to that.

I would also just like to make a comment which is that I feel the minister should be dealing and negotiating in good faith with the Private Landowners of Manitoba. They have been to see him. They have a proposal in place. They have met with him, and as yet, no concrete results have come out of their discussions with the minister. I would certainly like to know where the minister is and where the department is in their deliberations with the association and the concerns that these landowners have, and I will certainly be getting back to the minister for a response to that at the first opportunity.

One final thing. I have a letter from the LGD of Armstrong stating that they are in process of doing some land exchange with the Department of Natural Resources in the LGD. Their indication to me was that they feel that it is not moving at a speed that they would like to negotiate on. We are talking upwards of \$764,000 in values that must be exchanged for other parcels, and they would like, I guess, to have this matter probably dealt with on a speedier basis.

So with those remarks, I will certainly get back to the minister with some of these others and appreciate his response to these. Thank you very much.

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, the members say that I do not have to respond to it. I think I have to respond, because the member, between the Department of Highways and the Department of Natural Resources, I think, has aired every problem that he could imagine for the last two or three years and put it on the record.

I just want to tell the member that with all the ones that you have listed, if I miss some of them, you know, it is being monitored right now. We will try and get some responses and try and get them

out to him. He made reference to the fact that two months ago, he had a delegation in and they had not heard from me yet. Well, I might tell the member—and then he goes in the next breath and says that already—you know, he raised the issue of the Jackhead dam. It is in progress.

Through the system itself, it is not unusual that it sometimes takes up to two months to get a response by the time they do the investigation. If I get a letter and send it through the system, until it gets back, the investigation is done, it comes back through the system, it is not unusual that it takes a little bit of time.

* (1740)

I do not know whether any department is faster than mine, but we invariably get the information back. I will take many of the issues that he has put on the record. We will take and address them. I will try and respond by way of letter on that.

At the same time, you know, the issue of the Crown lands exchange, might I just suggest that the department with my director in there, Jack Schreuder, has been complimented on the speed at which they have basically done a lot of the cleanup and moving forward in terms of doing an exchange which basically took forever at one time. So I make no apologies for the speed at which we are moving, when we certainly are doing it. In most cases, the LGDs feel very positive in terms of the speed at which we have been doing these exchanges.

I also might say, at the same time, that our policy basically with Crown lands is that we are not averse to selling Crown lands to lessees. If they have an agricultural lease on it, we have no problem with selling it. You know, that is well received out there as well. So when the member is looking at bringing forward a series of problems all the time, he should also take and think of some of the positive things that are happening out there.

An Honourable Member: Be positive, be happy.

Mr. Driedger: Yes, that is right. Don't worry, be happy.

You have good government, and I want to say that you have good government again after the next election because we will still be here.

In conclusion, I know other people want to get in on the discussions, but I just want to say that we will try and address those issues that he has on there. If not, he has never been averse to taking and phoning or coming to my office and that kind of arrangement will continue. If I miss some of these points, I know that he will bring them to my attention. Thank you.

Mr. Paul Edwards (Leader of the Second Opposition): Madam Chair, my question is for the Minister of Environment. For a number of years in the province, various groups and organizations and indeed political parties have debated the pros and cons of an environmental bill of rights. There are a number of jurisdictions in the United States that have them. There are also a number of jurisdictions in Canada that have moved in this direction.

My question for the Minister of Environment is whether or not he or the government department has in fact studied the issue of a legislative instrument, an environmental bill of rights, and whether or not the department has produced any thoughts, any papers, on that issue as it might apply in Manitoba.

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Well, Madam Chair, this could probably evolve into a rather lengthy and cerebral discussion of an environmental bill of rights versus environmental regulation versus principles of sustainable development, and all of the intricate relationships that can be developed and debated.

I would prefer, however, to more directly address the member's question, which is that there is consistently review of what is going on in other jurisdictions that occurs within the department. I can tell the member that I have had some exposure—in fact, more than some. I have had a fair bit of exposure to discussion that surrounds whether or not an environmental bill of rights is an appropriate direction to take or whether there are other establishment of principles and statement of principles that can address and provide the direction, essentially, and the protection, if you

will, that flows from the development of a bill of rights.

There is constantly a two-way battle, which I think the member would probably cheerfully acknowledge, that in establishing a bill of rights, there are certain other—whether it is in the area of environment or whether it is in other areas, there can be dynamics that arise that probably are not always, in the long run, beneficial in providing the best long-term planning and direction. I think of the changes that occurred in this country over the years in the development of that thinking.

If the member is asking, are we on the verge of introducing a bill of rights, obviously, at this stage in this session, no. Have we considered or had discussion internally, particularly within my department and in my own office? Of course, we have discussed it. I think I would be, however, less than frank if I did not indicate that I am not, at this point, sold on the idea that it would be an appropriate item to put at the top of the environmental agenda. It is not that it is not fair. It is just that we have other very important matters.

Mr. Edwards: Madam Chairperson, I appreciate the comments of the minister. Clearly, it is an issue that has been debated over a length of time by many in the environmental community, in the business community and certainly in government circles.

As the minister knows, the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) introduced for first reading—I believe a couple of years ago—an environmental bill of rights. Last year, approximately just a little over a year ago, I, as the then-Environment critic for our party, also proposed an environmental bill of rights. When I went to have that bill drafted—and I want to put on the record that I did very early on in this session seek through Legislative Counsel to have a bill put forward for this House to consider in substance—what I was advised by the Legislative Counsel was that the appointment of an environmental commissioner, which is an essential part, in my view, of the environmental bill of rights, even though we went through it in some detail, their view was and their recommendation would have been that it would

not have been totally without cost and therefore would not be a bill that I could bring forward.

Madam Chairperson, I sought at great lengths to avoid that. I was unable to do it in my dealings with the Legislative Counsel, and because I did commit to bringing forward a bill in this session and wanted very much to do that, I want to table with leave and have the minister review the proposal which I put to Legislative Counsel. This is a simple document which I would ask him and his department to take under advisement as the gist of the bill that I would have brought forward had I in fact been able to. I do not suggest that this represents all that may need to go into a bill. It is obviously a starting point and represents, as I say, the essence and the gist of what would have been in that proposed act.

So I want to table that for members of the House, obviously not in a clause-by-clause format but in a synopsis of what the bill would have been. I would ask the minister to consider that and also to consider the merits of an environmental bill of rights which, in my view, in our party's view, would seriously enhance the rights of Manitobans on issues of environmental concern. I do not think, in my view, in my opinion, that it would result in some of the things which its detractors suggest it would, undue delay and cost.

What I see currently is a system burdened by undue delay and costs and a system that is largely not working because of course it is difficult to achieve a consensus and regularity across the nation on environmental regulation.

I believe that in a move to environmental rights, putting rights into the hands of people is a good idea and is generally a direction which I and our party support. I think that this bill, with proper controls, has been successful in jurisdictions around North America. Obviously we need to learn from their experiences, some good, some bad, but I think the general thrust is good and that a properly tailored bill taking into consideration some of the perceived and now known downsides in other jurisdictions could work.

So I leave that with the minister at this point. I did want to put that on the record as a specific

recommendation of our caucus to government. Unfortunately, because of the difficulties in dealing with Legislative Counsel on this issue and the recommendation they came forward with, we were unable to put it forward in a clause-by-clause, but I believe we have done the next best thing and invite all members to review the document that has been tabled today. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Cummings: I appreciate the brevity of the member's remarks, and I will try and respond in the same vein.

The national round table had some considerable discussion about laying down principles of sustainable development as opposed to establishing an environmental bill of rights.

You might argue that is not a black-or-white question, it is not an either/or question. I know that the national round table has received a paper and will be discussing the long-range plans of the present federal government regarding an environmental commissioner versus an environmental ombudsman versus an environmental bill of rights.

I would only want one thing on the record. You know, it is so difficult for anyone to say that they have a criticism of a bill of rights. How can you criticize rights? What happens so often—and the Leader of the Second Opposition (Mr. Edwards) is probably more aware of this than anyone else in this House, given his training. It is so very easy then for decisions to be taken out of the hands of policymakers, as it were, and put into the courts very often.

* (1750)

I have to ask the question, and maybe it is a rhetorical question, but clearly you have to ask the question: Is this a situation where the courts are always the final arbiter of decisions, or does a country and governments of whatever stripe, on behalf of the people, make decisions within a policy framework and within the rules that are laid down under environmental law?

I think it is only fair that those comments be put on the record. No one should interpret either my comments or anyone else's as ones of opposition

but simply words of comment about this being not necessarily a simple road.

Mr. Edwards: Yes, it is accepted. It is not a simple road.

I simply say to the minister that all of those cautionary notes he puts on the record and the statements about the questions that he has asked are ones that have been around for a long time, are ones that have been kicked around really on this continent in various jurisdictions for a number of years. I and our caucus have gone through them and have made a decision that an environmental bill of rights is the way to go. That was something we came forward with a year ago, and so I leave those comments on the record for the minister.

Obviously, they feel differently. However, I do invite him to review the document that we have tabled today as to what it establishes, because, of course, it does establish an environmental commissioner as opposed to first recourse being to the courts. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. Norma McCormick (Osborne): Madam Chair, I have a few questions for the Minister of Environment as well.

Following the Estimates process, I went back and examined an issue that there was considerable dialogue between the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) and the minister on. I wanted to pursue what I understood the minister's response to be and test it against some information that I have come to find since. It is with respect to the public hearings for the Norwood Bridge.

The minister had indicated, I believe, in Estimates that there had only been one letter received requesting public hearings at that time. Actually, in the context of the Environment Estimates debate, I had understood that was a letter which had come forward from the Choices group. I have since learned that there had been a letter communicated last fall from the Mayfair community which I do not believe was connected with the Choices letter.

I am wondering if the minister can indicate, because this letter written to the minister by Barb Sarson and delivered to the minister, I think, on the

final day within which she was entitled to bring her concern forward—she indicates that she had written to the minister last fall. I would like the minister to indicate whether he has responded to Ms. Sarson with respect to the holding of public hearings on the Norwood Bridge project and whether or not he or his department have made any decisions about whether this will be referred to the Clean Environment Commission.

Mr. Cummings: As I heard the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger) indicate earlier, sometimes the paperwork shows up at very appropriate times. I have in front of me my response to Barbara Sarson, dated in July, dated today over my signature.

It says, I am in receipt of your letter, wherein your group is appealing the decision of the director. It lists the project and the file number. Your appeal is under review, and you will be advised within seven days of a decision being reached in accordance with Section 27 of the act.

I think there are three different letters that I have signed today. The information that I gave the member during Estimates—I think we are possibly confusing when the time frame had elapsed for appeals to the director's decision as to pose whether or not there were letters that came in during the period that the director was reviewing the project.

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

During the period that the director was reviewing the project, there was, to my knowledge, only the one. Now, I can double check about Ms. Sarson's letter, if she had corresponded earlier. I do not see a date here that I can link that to, although it might be in the bottom part of the file. It is on Fort Rouge School letterhead, but nevertheless, there was very little request during the period of time that the director was reviewing the project, very little interest or very little promotion of the idea from within the public, that it should go to public hearings.

Since then, when his decision became known, there were several who appealed, saying that I should overrule his decision, which is within the power of the act for the minister to do. The

problem we have, frankly, is probably more of perception than it is of reality. Those who are appealing and those who made presentations in the previous period, when the director was reviewing the proposal, primarily referred to matters that they saw of concern which did not fall within the purview of either the director or really of The Environment Act.

Now, The Environment Act is pretty flexible and can be stretched, but sometimes, I think that some discretion needs to be exercised there as well. The difference that people consistently raise and one which I think I have some responsibility to consistently explain is that there is considerable difference between the Charleswood Bridge situation, where there was a new bridge, and there was never a proper environmental assessment, nor was it put into a proper process before the decision was made that it should be put through the process, and ultimately a hearing was called. This replacement, the Norwood replacement, has gone through the process. It is still in the process. So it is simply now a decision as to whether or not the appeals that we are receiving relate to something that the environment process could properly deal with.

I understand the frustration of the community. I am not giving them the back of my hand, figuratively, or dismissing their concerns. But, unfortunately, they are not going to get a traffic study out of an environmental hearing. Our experience in the Charleswood review seems to be mirrored here in the concerns that are being brought forward. People are not talking about the problems that this will create in relationship to the river or the bank's stability or the navigable waters situation, but more to how is the traffic flow going to be managed. Therefore, without predetermining what my decision is going to be, I have to indicate that is very much the type of issues that seem to be coming forward. I would hope that the people who are bringing forward their concerns will take those concerns forward to the city.

One of the arguments that has been put forward is the question about should this replacement not wait until it is shown how it fits into Transport

2010, the plan that the city is working towards. I suppose that the city will have to in the end answer that question. I cannot, however, in my own view see how the city can do without that bridge, and the bridge is in lousy shape from an engineering point of view. The city is going to have to deal with it, or it is going to have to start facing load restrictions.

So we are caught with a little bit of an unponderable and a no-win situation in the eyes of the local community in terms of whether or not they think they can impact the traffic flow that will approach that bridge through The Environment Act. I would suggest it would be very unlikely that we can address that through The Environment Act, because once you get past the immediate area of the bridge, that is very much city jurisdiction and city responsibility. While I might well want to give them some advice, I would think that I would be very quickly told in the reverse not only by the city, but probably the community, that they want to decide that and they should be talking to the city about how they decide that.

I will sit down and wait for further questions, but I do want to put on the record that I think it is quite unfortunate that some members of City Council believe that this hearing process would answer their concerns. I am not looking to attribute blame or to cause difficulties for them. I am simply saying it is a problem that the city planning process, I believe, is equipped to deal with. It still is not going to be satisfactory if the community is unwilling to have the volume of traffic in its community or in its area. The Environment Act, however, at least at this point, I have not concluded is the best vehicle for them answering that concern.

* (1800)

Ms. McCormick: I appreciate the minister's perspective on this, and I think that there are some differences of opinion when we talk about environmental impact. I guess the question as to the rerouting of traffic routes through a community is, without question, going to have an impact on that community.

The community is concerned that it is being seen as a throwaway. So I will take back the minister's words at face value that you are not intending to

just pass this off, that you will consider the information put forward in Miss Sarson's letter, and that if you have further advice to give to the community, then we hope that they will take it in the spirit that you intend it to be given.

I want now to ask some questions with respect to the Manitoba Hazardous Waste Management Corporation. We understand that memos have been sent to the existing staff indicating that their future beyond the 14th of July is dependent on the signing of the deal with the IEI group. I want to determine from the minister, further to the questions that were asked yesterday in Question Period, what the minister understands with respect to the nature of the financing of the deal.

I have been informed that the potential purchaser has gone to the Bank of India for the securing of a line of credit, and I would like to get some information on this rather unusual arrangement. Does the minister have any information as to why there is no local lending institution interested in this project?

Mr. Cummings: Yes, I certainly can dispel what might be uneasiness given that there is a story out there that the investors will be seeking money from a state bank other than within Canada or the United States.

To begin with, the conditions of the sale are that a letter of credit shall be assigned and guaranteed by one of Canada's major banks. So they have to meet that condition, no matter what.

I can tell you that, probably without fear of retribution, I think, if you were to inquire with any one of the major banks in this country, that they would tell you that the State Bank of India is probably a heck of a lot safer than most of the state banks in the United States and that they would sooner do business with it.

I am not well versed with the world banking situation, but one should not assume—you know, we hear the term Japanese dollars, or we hear other terms referring to German money coming in. The bottom line is this deal will be closed in Canadian dollars, and it will be supported by legitimate operating interests or it will not close.

Ms. McCormick: Another area of concern has been raised earlier, and that is with respect to Immigrant Investor money. This is another sort of rumour on the street, that the choice of the Bank of India is a way of leveraging money that would otherwise be unacceptable, given the Manitoba government's position on the Immigrant Investor Funds.

I guess I want to add into this a concern that has been raised fairly early in the process by Mr. Sherwood, representing the Crown Corporations Council. You will know that I had written some letters to him and that I had expressed some concerns about the progress of this deal. Mr. Sherwood is on the record challenging the ability of this Toronto-based consortium to finance a deal of this magnitude, and I want to tie these two things together to determine whether or not, in fact, the minister knows if there is Immigrant Investor money going into this. There are remaining concerns with respect to the Crown Corporations Council with respect to the ability of this IEI group to pull a deal together.

Mr. Cummings: Yes, the answer is, of course, fairly simple. As I understand the conditions of Immigrant Investor monies that are allocated anywhere in this country, they, in fact, have to be allocated within the conditions of the jurisdiction in which they are sitting, so there is no way that Immigrant Investor Funds allocated for Manitoba could somehow surface in a foreign bank and then come back through another investor. So I think we can fairly quickly and logically put that rumour to bed.

The second part of your question—you said, given our approach to Immigrant Investor dollars or given the relationship, I actually find it very discouraging that other jurisdictions in this country are actively pursuing Immigrant Investor dollars, that they are courting Immigrant Investor dollars through the Immigrant Investor Fund in Victoria and all through the province of B.C., as one example, and yet in Manitoba, every time the words "Immigrant Investor Fund" are raised, I have to say that there is an aura and, in fact, criticism raised from opposition benches about any

possibility of that money being invested in anything in this province.

So I am not going to stray into the debate about appropriate use of Immigrant Investor funding. I am just saying as a matter of principle, is it not rather odd that other jurisdictions in this country under Liberal, NDP administrations are courting immigrant investor dollars but nobody wants to touch them in Manitoba? An interesting concept—I think that we might all want to ponder that a little bit.

The second part of that, of course, is that I am not discouraged in terms of IEI being able to complete the investment. They always said that they had an investor. They always said that that investor would be backed up by eventually moving the investment into a situation where there were more local investors.

I do not want the member to interchange the term local with immigrant here. I am talking local. I am talking people who—and there are lots of people, private investors who considered putting together a syndicate here in the province, who might well want to become partners down the road.

* (1810)

As I say, I am not uncomfortable, nor do I lack confidence that this will close. On the other hand, I am also saying that if something does not cause it not to close, we have a quarter of a million dollars of the investors money that does now belong to the province through the Hazardous Waste Corp. So we are in a very secure position. The deposit is very much at risk if this project does not now proceed, so I am confident that they will make every effort and they will achieve that, given the fact that they have been able to demonstrate to me at least and to those who are looking after this on behalf of the Hazardous Waste Corp. that they will proceed to closing, but one will call it closed when the signature is on the line.

Ms. McCormick: Mr. Deputy Chair, yesterday the minister I believe took as notice an intention to check on the status of the improvements and deficiencies that were identified during an inspection conducted by the Department of

Environment. In his response yesterday the minister indicated that he understood this was an event of a month ago. My information is that it was about two weeks ago that this unfolded.

I would be interested in knowing whether the minister has in fact checked out whether the local resident community of the people involved in the co-management process have been informed of the deficiencies.

Mr. Cummings: I have not been able to check to see if that has been completed. I think I am talking about the same matter that the member is referring to. It was sometime in June, June 20 or something like that, that the information was conveyed to the corporation.

I have asked my staff in my office to review this, the situation, and I am looking to see if I have the material here. I have not got myself up to date any more than I was yesterday if I were to be completely candid with the member, but I can tell you that the fact that this is being handled as it is is certainly not any different and may in fact be a little more forceful than it would be with a private organization, because there is every intention that this will not be seen as a lax enforcement but, more importantly, that the company is not seen or being allowed to operate in a lax manner.

I think, when we review the details of this and knowing the details of what has occurred over a period of time out there, in fact, some runoff water on the surface that has not been adequately contained can be viewed as a spill. Now that is not, I do not think, what we are referring to in this case.

I said in the Estimates, and I think the member will probably remember that I said, that the question that the opposition should be asking is not whether or not the corporation is doing business in a particular way. The more important question is whether or not the Department of Environment is now moving without impediment as a regulator and is treating the corporation, now that they are starting to operate as they have in the last year, in a more independent and competitive manner.

Certainly, I say that in light of the volumes. The volumes have risen dramatically this last year as opposed to the year before, volumes of business

done. If you want to judge it by dollars or any other criteria, the amount of work that the corporation is doing has grown considerably over the last year, perhaps the last two years, I suppose, would be a more accurate reflection. So asking the rhetorical question, I believe I can now say that here is an example of the fact that the Department of Environment is acting in an appropriate manner and not in a collegial manner, which would be a greater problem if that situation or that perception should ever develop.

Ms. McCormick: Mr. Deputy Chair, with respect to the operation of the corporation and its changing status and apparent disconnection from government, I am interested in knowing what are the regulations or the rules around the classes of determining who does work for the corporation.

We have been learning of a concern with respect to a project that is going on, on behalf of Repap in northern Manitoba, in which there was a tendering process, and subsequently work awarded to people who apparently had not gone through that up-front process.

I have entertained myself quite well over the last three months having discovered the untendered contract system on the legislative computer system, and yet have never found anything for the Manitoba Hazardous Waste Management Corporation, at least not lately, on that untendered contract system.

Is the Crown corporation required, according to the regulations which govern departments, to report on untendered contracts? If so, how is it that this Repap project seems to have been let to someone who was not part of that initial tendering?

Mr. Cummings: I am going to do something that probably I will regret. It is my understanding that they are not required to, but this was also the topic of some of their review that the Crown Council and the Auditor have been involved in. I do not think I have my briefing note here. Probably the member has the Auditor's report in front of her and can answer the question herself more accurately. The fact is I think my answer is the appropriate one. The matter that you are referring to, I am not sure that I could speak to it. I am not fully familiar.

I am aware of the process that we entered into, not so much with individual contracts but the fact that the remediation program at Repap is being undertaken not with the cheapest technology that might be available to do the job, but it is being undertaken jointly with the federal government in order to attempt some technological advancement in terms of fungal remediation.

I am not technically able to comment beyond that, except that the federal government was not prepared to jointly fund the original proposal that Repap had accepted with the Manitoba Hazardous Waste Corp., but they were, in fact, prepared to co-support the more expensive program because there is deemed to be information that can flow from that.

Obviously we have a unique situation. If it can be made to work successfully in what is a less-than-hospitable climate then that is probably a technology that will get used. It is a technology that Manitoba Hazardous Waste Corporation may use only in a limited amount, but the fact is it ended up costing the Province of Manitoba less because, through the shared agreement, Manitoba was responsible for the clean-up costs from money to come from the sale of the corporation.

Of course, we ended up saving some dollars by doing it this way, although we are using what is, I believe, not a fully proven technology.

Ms. McCormick: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I think the technical process the minister is speaking of is bioremediation. It was a bioremediation project. I am not as interested on getting detail on the specific process of the choice of the company that wound up doing it as I am about the policy around untendered contracts.

* (1820)

If I could just ask a direct question, does the minister believe that the process for the publication of untendered contracts ought to apply to Crown corporations, and in the new corporation partially owned by the province, if that process should continue?

Mr. Cummings: I would have to state quite emphatically that I would not expect the new

corporation to be subject to the same mechanisms as a Crown. The government will be a shareholder in a company that will essentially operate as an independent private entity. They will be subject to all the rules and regulations and agreements that were drawn up between the community and the government and the licence, but the monitoring and the reporting mechanism of that corporation would not be the same requirements as we would put on a Crown.

I think it is quite reasonable to expect that there will be some significant private information that will be part of that company, and I would not expect that they would be reporting as we would expect our departments to report.

If the member is asking me to enunciate the existing policy on untendered contracts through the Crowns and whether or not they are subject to reporting, I believe that is still subject to some debate between us and the Auditor. I do not think there is any great disagreement, but I think I can state with some certainty that the new entity, the new Manitoba environment centre, will operate as a private company would out there, and we will be the shareholder through the existing format of the Hazardous Waste Corp., by the way.

Ms. McCormick: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I just have two more areas to pursue. One is with respect to the minister's current use of the word "Manitoba environment centre" as opposed to corporation. Can the minister advise us as to whether or not clearance has been given for the new corporation to be given the name Manitoba environmental corporation?

Mr. Cummings: I think that was a slip of the lip on my part. They likely will be known as corporation as opposed to centre.

Ms. McCormick: My final questioning is in the area of the volume of sale.

The minister indicated earlier that part of the move of the corporation toward independence was an increasing volume of business. Can the minister confirm that this momentum is continuing?

I know in the Estimates process we talked about the sale of the soils remediation really flagging. Another area which was a big infusion of capital or

rather of revenue into the last operation was the PCBs, which were, in fact, kind of a one-shot deal as well.

Does the volume of sales continue to build, or are they remaining in a stalled situation?

Mr. Cummings: The member has pointed out two areas that were obviously—well, to start off I will deal with the PCBs. That was a one-time very opportune deal that was made, one for which we will, I think, for several generations probably be quite appreciative of the Province of Alberta.

The soils, I would expect that they will continue somewhere in the same range that they have been. Although I have to indicate there is undoubtedly some resistance on the part of oil companies to move land, unless they have a sale for it. There are a number of sites out there that probably will be moved, but they are not being moved at this particular juncture, and that may well affect the long-term volumes.

It has always been understood that the soil remediation facility would probably put itself out of business in the long run, because eventually you will get down to smaller—or not completely out of business, but it will reduce. It will not be the main part of the business. It will be simply an ongoing and possibly quite steady portion of the business.

I need to get to the nub of the member's question. It is my understanding that the volume of business, using the transfer facility that is available, that the corporation has been able to be quite competitive and is continuing to build its volume of business through that centre, which of course leads to the next development that we need to have. That is why we are seeking the \$20-million worth of investment, which is to develop the ability to treat more of this material rather than transshipping it.

Ms. McCormick: I just have a final question that the minister by his response promised me to ask with respect to moving on to the next development. Given that the deal is expected to be transacted and complete by the end of July, when could we reasonably expect construction to begin on the new facility?

Mr. Cummings: Certainly in August. Let me put on the record why that seems to me to be quite possible. The fact is, when the arrangements are signed, the investors will have \$20 million tied up in a letter of credit in a Canadian bank, and I am sure they will want to do something with it as quickly as they can, because it is not able to be used for anything except to support and be there to back up the construction of the facility. In other words, time value of money all of a sudden will become very important to them, and that, along with the commitments that are in the agreement, will drive them very quickly to begin construction.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Deputy Chair, I have a question for the Minister of Environment as well.

Today in the House I tabled a number of petitions. I do not know if the minister has had a chance to read them yet. I expect his staff may well have looked at them, but it was a petition which I believe has been signed by over a thousand people, mostly in my constituency, and it represents the work of a number of volunteers in an environmental coalition. I understand that they were able to gather these signatures very quickly. So it is an indication, certainly, of interest and concern.

The petition asks the minister to consider that the amount of junk mail and unwanted advertising is expanding in Manitoba and Canada, and they believe, for example, that the amount of junk mail has doubled in the past five years. The concerns of my constituents are that much of this advertising material is printed upon nonrecyclable paper. What they have asked their government to do, the government of Manitoba, is to write to the federal government to request the federal minister responsible for Canada Post to consider bringing in legislation requiring all unsolicited mail and flyers use recycled materials.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, this, I believe, is not just a concern of those people who were able to sign the petition, but it is a concern of many households in Wolseley, and I know that as I go door to door there are many signs, sometimes written by children, sometimes from the Canadian

newspaper companies, which indicate that this particular household does not want junk mail, does not want flyers. It is a very widespread concern, and I am sure it is not just in the community of Wolseley.

There is a City of Winnipeg by-law on this, as I am sure the minister is aware, but there are also many difficulties with enforcing it, and obviously Canada Post has a responsibility to deliver mail which is sent through Canada Post, and that is an international responsibility which must be adhered to. The City of Winnipeg by-law also requires one to post a notice at the entrance to one's property, not just on the door. For many people, particularly those in apartments, that is quite difficult.

So I think what the constituents here are trying to do is to come at this from another tack and to try and ensure that at least those materials which must be delivered are based on recyclable paper. It is an interesting way, I believe, of ensuring that the market for recycled paper expands, and that in expanding that market there may be an opportunity to bring down the price, and I think we do know that in most cases recycled paper, which in fact I use for all of my mail and literature to residents, certainly is a little more expensive, but I think it is something which my constituents certainly approve of.

There are other ways, of course, of expanding the market for recycled paper, and one, of course, is by government purchasing or by purchasing by large corporations.

* (1830)

So what I wanted to do this evening is to ask the minister what kind of policy he is pursuing on the use of recycled papers to expand that market and possibly bring down the price of recycled papers, secondly, whether he is also prepared to respond to this petition and to write to the federal minister and to request the federal minister to consider bringing in federal legislation for recycled materials. Thirdly, I also wanted to follow up on a question I believe was asked of the minister earlier in the session, I think a few days ago, where he talked about the initiatives that his government was taking in this area and if he could perhaps give us

some more detail at this time on the use of recycled papers in particular.

(Madam Chairperson in the Chair)

Mr. Cummings: Yes, I am not sure that I have seen the petition, but I understand the principles the member put forward, and from the sound of it, it is a petition I would not have much problem supporting, frankly.

There is some background to this that goes beyond just the question of whether or not flyers are printed on recyclable material. That in itself is an interesting approach because most people who have approached my office are talking about the need to reduce the amount of unsolicited material that comes through our boxes rather than—here, I now have a copy. I do have this, I am sorry.

The unsolicited material that we find in our boxes is becoming quite burdensome, and there are some figures that were published not very long ago that demonstrate, I think it is, about \$200,000,000 that the Post Office receives in revenues for delivery of this material. The reason I have no problem with this approach or with this suggestion is that this ties very directly into the problem that I have had in bringing together a multimaterial recycling program, because the Canada Post is probably the one area that we are going to have the most difficulty getting co-operation in contributing any revenue to a program.

Number one, a federal authority, a federal service, we are probably not capable of levelling a tax against them without a considerable amount of constitutional wrangling. I think the payroll tax is a demonstration of the problems that can arise in trying to get those revenues out of the federal government. However, the Post Office is expected to operate more independently of government.

I have had communication with them. They sent me their environmental policy, and they said a number of comforting things, but they did not say the cheque was in the mail either. If they are not prepared to contribute in some way toward the elimination of this material from the wastestream, then the next logical step is, would they be prepared to require that it be printed in a more environmentally friendly way so the material

would be less of a problem in the wastestream? I do not have a problem with that.

Paper is well known to be one of our biggest wastestreams. It is also well known to be, in terms of tonnage, one of the wastestreams that will probably have some value if we can get the less valuable papers out of it; either that or we have to have some fairly expensive de-inking processes.

I am not sure that either one of us can technically answer what this paper means in the de-inking process and whether having it on recyclable paper at that point would make much difference. It seems to me, in the de-inking process, there are an awful lot of things that we do not think of as recyclable today that might be, but we do not have that capacity, so that is almost an academic discussion.

In terms of paper as a whole, if the member was looking for some response from me in terms of getting the recycling program going in this province, cardboard has, interestingly enough, got a market of its own right now and is actually being sought. Just this afternoon, I had someone in the industry tell me that might well be a blip, something the same as \$9 canola was in the farm community this summer.

I am not sure I share that view, because I do not see cardboard packaging being reduced dramatically. I do not know what would have created the demand today that would not at least have some ongoing demand over the next year, other than the fact that there may be virgin product that suddenly becomes cheaper priced that will impact on that.

Our intention is that we will move from what will be a fairly rigid and regulated approach at the front end of our program into a situation where we invite the industry. We intend to invite them right from the start, but the industry will gradually assume more input and more real input in the sense that we would start to move the products to more of a true-cost accounting, in other words, those products that are recyclable and do have value when they come out the other end, that that value starts to be recognized in what it costs them to go in in the front end: aluminum, the first obvious example; good old newsprint being another,

because we believe that that market is going to continue to grow; glass being an example of a product that is likely going to be penalized in the long run or at least is certainly not going to get a lot of relief from being considered a problem in the recycling loop, if you will.

Other products will be on either side of that balance, if you will. Certainly, I think aluminum is way over on this side, and I think glass is over quite a ways on the other side. Canada Post and the problem that is raised there and the issue that is presented as part of this petition is in fact one of the areas that we acknowledge there probably is going to be a problem. But I am not going to wait to solve this problem to get the program going.

We are going to get the program going and we will attempt by whatever way we can to get Canada Post in the loop. It certainly is our intent to request other companies producing flyers within the province to contribute on a per-tonne basis. So we are automatically going to have a problem if we follow that track, because it is all of a sudden going to be more cost competitive for Canada Post to put it in, because they will not be contributing to our recycling program.

We will certainly be conscious of not creating that inequity. I am hopeful Canada Post will contribute, because I think—and it would be not difficult at all to get all members or all parties in this Legislature and others across the country, if our program starts to take hold and I think it will, to say Canada Post cannot morally stay out of the loop any longer.

Whether it is Autopac and Hydro or Telephone here in the province, nationally Canada Post is going to become a lightning rod and they will have to respond. Frankly, I throw out a challenge to my Liberal colleagues. Unless they want the federal Liberal government to start getting a black eye over its lack of commitment toward the environment, then they are going to have to get to their Crown, i.e., Canada Post, and tell them they better get on board because all of a sudden they will be discriminating against Manitoba producers who are producing flyers, and who are going to be paying toward the removal of them from the

wastestream, and we will have a national Crown that is not.

Ms. Friesen: I want to thank the minister for that response and to indicate that I certainly, myself, will be writing to Canada Post and, as the minister suggested, would invite other parties in this House to do the same.

I wanted to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Graham, my constituent, for all the work that he has put into this and the number of volunteers that he was able to marshal to go door to door literally over many hours in the constituency.

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Madam Chairperson, I know that the pile of dead trees on my desk may cause some concern for some of my caucus colleagues, but I will try to keep my questions very short and brief. I am sure there is a good amount of recycled paper in this stack of files here.

* (1840)

I do want to ask the minister some questions, a couple flowing from the debate I have heard since I have been in the House this afternoon. I will start off with the topic that the minister was discussing with the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen).

I just want to ask one question with respect to the WRAP, the Waste Reduction and Prevention program, and it has to do with the third-party financing. I have had some discussions about this with the minister, but I want him to give me some assurance now that there is not going to be a problem with having an entity created that is going to require corporations to pay money to a third party, to a party other than the government, and if this is, in fact, a novel situation or a new kind of approach, and if there is not some risk involved and if there is a legal opinion that the government has with respect to this type of third-party financing for the recycling program that the government is embarking on.

I have had this raised with me from people in the community, and I again would just like the minister to clarify that in the debate today.

Mr. Cummings: I just got a word of caution from the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson). No, I would be quite willing to discuss this issue.

It is a different way of dealing with the problem. I acknowledge that and accept the challenge that goes with that, frankly, because the alternative is a bureaucracy, and I say that with respect for those who work in the bureaucracy, but when you are talking about civil service establishing a program and running it, then you have built into the tax base a situation where you have to either have it within the base expenditures of government funded by tax dollars, or you have to take all of the revenues that in this case we would be talking about for recycling into government or, thirdly, I suppose, you would take portions of it and claim them as a legitimate overhead to government.

The bottom line is that we want industry to be comfortable with using their initiative and their business acumen, if you will, to make this process work. This is not intended to be a hostile takeover although, frankly, I would think that there were probably some in the community, given the comments I made on the record and the reaction of some of the members of CPIPSI, that they might well make that interpretation, but that is not at all where we are headed.

When CPIPSI made its proposal after having met with Grocery Products Manufacturers, their suggestion was that industry would run the program, that they would accept voluntary contributions within their organization, but they did say that there was one rider on that, and this is where, quite frankly, we were unable to reach an agreement that was satisfactory to all parties. The rider on that was that the WRAP legislation, because it is a fairly unique piece of legislation, in fact, fit very well with the concept that they had of an industry-run recycling system.

Now, how can a government regulation be seen to be that compatible with a private sector initiative? Well, it comes about this way. The private sector was unable to get everyone within what would be considered the broad reaches of a multimaterial recycling program. They were not able to get them all voluntarily in the tent. So they

said, that is okay, we have got our own membership in the tent; now we want government to regulate those who are not in the tent. That makes sense. It has got to be a level playing field, but frankly, if you are going to regulate one portion of an industry, it is a little bit unfair to say you are not going to regulate another unless you give them an exemption. That exemption is then based on whether or not they are contributing a fair and equal or a proportionate amount.

The program would be that the private industry would set the levy, and they would, through their own program, allocate money as to what they thought was the appropriate contribution for that levy, but government would be required, probably in the long run, to collect the levy from those who were not voluntarily in the program and then forward that money to the program.

Secondly, as I have indicated on the record before, in negotiations with the city, they were unable to reach an agreement as to what was an appropriate level of support to run the type of multimaterial recycling program the city, the province and, I think, GPMC thought was appropriate for this province. So it came down to the fact that if government—we had no agreement over the total dollars. Government was not going to set the levy, but government would be responding by collecting a levy that would be set by an outside group. So we began to have a mishmash that was sort of the reverse of where we are now.

The decision was made that if government was going to regulate, then government should in fact have some significant input into what the levy was going to be. There was no agreement over the dollars, so we felt that in the early stages, there was going to have to be some protection to the municipalities and in fact more than in the early stages, and any program in the end was going to have to have an ongoing commitment to a clear and understandable cost that would be appropriated to the municipalities. That can be done if this program lies within the realm of the regulation as we have laid it out and will allow contracts to be written. Now, who should write

those contracts? Should it be the Department of Environment or should it be a group on behalf of government who manage the program?

Criticism by members opposite, as a matter of fact, as I recall, was that there was possibly a problem with development of markets, and if industry was not in the loop, we would not have any hope of developing the markets that needed to be developed in order to dispose of or to properly recycle the material.

My hope, my expectation, in fact, something of which I have a very high level of confidence and expectation of, is that the implementation and management group that will operate this fund will have representation from government and industry, and industry will gradually have more and more input over the next three years so that they become, not only full partners, but probably move more into proactive development, because they have everything to gain and nothing to lose.

There is obviously a fear up front from any industry if they believe they are going to be regulated in an area that they previously did not have a cost, but if we acknowledge the changes that have come in our society, where products need to have a value attached to them so they are removed from the wastestream—I believe we have reached that stage in the development of our communities. The public is no longer willing to accept that if they buy a product and they send it to the landfill, that does not cost them anything. It is costing them anyway. They are paying it through their taxes, through their city or municipality, in the cost of managing that wastestream and the cost of managing the landfill, plus we are losing an asset. We are losing a product that has value.

* (1850)

For environmental reasons, we need to stop burying products of value or disposing of them without getting the value back out of them. Those are the principles that are the underlying part of this, and all of those principles need to be considered when we talk about the fact that we are going to have an arm's-length organization that will receive monies, that government will have set the levies for.

I believe it is a happy marriage in the long run of industry, government and environmental concern that will end up, not only doing the right thing, but creating jobs in the process, creating a much different climate in this province, and particularly in the city of Winnipeg, for management of what has been some very large volumes of recycled material that are not being properly handled.

Ms. Cerilli: It sounds then, from that answer, that the minister is quite confident that this is not a new experiment that is going to cause some problems from a legal point of view. I want to move to another issue that was just discussed, an issue that we did spend some time on in the Estimates. I am quite concerned about the minister's answer with respect to the traffic study at the City of Winnipeg. I would ask the minister if he would not admit, by authorizing the environmental assessment to go ahead on the Norwood Bridge prior to the study being completed by the City of Winnipeg on traffic flows, that he is not giving up any authority that he may have to ensure that there is environmentally sustainable traffic planning at the city. That is question one.

Further to that, if he has any assurance from the city that the concerns that have been raised in the community, which he believes are not under the purview of The Environment Act, are those in fact going to be addressed through some kind of public process through the city? We could debate, like we did in Estimates, if these urban planning issues are in fact environment issues, but we will not get into that here. Those are the two very specific questions I would ask the minister to answer.

Mr. Cummings: I will try and keep my answer as brief as possible. I have gone through the explanation already on an earlier question on how I saw the area of responsibilities unfold. I do not believe that we have compromised the process in any way, No. 1. If the question is, can you hold up the environment licensing process until the city does something, then I would suspect that we will be still here in the year 2,000 debating whether or not everybody has done everything that they needed to in relationship to this project.

I am somewhat concerned that some councillors feel that they thought hearings under The Environment Act would have somehow got them off the hook or answered their questions for traffic flow. That, unfortunately, is not likely going to be the answer.

Now the member said she had a two-part question. I think I answered the second part. I would like her to repeat what she was referring to in the first part, because if she was implying that the system or the process was somehow shortened, I disagree.

Ms. Cerilli: I think the minister answered the first question. What I was getting at is the minister has some authority right now under The Environment Act, which includes the city of Winnipeg which would include this bridge, to ensure there is going to be environmental considerations because he holds the ticket on the environmental impact assessment.

We have a study going on in the city that is going to make recommendations with respect to traffic flow, and I guess the suggestion that we have been making on this side of the House is that you should not be putting the cart before the horse and allowing major bridge reconstruction before you have the study from the city. Even if there is an environmental assessment that goes ahead, the minister can make a decision to issue the licence or not, and that should be done based on full information, as much information as is going to come along. I would hate to think that we are going to have all this kind of construction go through and then have some new information come forward from the traffic study.

The other question I was asking has to do with the minister playing what I would call interjurisdictional hide-and-seek with the city on their process of public input and review of some of the urban planning issues. I think that I will just leave it at that.

I want to move on to another area. The minister, I think, in his relationship with the city, could ensure that there be some protection and some consideration if he believes that the city has its

own process that could handle some of the concerns which are coming from the community.

I want to ask the minister if he has familiarized himself with the federal court ruling with respect to the sewage lagoons at Oak Hammock Marsh, and if from that ruling which, as I understand it, the judge clearly stated that sewage lagoons are provincial responsibility—all the concerns should be dealt with at the provincial level—if there are going to be any implications from that with respect to sewage lagoon construction going on in the province and the way it is being handled up to this point where municipalities are dealing with this area in what seems to be, because they do not have a lot of environmental regulations at the municipal levels, which seems to be in a way that is not in keeping with concern for the environment, sustainable development or what I would think is a forward-looking approach.

So I want to ask the minister that and then follow that with another question with respect to sewage lagoons.

Mr. Cummings: This minister has a little longer memory than the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman).

Madam Chair, the question about Oak Hammock and whether or not there are implications from the court ruling, the answer is quite simply, the implication is that the position of the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger), the process that the Department of Environment put the project through here have in fact been able to demonstrate that they were adequate and that they can continue their responsibility.

Well, I think for the record it should be shown that the members opposite still believe that even though it has gone through the court system in Manitoba, it has gone to appeal at the federal level, that they are still scoffing at the fact that the courts ruled in a particular way. I might be unhappy if they were to all of a sudden come around and say how great they thought this project was, because then all of a sudden I would be uncomfortable with the colleagues that have for so long done everything they can to discredit this project, one of the best projects in North America, by the

standards of many people who go through there these days, and the members opposite are still wishing that it could be somehow pilloried through the court system. What an abuse.

Point of Order

Ms. Cerilli: Madam Chairperson, the minister is, I think, not using this time to answer the questions that are asked. I specifically asked how that is going to affect future locations of sewage lagoons in the province, and we do not want to, I think, tread into the Oak Hammock Marsh issue at this point.

I would ask the minister to just answer the question. There are lots of people here with lots of questions to ask, and we want to get going.

Madam Chairperson: The honourable member for Radisson does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Cummings: Are there any implications for Manitoba from the court ruling? No.

Ms. Cerilli: I have had an issue raised with me with respect to a sewage lagoon that is going to be sited in the R.M. of St. Clement. It is a human waste lagoon that is going to go half a mile north of Sunset Beach, half a mile from Lake Winnipeg. It is going to have its flow impacts, potentially, I would say, but very likely, considering the wind direction and the flow of the water, onto Grand Marais and Grand Beach. This to me does not make a lot of sense in terms of maintaining what are huge tourist attractions for the province of Manitoba.

* (1900)

I would ask the minister if he would commit to giving me the criteria that were used by IDS engineering when they selected this site for the sewage lagoon in this R.M. and to ensure that there was environmental consideration of the effect on the lake and the beach and the beach users and an area that has been developed, I would say, relying on the water quality of the shoreline along Lake Winnipeg on that eastern side of the south basin.

I am not convinced that there are strong enough guidelines from the province on siting these types

of lagoons, and I would like for the minister to clarify for me what requirements the selection process would have to ensure that we are not setting ourselves up for a disaster here.

Mr. Cummings: Madam Chair, I am not sure that I could or that I should attempt to report as to the criteria that I believe would be required. I am certainly prepared to take the question as the member has put it as indication that she would like further information and background on what is occurring in that location. I would be more than glad to supply it. I do not have specific information on that site at my fingertips, and I would have to rely on the environment officer in that area to send me the information.

Ms. Cerilli: I thank the minister for agreeing to send me that information. Given the season, this is the summer season, beach season, there are a lot of people who are going to be up there wanting to use that beach. This is a very big issue of concern to the communities that I mentioned, and I would just ask the minister if he would commit to do this immediately, to supply myself, and I will, as I am sure he is aware, forward on to the community the criteria that are going to be used for siting sewage lagoons in the province of Manitoba, so that we know that they are looking at the geology and the flow of effluent that is going to be dislodged into water bodies like Lake Winnipeg.

Mr. Cummings: Well, I am tempted to ask the member where she thinks the combined overflows from Winnipeg went yesterday and the day before.

Madam Chair, the bigger question is one that has been raised by this member and by others as to whether or not there are appropriate operating standards for lagoons in this province; and secondly, the other question, which I think has even greater implications for all of us, is the question that is being asked by some, and I think a small number at this point, who are suggesting that lagoons should be eliminated.

I really wonder if that is now the position of the official opposition which they will be putting forward in the next short while, a position that says that all lagoon construction shall cease in this province and that any human effluent from here on

would be treated mechanically or biologically and not—with no discharge.

Ms. Cerilli: One final question—if the minister, given his answer, would ensure that future lagoons of this type are going to be given due consideration, given that the minister is currently undertaking, as I understand it, a study to see if in fact these sewage lagoons are treating sewage and working properly in Manitoba.

Similar to the questions with respect to the Norwood Bridge, are we not continuing to put the cart before the horse if we proceed with the kind of developments where we are not sure what the environmental impacts are? Should we not wait until the proper studies are done and then use that information for an informed decision with respect to either siting, which I think also is an issue, and the type of sewage treatment that we are going to use in the province? Thank you for your time.

Mr. Cummings: Well, a little knowledge, whether it is on my part or on anybody else's part, can be dangerous. The implication has always been out there that lagoons are not functioning and that they are destroying our environment.

I would only like to put on the record the one shining example of something that should never have happened in this province, and that is when the Dunnottar discharge flooded out a family. It should never have happened, but the accusation under those circumstances that there were certain levels of pollution that were discharged from the lagoon—extensive testing showed that the water picked up the contamination as it ran down the ditch. It was more contaminated one mile down the road than it was when it came out of the lagoon. So I suggest that this becomes a circular argument pretty quickly.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Chairperson, I have a couple of short snappers for the Minister of Environment.

In the Burrows constituency, the new federal virology lab is under construction. I think we are all pleased that we have this investment in Manitoba. It is surrounded by residential neighbourhoods on all four sides, and I think that it is an improvement in terms of the visual effects in

the neighbourhood. I know that in the past, the residents complained about the dust from the city Works and Operations yard and from the noise of trucks. So I think overall it is an improvement for the neighbourhood.

I would like to ask the minister if there is any kind of environmental problem as a result of any kind of emissions into the atmosphere or the sewers or any waste products from that building. Who has the jurisdiction over any environmental problem regarding that building? Is it the provincial government or the federal government, and a similar question, who monitors any waste or effluent from that building and that operation?

Mr. Cummings: This was all clearly laid out in the conditions of the licence, and as I understand it, there are no discharges that should be of concern. Certainly, it is meant to be a contained facility.

Secondly, in terms of environmental responsibility, I think we are looking at an area of shared responsibility. I would have to research with my department as to who is doing what in terms of the precise monitoring and checking of the site. The City of Winnipeg, of course, also has enforcement officers who would be involved.

This is rather a unique facility. I do not anticipate that it will be one that—in fact, it will be an exceptionally safe facility, given the conditions that were put on it during the environmental licensing.

Ms. Friesen: My questions are for the Minister of Urban Affairs.

I want to ask the minister about an issue that was raised in the House recently. It deals with a park that runs through my constituency and which I am sure the minister is familiar with, and that is Omands Creek.

* (1910)

Omands Creek is partly in St. James constituency and partly in Wolseley, but certainly the residents of Wolseley have been very concerned about the future of this park for a long time. During the 1980s, when concerns were expressed about the possibility of building over the park and of the development and interpretation of

the northern section of the park, the provincial government—it was an NDP government at that time—did step in and I think helped to create the northern section of the park, now known as Bluestem Park, which has had considerable interest and activity on the part of both provincial governments, that is, the one that succeeded as the present government.

There has been interpretation done there, natural heritage interpretation, which has added to the enjoyment and use of the park. Certainly, in the last I think eight or 10 years, it has become an area, a city park, an urban park, a long, very attractive gully which has been increasingly used by members of the very close neighbourhood.

I am sure the minister is aware that there continue to be problems threatening the northern section of Omands Creek. During the late 1980s there were indications that a commercial enterprise planned to build over the creek. At that time, the former member for Wolseley did introduce a piece of legislation or an amendment to existing legislation to prevent this. This was at a time of a minority government, and that received support of both opposition parties and was passed.

Subsequent to that, Madam Chairperson, when the present government assumed a majority, it did take steps to change this situation, first of all to devolve the responsibility for waterways to the City of Winnipeg. At that time, that was Bill 35 in 1991, I did propose amendments similar to those of a previous member for Wolseley to protect Omands Creek from buildings constructed across the creek. Those were not passed at a time of a majority government. The city was supposed to proceed to creating a by-law that would deal with buildings and construction over waterways.

Subsequent to that, in 1992, in Bill 78 the provincial government, I believe, recognized that the city had not moved to create the by-law. The province indicated that that by-law should be created and that the city should have hearings before that by-law was developed.

As the minister knows, there are again threats to Omands Creek. I believe, on Friday of this week it does come before a city planning committee, and

there is a proposal to build not from one side of the creek to the other, but a proposal for, I believe, a parking lot this time—not an office building, but for a parking lot that is cantilevered out to some extent to the edge of the riverbank and possibly at certain times of the year, given the size by the way of the creek, does vary considerably during the spring to perhaps the driest season of the summer. It does seem to the residents of that area that the creek is again threatened, and it is not clear what the by-law procedures are going to be for that.

I wanted to ask the minister about that. First of all, has the city, to her knowledge, created that new by-law dealing with rivers and streams? Secondly, were there public hearings at that time? Subsequent to issues raised in this House this week, has the minister had conversations with the city, as she suggested she might be able to do, over this issue?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Urban Affairs): Madam Chair, the city has not proclaimed the by-law which they are obliged to proclaim. We have discussed this on numerous occasions. They have been made aware of the fact that they are behind in their obligation in this respect.

The city was behind in a couple of its obligations. One was the City of Winnipeg French Language Services; the other was the Ombudsman; the third was this one. They have now, within the last few months, complied with the French language requirement. They have just recently complied with the Ombudsman, and I am looking for soon compliance upon this one, although I have not yet seen a draft of a by-law on this topic. I do have an appointment request with the mayor. It has not been set yet. I know they are having a hearing on Friday.

I have at various points discussed this whole issue of the property owner's rights, the changed expectations, the protection of the waterways and parks and natural lands. I have indicated that perhaps a land swap could be made where the owner could be given property of equivalent value in trade for the particular land that is under discussion here. My initial response to that from

the city was a negative one. That request will be formalized before too long, and I will be asking for some other kind of reaction on that.

I do have a piece of property in mind that perhaps could be a suitable trade if they were willing. I have not seen the proposal that is going forward on Friday. All I know about it really is what has been in the newspaper. I do not know if the City Council has received it as a document in preparation for their hearing on Friday or their meeting on Friday. That is where it stands right now. I hope by tomorrow that we do have an appointment set for the mayor and I to discuss this. Today just was not possible for the two of us to get our heads together on this issue.

Ms. Friesen: Madam Chairperson, I want to thank the minister for that and I am very pleased to see her interest in the possibility of a land swap and of extending the public park area, because it is a park I think which the province has considerable interest in. I think the province has done a very good job of natural and historical interpretation in that urban park and particularly in an area which is so close to the inner city. There are very few parks of that natural cast, and it is one I think that is very well used.

I am glad to hear the minister's response on the issue of the by-law because I thought perhaps it was something I had missed, that in fact they had proclaimed a by-law that somehow I had not paid attention to. I do want to make the minister aware of some comments that I made at the time that the previous Minister of Urban Affairs brought in the legislation requiring that by-law.

The actual wording of the act suggests that the city must bring in a by-law with public hearings, but it does offer them—as I thought at the time—an escape hatch by having an escape route that says if there is an individual or a personal interest in the—I should read the actual exact indication.

The phraseology of the proposed by-law says that they must hold public hearings if the rights of any person are to be involved. My concern at the time was that persons are not necessarily communities, and I am concerned about the city's

interpretation of that. If the minister is meeting with the mayor, I hope that she will draw that to her attention. This was when I was speaking on June 24, 1992.

The other area that I had concern of in that by-law was the French translation. The French translation is a little more ambiguous than the English. It does say in the French translation that—the quotation actually is, ne brime aucun droit, and “droit” has two ways of being interpreted, as right or law.

So there is an ambiguity which I asked the minister about at the time. There was nothing put on the record which actually straightened out that ambiguity. It may be that, legally, the ambiguity that I am seeing is not there in the words. Perhaps if the minister would confer with the previous Minister of Urban Affairs to see what judgment was given at that time or what advice was given at that time.

I wanted to again draw to the minister's attention the fact that I believe that the residents of Wolseley are very, very strongly opposed to building over waterways, whether it is directly across or whether it is cantilevered across, and that public access to the whole of that gully and to the whole of the waterways of that gully would be considered very important to my constituents. I wish the minister well with her meetings with the city.

* (1920)

Mrs. McIntosh: I thank the member for her comments, and I will be certain to ensure that her comments from Hansard are taken under consideration when the topic is discussed.

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): I just had a couple of questions of the minister responsible for infrastructure renewal.

An Honourable Member: If you are short half a bridge, ask John—

Mr. Chomiak: If we are short a bridge, I know where we can dismantle one. It is soon to be constructed in the south end of the city and could help fund many other activities.

Probably, members of this House will be surprised to learn that statistics from the Manitoba

Disaster Assistance Board indicate that in last year's floods West Kildonan had the greatest amount of claims in the entire city of Winnipeg. In fact, West Kildonan had almost half of all the claims of the city of Winnipeg, far in excess of any other region of the city. Consequently, the sewer and water structures in West Kildonan are quite deteriorated and have had numerous claims from residents of the area as to when projects are going to be developed to redevelop the infrastructure, specifically the sewer and water in our area.

I note from the statistics that I have from the infrastructure project that virtually no sewer and water projects are being undertaken by infrastructure in the West Kildonan region.

Can the minister outline why that is, or if he has any indication as to that?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): I think the member knows the process that was utilized in terms of allocating the dollars under the infrastructure agreement. The total agreement over the next two years is a \$205-million program with contributions coming one-third from the province, one-third from the federal government and a third from either a municipal government or another organization.

At the very outset, in consultation with the federal government, we allocated that money into three pools, so to speak. We allocated \$60 million to the City of Winnipeg for them to come forward with their recommendations in terms of what we call traditional municipal infrastructure requirements, sewer and water, streets and so on. We allocated \$60 million to rural Manitoba, and we allocated the \$85 million to Strategic Initiatives.

So, within the \$60 million, we are relying on the City of Winnipeg to outline for us their greatest area of need, their highest priorities. Within that area they had set aside \$20 million for sewer district relief programs. They have highlighted four major sewer district areas. The member is correct. The West Kildonan area is not one of them.

So we continue to work with the city in terms of what their highest priorities are with the amount of

money that is available under the current infrastructure program. These were the priorities they provided us with within the dollars that have been allocated. We will continue to work with them to determine what they do as being the highest priorities under the traditional municipal elements.

Mr. Chomiak: I thank the minister for that response, and my only comment is that I think—and obviously I have a vested interest in this insofar as it is the area I represent, but given the statistics from the Manitoba Disaster Assistance Board, I think the city has made some wrong decisions with respect to the allocation of the funds for the infrastructure sewer and water, as demonstrated by, again, damage in the end of the city that I represent during the recent rains and floods, but I thank the minister for that response.

Ms. Friesen: I have a question for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism.

Madam Chair, this is a question that was raised with me by a constituent recently, and I said that I would ask the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism, if there was time in concurrence.

This arose out of the celebrations of Canada Day at The Forks. There was a very large crowd. It was a very successful day, as I am sure the minister is aware, but one of the unfortunate aspects that my constituent pointed out was that the new tourism building was not open. I think she was there at around nine o'clock. She pointed to the number of out-of-province, out-of-country cars in the car park, obviously a large number of people who had come in for the Pink Floyd concert and other events of that weekend and who were there at The Forks, and the new tourism building, with its staff and its leaflets and its ability to introduce people to the wider aspects of Manitoba was not open.

So I wanted to ask the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism about that, about the opening hours at The Forks, and whether he would consider on long festival days like that whether it would not be an advantage to the province to keep that office open, at least as long as the regular commercial establishments at The Forks are.

I say this having looked at the opening hours of other offices of Tourism. The ones at the Legislature, for example, are now closed on weekends, which is not something which happened before, so this is the only opportunity that people would have who came in on the weekend for special events like that.

So I wonder if the minister perhaps has some reflections on that and whether it would be of benefit to the province to keep that open.

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Madam Chair, I appreciate the question from the member for Wolseley on behalf of her constituent.

Let me assure her that I think it would be appropriate to provide service to the public to the greatest extent possible. There is a fairly substantial investment in the facility that is there by both the provincial and federal government. It is there to provide information and service to the public.

I will take the question basically as an advisement from the member and look into what we could do to further accommodate the public and make sure that we could do that.

It makes good common sense to try to provide a greater service. We have set some targets that are fairly ambitious for the tourism industry in Manitoba, and we believe that with the response we are getting with some of the advertising, particularly in the United States and the advantage that we have with the U.S.-Canadian dollar difference that we do have a tremendous opportunity.

I will certainly take a personal review of the situation as it relates to hours that are open and try to work to accommodate the general public.

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): I have a question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism.

Just following on the Committee of Supply which discussed the Immigrant Investor Fund on June 13, I am wondering if the minister would advise the committee if there has been an evaluation by his department of a revised plan for

the Ramada Renaissance project by the Lakeview group since we last discussed this on June 13.

Mr. Downey: Madam Chair, I am not aware of any specific revisions. I know that there have been discussions. I am not sure as to what is in the department as it relates specifically to any changes to that project that he refers to. If there has been any substantial information that is different than what he received during the committee process, I would be prepared to provide it for him in a day or two.

Mr. Mackintosh: I go back to the letter tabled by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) on June 13, a letter signed by the Director of Investor Reporting for Lakeview, which references a preferred downsizing of the project from 167 rooms. That letter states in part: "We have written the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism for the Province of Manitoba, asking for approval to downsize the project. We have asked the province to advise us of its position by June 13."

I am wondering if the minister did advise Lakeview by June 13 as requested.

* (1930)

Mr. Downey: Yes, Madam Chairperson, I believe that has in fact taken place. One of the concerns that I guess I would be fair in putting on the record is that before any major change with an investment were to take place, there, I believe, has to be appropriate approval by the investors. That was one of the conditions which has been placed on that, and it has to show economic activity and benefits for the province of Manitoba. I believe that would be the kind of response it was given. I do not know exactly what it was, but I believe that was the kind of response that was provided.

Mr. Mackintosh: Can the minister advise the committee whether the province has approved any continued development by the Winnipeg Ramada Renaissance group?

Mr. Downey: Not at this point, Madam Chairperson.

Mr. Mackintosh: Can the minister advise the committee whether the government has given any approval subject to investor approval?

Mr. Downey: Madam Chairperson, I think I also added that it has to demonstrate economic viability and/or economic benefits for the province of Manitoba, as well as the investor approval. I believe I am accurate in those comments. Again, I will put a caveat on it.

If there is further information which should be provided to the member as it relates to this, I am quite prepared to provide that within a day or so.

Mr. Mackintosh: Just to clarify then, is the minister saying that the department has or has not conducted an analysis of the economic benefit of a revised proposal from Ramada Renaissance?

Mr. Downey: Madam Chairperson, I do not believe there has been any further in-depth work done as it relates to a revised proposal. I think, at the outset, there was a report, in general terms, done by the industry indicating in fact the questionable need for any additional hotel rooms in the city of Winnipeg as it relates to any investment. That is a concern that has been brought to me by some of the hotel industry people at this particular time. I am certainly aware of their concern, the fact that it could well cause further difficulties with the hotel industry we already have.

As far as any detailed further review of a new proposal, I do not believe there has been any in-depth work done, but certainly knowledgeable as to what the desires are, I believe, of the Lakeview group.

Mr. Mackintosh: Would the minister provide to me a copy of any correspondence sent back to Lakeview in response to its request for the government's position by June 13?

Mr. Downey: Madam Chair, I will take a look at the correspondence, and if it is able to be tabled without in any way jeopardizing the province or the individuals, the investors, I will take under consideration the provision of that material for the member.

Mr. Mackintosh: Would the minister advise whether the government has given any approval, conditional on investors' approval or not, regarding the Ramada property on Pembina Highway south?

Mr. Downey: So I do not misinform the House, Madam Chair, I will provide that information to the member, as I said, with the other information he has requested.

Madam Chairperson: Is the committee ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Chairperson: Is it the will of the committee to adopt the motion? Agreed?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

An Honourable Member: On division.

Madam Chairperson: On division. The motion is accordingly adopted.

Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Committee Report

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Chairperson of Committees): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has adopted a motion regarding concurrence in Supply resolutions passed, directs me to report the same and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), that this House concur in the report of the Committee of Supply respecting concurrence and all Supply resolutions relating to the Estimates of expenditure for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1995.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Ernst: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into Committee of Ways and Means for raising of Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Motion agreed to, and the House resolved itself into Committee of Ways and Means for raising of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty with the

honourable member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS

Supply—Capital Supply

Madam Chairperson (Louise Dacquay): Order, please. Will the Committee of Ways and Means please come to order.

We have before us for our consideration the resolution respecting the Capital Supply bill. I would remind members that as the 240 hours allowed for consideration of Supply, and Ways and Means resolutions has expired, pursuant to Rule 64.1(1), these resolutions are not debatable.

The resolution for Capital Supply reads as follows:

RESOLVED that towards making good certain sums of money for Capital purposes, the sum of \$181,355,000 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund.

Shall the resolution be passed?

An Honourable Member: On division.

Madam Chairperson: On division? The resolution is accordingly passed on division.

Supply—Main Supply

Madam Chairperson: We also have before us for our consideration the resolution respecting the Main Supply bill. I once again remind members that as the 240 hours allowed for consideration of Supply, and Ways and Means resolutions has expired, pursuant to Rule 64.1(1), these resolutions are not debatable.

The resolution for Main Supply reads as follows:

RESOLVED that towards making good certain sums of money granted to Her Majesty for the public service of the province for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1995, the sum of \$4,892,067,100 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund.

Shall the resolution be passed?

An Honourable Member: On division.

Madam Chairperson: On division? The resolution is accordingly passed on division.

* (1940)

Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Committee Report

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Chairperson of Committees): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Ways and Means has adopted a resolution regarding Capital Supply and a resolution regarding Main Supply, directs me to report the same and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 30—The Appropriation Act, 1994

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey), that leave be given to introduce Bill 30, The Appropriation Act, 1994 (Loi de 1994 portant affectation de crédits), and that the same be now received, read a first time and be ordered for second reading immediately.

Motion agreed to.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 30—The Appropriation Act, 1994

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): I move (by leave) seconded by the Minister of Education and Training (Mr. Manness), that Bill 30, The Appropriation Act, 1994 (Loi de 1994 portant affectation de crédits), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 29—The Loan Act, 1994

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), that leave be given to introduce Bill 29, The Loan Act, 1994 (Loi d'emprunt de 1994), and that the same be now received and read

a first time and be ordered for second reading immediately.

Motion agreed to.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 29—The Loan Act, 1994

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey), that Bill 29, The Loan Act, 1994 (Loi d'emprunt de 1994), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider and report of Bill 25, The Statute Law Amendment (Taxation) Act, 1994, (Loi de 1994 modifiant diverses dispositions législatives en matière de fiscalité); Bill 29, The Loan Act, 1994 (Loi d'emprunt de 1994); and Bill 30, The Appropriation Act, 1994 (Loi de 1994 portant affectation de crédits), for third reading.

Motion agreed to, and the House resolved itself into a committee to consider and report on Bills 25, 29 and 30, with the honourable member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill 25—The Statute Law Amendment (Taxation) Act, 1994

Madam Chairperson (Louise Dacquay): The Committee of the Whole will come to order to consider Bill 25, The Statute Law Amendment (Taxation) Act, 1994 (Loi de 1994 modifiant diverses dispositions législatives en matière de fiscalité).

Does the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) wish to make an opening statement? Does the critic for the official opposition wish to make an opening statement? The critic for the second opposition? No?

We shall proceed to consider Bill 25 clause by clause.

An Honourable Member: Page by page.

Madam Chairperson: We shall consider Bill 25 page by page.

Shall Clauses 1 and 2 pass—pass; Clauses 3(1) and 3(2)—pass; Clauses 4 and 5—pass; Clauses 6 and 7—pass; Clauses 8 and 9—pass; Clause 10—pass; Clauses 11 and 12—pass; Clause 13(1), page 10—pass; Clauses 13(2), 13(3) and 14, page 11—pass; Clause 15—pass; Clause 16—pass; Clauses 17, 18, 19 and 20(1) on page 15—pass; Clauses 20(2), 20(3), 21, 22, 23 on page 16—pass; Clause 24—pass; Clauses 25, 26 and 27—pass; Clause 28—pass; Clauses 29, 30, 31, 32—pass; Clauses 33 and 34—pass; Clauses 35, 36, 37 and 38—pass; Clauses 39 and 40—pass; Clauses 41, 42, 43 and 44—pass; Clauses 45, 46 and 47—pass; Clause 48—pass; Clause 49, 50, 51 and 52—pass; Clauses 53, 54, 55 and 56—pass; Clause 57—pass; Preamble—pass; Title—pass. Bill be reported.

* (1950)

Bill 29—The Loan Act, 1994

Madam Chairperson: We shall now proceed to consider Bill 29 clause by clause. Does the minister wish to make an opening statement?

Clauses 1, 2 and 3—pass; Clauses 4 and 5—pass; Clauses 6 and 7—pass; Clauses 8, 9, 10 and 11—pass; Clauses 12 and 13—pass; Schedule A—pass; Schedule B—pass; Preamble—pass; Title—pass. Bill be reported.

Bill 30—The Appropriation Act, 1994

Madam Chairperson: We will now consider Bill 30, The Appropriation Act, 1994 (Loi de 1994 portant affectation de crédits), clause by clause.

Clauses 1, 2 and 3—pass; Clauses 4, 5, 6—pass; Clauses 7, 8 and 9—pass; Clauses 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14—pass; Schedule A—pass; Preamble—pass; Title—pass.

Is it the will of the committee that I report the bill? [agreed]

Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION**Committee Report**

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Chairperson of Committees): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has considered Bill 25, The Statute Law Amendment (Taxation) Act, 1994; and Bill 29, The Loan Act, 1994; has directed me to report the same, and Bill 30, The Appropriation Act, 1994, and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), that the report of the Committee of the Whole be received.

Motion agreed to.

REPORT STAGE**Bill 25—The Statute Law Amendment (Taxation) Act, 1994**

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I move (by leave), seconded by the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Orchard), that Bill 25, The Statute Law Amendment (Taxation) Act, 1994 (Loi de 1994 modifiant diverses dispositions législatives en matière de fiscalité), reported from the Committee of the Whole, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

THIRD READINGS**Bill 25—The Statute Law Amendment (Taxation) Act, 1994**

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): I move (by leave), seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), that Bill 25, The Statute Law Amendment (Taxation) Act, 1994 (Loi de 1994 modifiant diverses dispositions législatives en matière de fiscalité), be now read a third time and passed.

Motion agreed to.

REPORT STAGE**Bill 29—The Loan Act, 1994**

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the government House leader (Mr. Ernst) (by leave), that Bill 29, The Loan Act, 1994 (Loi d'emprunt de 1994),

reported by the Committee of the Whole, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

THIRD READINGS**Bill 29—The Loan Act, 1994**

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) (by leave), that Bill 29, The Loan Act, 1994 (Loi d'emprunt de 1994), be read a third time and passed.

Motion agreed to.

REPORT STAGE**Bill 30—The Appropriation Act, 1994**

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the government House leader (Mr. Ernst), that Bill 30, The Appropriation Act, 1994 (Loi de 1994 portant affectation de crédits), reported from the Committee of the Whole, be concurred in.

Motion presented.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: No? The question before the House is that Bill 30, The Appropriation Act, 1994; Loi de 1994 portant affectation de crédits, reported from the Committee of the Whole, be concurred in.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

An Honourable Member: On division.

Mr. Speaker: On division.

* (2000)

THIRD READINGS**Bill 30—The Appropriation Act, 1994**

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of

Finance (by leave), that Bill 30, The Appropriation Act, 1994 (Loi de 1994 portant affectation de crédits), be now read a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: No? The question before the House is that Bill 30, The Appropriation Act, 1994; Loi de 1994 portant affectation de crédits, be now read a third time and passed.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

An Honourable Member: On division.

Mr. Speaker: On division.

* * *

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you call Bill 4 for third reading.

Bill 4—The Energy and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Orchard), that Bill 4, The Energy and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi sur l'énergie et apportant des modifications corrélatives), be now a read a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

[applause]

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): I want to thank all honourable members for the applause. After that show of unity, I may change my mind.

Mr. Speaker, I was asking my caucus colleagues earlier today—I said, how do you sum up 13 years involved in the political process? My Leader said, hopefully, quickly. [applause] More spontaneous applause.

Mr. Speaker, I thought of, how do you begin this process? I thought of maybe becoming the Joe Biden of the Manitoba Legislature and misquoting some Charles Dickens. This job is not easy. In the first line of the Tale of Two Cities: It was the best of jobs; it was the worst of jobs. I think that sums up being a member of the Legislature and perhaps of being a member of any House in any parliamentary democracy in any country.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to cover a number of topics besides Bill 4. I know that you are going to be listening very carefully and be calling me on my relevance in my remarks to this bill, so I will be saying "Bill 4" several times throughout my remarks. It is quite, I think, fitting that my final comments in this Chamber be on Bill 4 because, as members know here, besides representing a northern constituency which has suffered both the consequences of Hydro development particularly but also has received some of the benefits of the development of our hydro resources in the province of Manitoba—and I do want to make some remarks on Bill 4.

I wanted to begin by saying that this Chamber affords individuals a unique opportunity and one that is, although sometimes squandered over the course of a political career, regardless of how short or how long, most individuals in this Chamber, regardless of their political stripe, end up making a contribution that is of note. It is not always of note to those outside this Chamber, because I think quite often the process that we undertake is not very well understood.

I recall not too long ago, when Arlene Billinkoff retired, discussing this with a number of journalists, a number of reporters, who have been and still are, in some cases, reporting on legislative business, and it always struck me as odd how incomplete—I think that is probably the polite way of putting it, their view—their perspective on what we do is. I do not think, until you are a member, until you feel the pull and the push and the vagaries of political life, can you really understand what we—and I use that term royally; I mean, all of us in this Chamber, not just the opposition in this case—feel that it is a unique business.

Mr. Speaker, certainly in the last 13 years I have had my share of ups and downs, as many members opposite have. The political process can be unusually kind and unusually cruel and usually is, and that is, I think, a given. But I wanted to begin by saying, perhaps putting on the record, and this may be somewhat, I guess, parochial and self-serving, but I do want to put on the record some of the things that I think have challenged this Legislature and the province over the past decade and a half almost, some 13 years plus, 14 years since I began the nomination process, and perhaps talk about what some of the victories, at least from my perspective, have been in this Chamber.

I had the privilege, I guess, of becoming part of a government in 1981 that was faced with a recession, as this government has been over its course, its tenure, and, Mr. Speaker, at a relatively young age, I was fortunate enough to become involved in the cabinet, part of Executive Council and first as Minister of Housing. One of my first duties as Minister of Housing was to begin a program called Homes in Manitoba Program, which was a \$50-million program, which we believed at the time would do some of the things that the infrastructure program and the announcements of the last few weeks, we hope, will do, and that is, create some jobs in the province. We introduced rent regulations which this government has continued and a number of other things during my service in that capacity.

A number of years later, as Minister of Northern Affairs, I was involved in something that I am perhaps most proud of, and I believe that our government was proud of, and that was the conclusion of a series of negotiations with the bands in Manitoba, some 61 bands; and, as Minister of Northern Affairs, I signed an agreement in 1984 which resolved for the vast majority of bands, for every band save two, I believe, the treaty land entitlement question which had plagued our province and our country for more than a hundred years. That agreement was signed by me on behalf of the province, signed by a federal representative before the 1984 election, Mr. Speaker, and I am proud to say that many of my colleagues, some of whom are here, the

member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), the former member for Churchill, Jay Cowan, were deeply involved in that, and the negotiations took a long time. I believe the current Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Praznik) may be involved now in negotiations to finally see that agreement implemented, put in place.

(Mr. Marcel Laurendeau, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

Mr. Acting Speaker, for myself and for my constituency, this is not simply solving a matter of conscience. It is not just solving a historical problem. It is solving a practical problem, an economic problem, a community development problem for many of the communities that I serve, because in one community alone in my constituency, the community of Pukatawagan, the Mathias Colomb Cree Nation is entitled to more than 100,000 acres by virtue of the fact that it signed a treaty many, many years ago and never received the land to which it was entitled.

As a result of that, the band, quite rightly, I think, in the minds of most people, has resisted the infringement of economic development from the outside of its resource area, and that scenario was played out all across the province. It played out in Portage la Prairie; it played out in the Roblin-Russell constituency and every other constituency, I think without exception, in the province.

So, Mr. Acting Speaker, I was pleased to have been involved in that, and I hope that the next Minister of Northern Affairs and the next federal Minister responsible for Indian Affairs Canada will resolve that problem and put in place a solution that is satisfactory to everyone.

Mr. Acting Speaker, my tenure in the Department of Business Development and Tourism was quite short, but I did have the privilege of signing the largest tourism agreement between the Government of Canada and the Province of Manitoba in our history, some \$30 million, and I am very proud of that agreement and some of the things that we accomplished, including the Imax Theatre, the film Heartland, the first Manitoba-made Imax film. I had the opportunity to remind the current Minister of

Industry, Trade and Tourism that the money that was used to develop the Idea Centre, the tourism centre at The Forks, actually came out of the agreement that we originally signed in 1985.

***** (2010)

Mr. Acting Speaker, one of the things that we also were able to accomplish, I guess, in those years was, I think in part, to recognize the contribution to tourism that the North has made, and highlighted, in a number of tourism brochures and venues, sports angling and wilderness adventure and those kinds of activities which form a major part of the tourism draw in northern Manitoba.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I was, for a short period of time, Minister of Education and was the minister who formally created the task force to review the high school curriculum, a process that I took seriously, and the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) announced today some further reforms in the field of education, some of which I support, and some of which I look forward to perhaps implementing with perhaps this minister or perhaps another minister, but the bottom line is that that process, particularly changes to the high school curriculum, the high school program, I think, were important and needed to be done, and we have much work to do across the province and across the educational spectrum in this province.

Mr. Acting Speaker, one of the other activities that I was involved in and am proud of was the post-secondary forum that was a national forum in Saskatoon in 1987. That forum was co-chaired by the Minister of Education of the day and Brian Segal, who is now the president of Guelph university and the editor of Maclean's. It was one of the opportunities, one of the few national opportunities that we have had as a province, I think, to make the point, and I have made it on many occasions, that we are the only industrial country in the world that has no national perspective on post-secondary education. I recognize that constitutionally the provinces are given that authority, but I make the point that, notwithstanding the Constitution, we have very little chance of co-ordinating and making efficient

our post-secondary education system if we continue to do as we see fit as provinces without some sort of a national perspective.

I always argued and I will argue today that by virtue of the funding arrangements between the federal government and the province, that in fact the federal government has a great deal of say in post-secondary education both in terms of our institutions and in continuing education, but it is never recognized and there is no formal mechanism for co-ordinating that, and I think that is a shame. I challenge the current and the future Ministers of Education to work to resolve that and to find a way around the limitations imposed by our Constitution. I guess one should not say that our Constitution imposes limitations, but I think in this case that it does.

I also had the opportunity to serve as the Minister of Energy and Mines. In that portfolio, one of the principal successes was the decision on behalf of the government of Manitoba, the government of the day, to become involved with HBM&S in Callinan mine. It was at a time when over many years the copper and zinc prices had been low and the company had been floundering, to say the least, needed new reserves of ore and simply could not find a private sector partner, a private sector investor, and came to the province as a last resort, Manitoba Mineral Resources, and requested assistance.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we did become a partner with HBM&S, purchasing a 49 percent share in that particular venture. It provided a moment of relief in that community because of the importance of beginning the process of finding a new orebody to supplement the ore that was coming then from Trout Lake.

Those are some of the things I guess that stick in my mind as positive, apart from the process itself and being involved in the decision-making process of the province. Being involved in government, obviously, is a lot more gratifying than sitting on this side, and there is not anybody over there who would not agree. That does not diminish or belittle the role of opposition. It is simply a different part of this job. I think for most people carrying

ultimately the decision-making levers or having the hands on the levers is much more satisfactory.

Mr. Acting Speaker, there is a job to do over here and members over there have done it. Members on this side have done it, and it is still an important part of the job. I would not say I would have missed it if I had not had the opportunity, but on the other hand, you know, in the fullness of time I think it is joyful to experience all roles. We will leave it at that. We will just leave it at that, I think.

An Honourable Member: It teaches you humility before you go back out to the salt mines.

Mr. Storie: Yes, that is right. It teaches you humility.

I did want to just sort of continue on the question of mining because clearly—and this is going to be as nonpartisan as I can make it—the last six years have not been kind to mining communities.

Notwithstanding what the government sees as a legitimate and persistent effort to help mining activity in the province, and I know the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Orchard) feels that way, the fact is that the industry in general has not performed well in the last five years and that communities, in my constituency in particular, have been affected quite severely.

The community of Lynn Lake has gone from a community of 3,000 at one time to a community of probably 700. The community of Snow Lake, although there are signs of life again because of the involvement of a gold mining company, is still struggling and has gone from a community of 1,800 to probably 800, perhaps a few less.

The community of Flin Flon itself has lost some 600 employees in the last few years and, over the last 10 years, probably 1,000 fewer employees at HBM&S right now, and that has had an impact on our economy. Although we are in many respects a single-industry town—we have other industries that are important—the community is hurting. Individuals have lost a great deal in a very short period of time.

I do not think that anyone in this Chamber, and I certainly hope no one in this Chamber, has ever experienced the kind of trauma that the people of

Snow Lake experienced in November of 1992, when the value of their homes, their life savings, went from \$60,000 to \$2,500 in the space of about six weeks.

For those who have worked a lifetime in the mine and who had looked forward to retiring in some sort of dignity in a community that had resources and wealth and activities and services, to see those disappear before their eyes in a matter of months, can only be described as devastating.

Mr. Acting Speaker, those communities struggle on. They have found some sort of inner strength. They have relied upon themselves to a great extent, and they continue to struggle. There is some optimism in those communities today, and that is gratifying as well.

I guess my point of departure with respect to how I view the situation in the North, and perhaps the governments to some extent, is in the way that we deal with those kinds of catastrophes. Perhaps that is why I have been all my life, and continue to be, a social democratic, because I believe that the government has a role to play in, not only supporting the economic activity, the development of the economic base in the first instance, but also has an active role to play in ameliorating situations where action is required, where pain is being felt.

We have some anomalies in the way we view various industrial activities in this province. I have said this on other occasions, and it bears repeating.

* (2020)

I have chastised and spoken from my seat on many occasions across the way about the different way we view mining as an industry, and farming. Mr. Acting Speaker, we are talking about commodities that are sold internationally, that are traded internationally. We have a very thorough system of supports for agriculture in the province of Manitoba, in Canada. That is not true of many other industries, certainly not true in the case of the mining industry.

Perhaps a more directly parallel situation is the area of fishing. The fishermen in the province of Manitoba contribute significantly to the economy, many, many millions of dollars, employ at least

2,000 people in northern Manitoba. Overall, the federal and provincial government contributions to that industry are quite minute, a few hundred thousand dollars, less than \$300,000.

The federal government has discontinued all transportation support to the fishing industry. When you compare that to the hundreds of millions of dollars annually that are used to support the shipment of grain, there is some inequality there.

We are talking about an agricultural product. We are talking about a form of farming, resource harvesting and, yet, we do not treat it quite the same. We have not provincially and that is a criticism that goes back many, many years, and we certainly do not nationally, except perhaps for ocean fisheries, but inland fisheries is a different thing.

Mr. Acting Speaker, those are the some of the things, the challenges that we have yet to face.

I guess the other facet of serving in this Legislature which is unique, at least in the case of northern MLAs, is the distance we live from the Legislature and the distance that the constituents in Flin Flon, my constituents, live from the services that are provided to Manitobans by the government.

I wanted to reference a couple of things because there is an old saying that says that you can never really understand what someone is going through until you have walked a mile in their shoes, and that is nowhere more evident and more true than in the case of northerners. I suppose someone could argue it is the same with farming, if you come from rural Manitoba, but there are so few people, so few people, including in this Chamber, who have had the joyful experience of working till five o'clock in Leaf Rapids and driving back to Winnipeg for a meeting the next day. It is 13 hours over gravel roads for at least part of that road, the worst gravel road in the province, incidentally.

If you want, if you are the MLA for Flin Flon, and you go to Tadoule Lake, you fly to Thompson and drive to Leaf Rapids and charter into Tadoule, and it takes you at least six and a half hours flying

time and three hours of driving time, and it is a challenge.

It is not just a challenge for the MLA, it is even more of a challenge for the people who need services, and if there is one that I wish everyone here could experience on a more personal level, it is the issue of access to health care, because for most people, and I include most people in the community of Flin Flon, accessing health care is very easy. You walk down to the clinic, and for most people, accessing primary health care is pretty easy. Your doctor refers you to the hospital. In many communities in Manitoba, there are surgeons and there are anesthetists and there are not generally specialists. Most of the specialists, I think, are centred in a couple of communities, primarily Winnipeg, but it is a service that because I guess of the political sensitivity of it, because of the importance of that service to us as Canadians, I think too many of us take for granted.

Obviously, as we become more sophisticated, as health care becomes more sophisticated, as doctors rely on more sophisticated technology, as doctors rely on more and more specialists to diagnose and to treat illness, the accessing of medical services is a serious, serious problem, and it is a serious handicap to northern residents. That is more true of the more remote you are.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we need to make sure that the basic services—and they include obviously health care, but they also include education, they also include Family Services—are equally accessible.

We do not have a constitution in Manitoba. We have a Canadian Constitution that talks about equitable services across the country, but we do not have that kind of constitution in the province, and maybe we should have. If we are not going to have a constitution, then we have to have sort of some consensus that it is important to maintain those kinds of services. It is important at least to try to make sure that there is some sort of equality when it comes to accessing those services.

I referenced education, and I have mentioned on other occasions my involvement some 21, 22 years ago with the BUNTEP program. I actually

taught—one of the first, it was not called BUNTEP at that time, it was called IMPACTE, but it was the forerunner to the BUNTEP program in 1972.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

I can tell you—and these statistics have been used in this House on other occasions—that the province of Manitoba has an enviable record in taking particularly northern residents and training them in the professions to enable them to become doctors and social workers and nurses and doctors and engineers. I know that people have talked about the record of those programs in that they supply something like, you know, 50 percent of all the aboriginal teachers come from the BUNTEP programs in Manitoba; 60 percent of the aboriginal nurses are trained in our ACCESS programs; and 100 percent of the aboriginal doctors come out of ACCESS programs in Manitoba.

I am very proud of those programs, and the support of those programs. To give whatever credit may be due to the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) and the government, they have continued to support, albeit more modestly, those programs. The federal government, I think, should be called to task for failing to live up to the original mandate, the original goal of those programs.

Mr. Speaker, those are just some of the things that I think continue to affect the northern part of the constituency. Those programs and their importance I think cannot be overstated. I do not think we will realize how important they are until we find ourselves losing the best and the brightest, the most talented and capable in those communities. Perhaps it will be too late when we recognize the damage that we have done by undermining those programs.

There is an old saying that the unfortunate thing about human beings is that they seldom see the writing on the wall until their backs are against it. We need to be, I think, a little foresighted with those particular programs because they are important to all of us in the long run.

Mr. Speaker, one of the other things that is important to northern Manitoba is the details and the content, the substance, of Bill 4, energy. I did

want to mention, without wanting to boast, one of the most successful things that has happened in the last decade and a half in the province of Manitoba was the construction of the Limestone Generating Station.

I have watched the progression. I have watched the transformation of attitudes about the Limestone Generating project, not only in this Chamber, not only in members opposite but even in the press. I remember writing letters to the editor, challenging some editorialist who will remain nameless, whose initials are F.C., who continued to say this was a boondoggle and that Limestone would never make money. He kept referring to the fact that this was a sensitive set of negotiations because he said in his article that this deal hinged on the price of coal. Mr. Speaker, it is providing revenue to the Province of Manitoba.

* (2030)

I wanted to talk more about the history of Hydro development and some of the problems that it has created. Even members of my own caucus, I think, are sometimes unaware of the scope of the Hydro development projects in the province of Manitoba. The Limestone project and even the Conawapa project, which we supported and the government was pursuing, Mr. Speaker, that project would have been good for the province of Manitoba.

The question, I guess, is whether what the Minister of Energy (Mr. Orchard) is proposing in Bill 4 is going to allow us to make the kinds of decisions that have been made in the past to develop our hydroelectric energy in a rational and systematic way.

The Hydro projects that were developed in the '70s have caused some communities, a handful of communities in northern Manitoba, significant damage. South Indian Lake in my constituency, Mr. Speaker, as an example, probably one of the most affected, has clearly had mixed benefits and mixed results from this agreement. It sort of boils down to a situation where the damage unfortunately has been done. The water power reserve has been created and South Indian Lake is that water power reserve in the main.

Mr. Speaker, the question now becomes whether we develop in a consistent and environmentally sensitive way the remainder of the generating stations on the Nelson River, whether that can be done and whether we can realistically and in a financially beneficial way export the power from that. I believe that can be done. I believe that is a resource that may, in fact, be yet untapped for the province of Manitoba. I would argue, however, that we need to change The Manitoba Hydro Act, and perhaps we need to rethink some elements of Bill 4.

Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons I believe that we are being left in a dangerous situation and left in a situation where we do not have the control of our destiny with respect to energy sale is because of the elimination of the Manitoba Energy Authority. I know that this bill intends to refocus the question of energy, energy development, energy conservation, with the Department of Energy and Mines, but I believe that we need more than a department that becomes a regulator of that activity. I believe that we need a department that perceives or understands the real value of that for the long term for the province of Manitoba, and I hope that happens.

I want to conclude by saying some thank you's. Mr. Speaker, we say often in this Chamber that this is a difficult, a time-consuming, sometimes thankless job, and in some respects it is. The bottom line is that no member of this Legislature, regardless of how self-sufficient, ever really did it by themselves. The fact of the matter is that there are dozens and dozens of people along the way who have encouraged and supported and held up and loved and many other things to make us successful. I am no different.

I want to begin, of course, by thanking my wife and family. Betty has been a consistent partner for all of these years. Without the kind of support, without a home base where one feels comfortable and can actually relax, this is very difficult.

Needless to say, the political friends that you make, particularly the supporters in your caucus and, in my case, two leaders that I want to recognize. The former Premier of this province,

Howard Pawley, and my Leader, Gary Doer, have encouraged me and supported me and shown a great deal of confidence in me. For that, I am very grateful. Their friendship means a great deal to me, Mr. Speaker.

I have had several caucuses over the years. My current caucus is as supportive and talented a group as I have ever served with, and I am privileged to have served with them. But, I remember fondly some people who were here and who did their best for the province of Manitoba, who suffered some of the joys and the trials of this occupation. Their contribution should not go unnoticed, and for their contributions to my success and some of my achievements, as limited as they may be, they should be recognized, because no member of the front bench, no member of the government, does it all by themselves. They need the support of their colleagues and their Premier, actually.

Mr. Speaker, of course, philosophically, I have not changed my mind. I am still a social democrat. I still see the world a little bit differently than members opposite, members on my extreme left. That is not to say we do not share some views in common, have some views in common. That does not mean we do not agree on some things, but, fundamentally, I have always believed that the government has a greater role to play in making this a better world than maybe perhaps members opposite.

I will not get into a philosophical debate on that, Mr. Speaker. Suffice it to say, I am here and have been here for these past twelve and three-quarter years, whatever it is, as a social democrat, and I have not lost my enthusiasm, despite the fact that some observers have lost their enthusiasm for social democracy.

I think the good news is, Mr. Speaker, there are still many countries and many people in this country and around the world who still view the role of government in a positive light, and if we lose—and this is no intentional criticism on anybody who may be a political opponent. If we encourage the view that somehow government, that particular stripe of government, that particular

world view, if you will, is wrong and wrong-headed and will not serve the people, we ultimately do a disservice to ourselves, because government is of the people.

I am no different, an elected New Democrat, than any of you. I am simply elected by my constituents to do the best that I can do. They share in this case, I hope a majority of them at least, share my view of the world. Maybe that is easier for northerners because we are, in some respects, outsiders. We do not share the spoils of our collective wealth to the same degree, and I guess that is what makes me perhaps a social democrat, that I think that should be our objective, that we should ultimately want for everyone else what we want for ourselves, and I am paraphrasing another much more eloquent socialist than myself.

Mr. Speaker, finally, last but not least, as they say, I have enjoyed my association with other members in this Chamber. There are other members whom I respect a great deal—a great deal. There are other members whom I have enjoyed fighting with, frankly. There are, I think, many members in this Chamber who share a passion for partisan politics but who are able to lose it at the door. We all recognize what we do in here is certainly serious business, but it is also part theatre, it is also posturing and positioning. That is something that people, unless they are involved, do not always see.

Mr. Speaker, I genuinely believe in my experience over—and I have seen a few people come and go. My experience has been that virtually—and I should not say virtually, I would say everyone who has been elected to this Chamber came with the best of intentions. Of course, we all know what best intentions are, but be that as it may, that is certainly my experience. I think that most people not only come to serve their constituencies but come to serve the Province of Manitoba. That is what makes this job worthwhile.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my constituents, who, for some unknown reason, kept electing me. I never figured that out, other than I loved the job. I did enjoy—I will not say I enjoyed all of the job. There are always parts of it that you could do

without, but I certainly enjoyed serving the constituents.

I am humbled and I feel grateful that even today, even though my constituents know that I am leaving, I probably got a dozen phone calls, people who wanted me to help them get an appeal at the University of Manitoba, people who wanted to know about this program and people wanting to know about the Home Renovation Program, and I find that gratifying.

When I would go to have office hours in my 20-odd communities—and I held office hours throughout my constituency regularly—I would have as many as 35 people show up for office hours. I was gratified by that. I came with a bag load of work the next week and letters to write and all the rest of it, but it was gratifying. I enjoyed that.

The rest of it I am going to do without just fine.

* (2040)

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you. I have enjoyed the last few years under your constant vigilance. I have enjoyed, I think, your rural kind of approach to the job. It is sometimes—[interjection] No, I perhaps should explain myself. I have appreciated your informal approach to the job on many occasions. I know that you are as serious as any Speaker has ever been about the rules and the ultimate responsibility that you have, but you have had a way about you that reminds me of a rural umpire. You call them as you see them, and you let the chips fall where they may. At the same time, you have respected everybody's rights. I think that is a real challenge.

Mr. Speaker, I move on to other things. I really liked Bill 4—no, I was just kidding about that. [interjection] I am reminded that we are against it.

The bottom line is that all of us, I think, should every once in a while at least remind ourselves why we are here and try and shake off some of the criticism and some of the ugliness sometimes that we see in this Chamber. In my 13 years, if there is anyone here that remembers any insult that I gave them, I guess I will apologize now. There are a few

over there that have their hands up, but we will have to do that privately.

Mr. Speaker, I want to conclude by saying that this has been a hugely rewarding experience, but I am never doing it again. [applause]

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House was third reading of Bill 4, The Energy and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi sur l'énergie et apportant des modifications corrélatives.

All those in favour of the motion, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

An Honourable Member: On division.

Mr. Speaker: On division.

Bills 300, 301 and 302, Refund of Fees Paid

Mr. Ernst: Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to leave. At least not voluntarily anyway, but I do move (by leave), seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), that the fees paid with respect to the following bills be refunded less the cost of printing.

Bill 300, An Act to amend an Act to continue Brandon University Foundation (Loi modifiant la Loi prorogeant la Fondation de l'Université de Brandon); Bill 301, The Misericordia General Hospital Incorporation Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi constituant en corporation le "Misericordia General Hospital"); and Bill 302, The Manitoba Historical Society Incorporation Act (Loi constituant la Société historique du Manitoba).

Motion agreed to.

* * *

Mr. Ernst: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh), that when the House adjourns today, it shall stand adjourned until the time fixed by Mr. Speaker, upon the request of the government.

Motion presented.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I want to put a few words on the record, this motion to temporarily adjourn the House until a time when you will call this House back again.

I first of all want to start by complimenting the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie), his tremendous public career in this Legislature, his tremendous speech that just concluded a moment ago. I have always found the member for Flin Flon to have all the elements of a great member of this Legislature.

I remember meeting the member for Flin Flon before I was elected to this Chamber, and he was always pretty quick and to the point if he did not agree with you. He did not beat around the bush when he was in cabinet. When one was dealing with the member for Flin Flon, he got right to the point. He said what he meant, and he meant what he said.

I also found him to be a great strength when I had the privilege of being sworn into cabinet in 1986 and to join the member for Flin Flon who had been there previously. Again he said what was on his mind, I believe, sometimes with great success, and sometimes it had a little bit of an interesting controversy to it in the public arena, but people always knew where he stood.

It is interesting, I do not know whether people in the Chamber know some of the behavioural habits of the member for Flin Flon, but he was our designated pacer in the cabinet before and in the caucus today. He is always moving around. Sometimes that gives him the opportunity to speak two or three times on the same issue, when the Chair loses track of where he was sitting, and it has given him a great advantage over the years to make his point once, twice and eventually to hold the day.

His speech, as I say, was eloquent about the roles of all of us in this Chamber and nobody can say it better than a person like the member for Flin Flon who has experienced, as he stated, almost an equal career on the government side, first as a member of the government benches, then as a member of the cabinet, and then as a member of the third party or second opposition party, as you

will, the famous group of 12—[interjection] well, some of us would call us a lot of things at that point—and again being in opposition. Therefore, he has had all perspectives in this Chamber, and he has had a number of different portfolios.

Certainly, all of us in the caucus are going to miss him. There is no sense in being dishonest about that. He is a big loss to us, and he is a big loss to our caucus and to this Chamber. He is also a loss—I beg your pardon.

An Honourable Member: He might change his mind.

Mr. Doer: I hope so. I will do everything I can to change his mind. I tried to change his mind. We had a long conversation before the 1990 election, as others know, and we have had conversations in this session over the last five years. I would love to see him change his mind.

An Honourable Member: What portfolio did you promise Jerry?

Mr. Doer: Well, I could not promise anything, and leave it at that.

The member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) had the view it is after a period of time in public service that it is time to move on, and I respect that. I really do respect that. I do not like the fact that he is doing it, but I really respect his decision and the criteria that he used to make that decision. I am really happy for the member for Flin Flon in the job he has been awarded by the selection committee. He will be a great superintendent of the Frontier School Division.

* (2050)

He loves education. He loves the North. He loves students. He loves dealing in challenges in terms of ACCESS education. He has a tremendous amount of energy, and I congratulate the member for Flin Flon. It is rather ironic that as a northern MLA, he is going back north, and I know that he has never left the North.

I also know, Mr. Speaker, that he was humbly talking about representing a diverse and distant community and constituency. I know the amount of times that the member for Flin Flon left this Chamber on Friday at 12:30 and got in a car and

drove to his constituency, to the various communities in his constituency, and drove back Sunday night and was in here again on Monday morning, the hundreds of times that he has done that.

I know others do that, particularly those who reside in constituencies and represent constituencies outside of the city of Winnipeg. I know many people put in long hours, but it is absolutely demanding to a family and to the individual to represent that many communities in such remote areas. I have the utmost respect for all members on all sides that have that extra burden of not living in a constituency where this Legislature is located and having the extra responsibility of, not just being able to have one quadrant in the city of Winnipeg to represent, but rather have a distant group of communities, a diverse group of communities that require a great deal of time, effort and energy, not only on behalf of the individual member, but also on behalf of the family of the individual member.

This is the International Year of the Family, and I can remember the member for Flin Flon talking about the fact, when he was first sworn into cabinet, having to live in Winnipeg. I think he was a roommate with the member for Dauphin—[interjection] Well, we will not get into those stories. He was phoning his family, phoning his great wife, Betty, and his kids, and his young children missing him week after week after week and asking him when is he coming home, and when can he get back from the Legislature?

Of course, we used to go all summer in here for many years and every evening, and oftentimes it would be very late at night. That is a lot of sacrifice, and others are making that same sacrifice today. So we should never ever forget that tremendous sacrifice that families make for all of us to have the great privilege and honour to be in this Chamber.

I also briefly want to talk about a couple of other members who have indicated their departure, whether this session is the last one before the election or not—we do not know—but it is always interesting. Well, the member for Riel (Mr.

Ducharme) is one member who has indicated publicly he is leaving, and I, again, have always enjoyed working with the member for Riel. He and I basically had a transition a number of years ago, when he took the Urban Affairs portfolio.

We had some projects that we had started, The Forks project I was involved in with the planning stages and the negotiations of the money, and he often would come to me, and we would talk briefly about the The Forks, and we never saw it as a partisan issue. We always thought of it as a tremendous asset for the province of Manitoba and the city of Winnipeg.

I know he and I bump into each other in the fire-hall up at the lake the odd time and have nice breakfasts together, but he has had, again, a long career in public life, whether it is through City Hall or whether it is years in this Legislature, and I wish him and his family well after this session, as well, whether there is an election or not.

I also want to pay tribute to the member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs). We do not know what the future holds for the member for River Heights. We know that many of the jobs she is rumoured to be getting, none of us are rumoured to be getting the same jobs. We know that. They sound very exciting, very challenging, very interesting. Some of them we might even criticize when they come through, for philosophical reasons, I must say.

The member for River Heights—I remember being elected in '86 with the member, a single Liberal voice in the Legislature. We probably were too fair to the member for River Heights. What was it, the member was not an official party, but I think you had the third question every day and did raise some critical points to the government of the day, if I recall correctly, and did a very good job in that role, a very effective job, and lo and behold, we were at 12 and she was at 20, eventually 21 with the former member for Springfield. [interjection]

Now, Steve, this is supposed to be a high-road time. [interjection] It is on appeal. It is before the judges and perhaps the case will be heard shortly.

But I want to say, the day the member for River Heights resigned as Leader of the party, I think we all breathed a sigh of relief over on this side. I think at the time we said publicly that she was formidable and feisty, and feisty and formidable, back and forth. It is a tremendous job to take one's party from obscurity to relevance. We think it has got too much relevance right now, I might say, but it is a tremendous job to do that, and we really respect the member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs).

She has dedicated her public life now to the issue of child abuse, and we wish her well. We will work with her; obviously, all members will work with her in that challenge.

Certainly, the role I remember the most was maybe the finest moment or the not finest moment that we went through. There were some ups and downs with the member for Tuxedo, the Premier (Mr. Filmon), and the member for Brandon West (Mr. McCrae) in the old Meech Lake issue. You know, it is funny how June 23 just passed without a whisper, four years later, a couple of weeks ago. Remember how magical June 23 was at one point in our lives or in the life of this Chamber?

It was a tremendous experience, because not only did we oppose many provisions of Meech Lake, but I think we constructively called for improvements. We had a really good report. I still believe in that report as our constitutional vision of Manitoba, that original Meech Lake task force that called for a strong and united Canada with strong national programs, with a floor under which you cannot sink in terms of a national belief system. I thought we added some tremendously creative ideas, collectively, the Canada clause and a number of other provisions that today I think still bear the test of time and, unfortunately, were never accepted by the Prime Minister of the day. We, of course, came back with the flawed proposal and eventually a failed proposal with the opposition from First Nations people and from the former member for Churchill in this Chamber not so long ago.

Mr. Speaker, I want to wish the member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs) well. I will, as I say,

warn her that if it is a position that we do not support, we believe in abolishing, we will be critical. I want to assure the member it is nothing personal. We wish her well after this legislative session.

Mr. Speaker, this has been an interesting session. It is the fifth session since the majority government. I hear today the government saying there may be another one. We do not know. That will be determined. The night is not over—[interjection] I beg your pardon?

An Honourable Member: Six and five.

Mr. Doer: I am surprised the member for Morris (Mr. Manness) would be adopting an old Trudeau Liberal proposal, Mr. Speaker; however, times change, I suppose.

It is interesting you know. For some people this is the last session. I have outlined three people that have indicated this may be their last session, but for five people this has been their first session. It must be interesting for them to hear about election talk after just coming out of an election. I want to congratulate all five new members of this Legislature, the three members in our caucus and two members in the Liberal caucus. I know this can be a little bit of an interesting spot to be in. I think all five members have done very, very well in their first session, and I want to congratulate them.

* (2100)

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate you again. I cannot go better than the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) in terms of paying you all these compliments. I do not want too many compliments to be thrown your way, so I will just continue to say a job well done, and the job continues this evening as we proceed through this Legislature. You have done, Sir, I believe, a very, very admirable job under tough circumstances, lots of rulings that have been difficult and challenging to you. I think that the rulings have been very, very fair and very consistent with the parliamentary traditions, the parliamentary traditions that support both the majority and also respect the issues of the minority individual members when those are at risk.

I want to thank the Clerk, the Legislative Counsel, the people at the desk, and I want to thank all the Pages in this session. I know that this is an interesting experience. Really, when we get out of here we are human beings; I want you to know that. It is, as the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) said, a bit of a thrust and parry in the session, but I hope that this has helped your broad education of parliamentary life.

It really is one part of the parliamentary life and of course the work in the committees, in the legislation, the caucus rooms, out in the constituencies. There is so much more to this job than you may see in this House, but I hope that this part has been helpful to you. Many members who have been Pages before have gone on to jobs in the Legislature, to research staff, even elected members in the Chamber of the party of their choosing, and I want to thank you for your work.

I also want to thank our caucus staff and I want to thank our caucus. As the member for Flin Flon has said, we all come from caucuses. We all enjoy our caucus discussions, debate, the kind of area that we have. I am really proud to be in a caucus—if I can say so in self-serving way—that has members from northern Manitoba, from rural Manitoba, from the city of Winnipeg, from all three geographic regions. We are very lucky to have that representation from the distinct geographic regions of Manitoba. We, obviously, would want more and we will hope to have more and we will work to have more after the next election, but we are very, very proud of the geographic team that we have in our caucus. It brings a real strength of debate, I believe, in our own caucus and hopefully to the people of Manitoba with the energy and ideas.

We also are very proud of the diversity of people we have in our caucus. We have men and women from all walks of life whether it is small-business people, agricultural producers, whether it is teachers, nurses, educators, there are a whole variety of people in our caucus. I probably left some out by stating some, but we believe that—[interjection] I thank the Premier (Mr. Filmon) for his comments—and we really find ourselves very

fortunate to have our diversity of backgrounds and diversity of experiences. We really think it is helpful to have working men and women who have had to experience the challenges that working men and women are experiencing right across this province represented in our caucus.

Mr. Speaker, the future is going to be very challenging. Shortly in this country again we may be thrown into the whole issue of the future of our great land. Again, it is rather ironic that Canada, which is the best country in the world—we have always known that, we have always believed that, we live in the greatest country in the world—will again have a challenge ahead of it in terms of the whole so-called unity debate.

I really believe that we should stick to our strengths, stick to the strengths of Canada, stick to the things that made this country great, stick to the national and federal programs that have made this a great place to live, stick to the cultures and the kind of humanity that we have in our country as a set of values in terms of our great country in this debate. I believe very strongly that in this debate we should stick to our strengths, Mr. Speaker. We should not get caught up in changing this constitutional phrase—we tried that before—or that constitutional phrase. We should stick, as I say, to the strength of Canada and strength of people in this great country.

I agree strongly with Premiers Romanow and Harcourt, when they say that the choices before certain provinces in this country should be very clear. I have said that before in the House, when I have asked the Premier (Mr. Filmon) questions, but I know that we all in this Chamber believe strongly in our country. We will all work with the federal government and the Prime Minister and the Premier and all members of the Legislature to keep this country strong and to keep our people strong as our way of dealing with the future challenges.

I am absolutely convinced that when people have choices between a strong and united Canada from sea to sea to sea and splitting up this great country, ultimately, people all across this country will choose Canada and not choose to split it up, Mr. Speaker.

I also believe that we live in the greatest province in the country. It is a beautiful province, a diverse province, a province of great variety, of great people, and, of course, with great opportunities. We are very fortunate. We have a standard of living. Because of the conditions of living, we have a quality of life. We have communities that I think are envied all over the country and all over the world.

We are sometimes our own worst enemy. I mean, I know how many people talk about mosquitoes instead of talking about summers. I know how many Manitobans talk about the winters instead of talking about the four seasons. I sometimes think that it is part of the Manitoba thing to talk about some of the negative things. I always remember turning on CNN and Canada AM and seeing the entomologist from the City of Winnipeg talking about how many bites per second you get in the middle of a temporary mosquito kind of operation—[interjection] I know that. Maybe the member was involved in—no, I will not say that—when he was formerly at City Hall.

I have often thought that we have to praise the beauty of this province and the strengths of our people rather than just focus in on the few weeks that it may get too cold or we may have too many mosquitoes. I actually believe that we are the best kept secret in Canada, Mr. Speaker, and it is about time we had more energy praising our province and our people rather than having a negative situation. I think all members in this Chamber are committed to that goal, but when we say that—[interjection] Next session.

Mr. Speaker, when I say that, though, we have real challenges. Two weeks ago, I attended with the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie), the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) and the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson)—we visited the Mathias Colomb Band and community. I had been apprised, I had read the letters, I had read the documents, I had seen the back-and-forth correspondence. The member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) had apprised me of the situation. Where else in this province would you have a situation

where people were distilling water for six months before an emergency could be declared? Where else would you see over a thousand people affected with skin disease out of a community of 1,700 and still have it go on for six months? I am not a doctor or nurse. I saw kids with faces that I knew had gone through or were being afflicted with certain disease conditions or sicknesses in their community because there were just too many of them.

We have some real challenges here. We have Third World conditions in the best province in Canada and in the best country, Canada. It would not happen in our back yards. In many of our back yards this would not happen; it would not take six months. It would not take six minutes if we had a situation where water that was being consumed by the members of the community was actually more polluted after it came out of the treatment system than when it went in before. It would not happen. When we rejoice in our strength and we rejoice in our riches and rejoice in the great standard of living that many of us enjoy, we just cannot forget some of the Third World conditions that we have in our own communities.

(Mrs. Louise Dacquay, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair)

I remember the Premier (Mr. Filmon) talking two years ago about the opportunity he had—and we were giving him a little bit of a rough time about his trip to I believe it was Rio. He talked very eloquently about the international contributions of Manitoba. We should not forget, and we should rededicate ourselves to pledge ourselves in this Chamber tonight—our partisan differences will go back and forth and the comments will go back and forth. Madam Deputy Speaker, we should rededicate ourselves to—all 57 of us—finally trying to alleviate the Third World conditions in our own province and that every citizen of Manitoba is entitled to safe and clean drinking water and the opportunities we all would share.

I know the government acted, and I thank them for that. I think we have to continue to be vigilant, because there are more communities and there are more challenges.

* (2110)

Madam Deputy Speaker, that is why our debate was fairly strong throughout this session on ACCESS. The member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) talked about it as well. I am happy that the government has kept some of the funding for ACCESS after the federal Mulroney government cut it back. We do not believe it has been fair that the ACCESS program has been chosen to be reduced by the government. We have said it when people are here; we said it when people were not here. We will say it tonight again. We would like this government to re-examine the priorities of spending in this area.

As the member for Flin Flon has mentioned, 20 years ago there were very few First Nations' people teaching in First Nations' communities. There were very few nurses treating First Nations' people in First Nations' communities. There were no doctors. There were no engineers. There were no social workers. It was people from the south end of Winnipeg, from Winnipeg going up north and then leaving.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we have to really look at this because this has been a success. It has not been perfect. Nobody on this side is going to say it is perfect. Five hundred teachers, as the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) has indicated, in 20 years have been trained out of this program—500. Look at how much that multiplies the role models back in their own communities.

Nurses—it is another very positive role model. We do not want a situation in Manitoba where we have reservations with people coming in as professionals from other communities forever. We want First Nations communities with First Nations services delivered by First Nations people in a first-class way in this province.

That is why the member for Wolseley was so critical of the priorities of government, and when you go back and after the session is over, I would ask you to take another look at that. All governments make mistakes. We have made mistakes, some of them political, some of them that have been questionable in terms of value judgments that we have made in government.

Everybody makes mistakes, but it does not for us make any sense at all in terms of the fairness of this province to have a \$12-million enhancement on the corporate tax side and training side and to have a reduction of \$2 million on the ACCESS side.

If it is a question of tough choices—and the government says there are tough choices to make, and I know there are. There is no question about that. I would just ask you when you go back in your Estimates process, when you go back in cabinet or you go back in caucus, think about the 500 teachers who have been trained in ACCESS. Think about how successful that program has been and find a way to reinvest in our people in Manitoba and find a way to reinvest in the ACCESS Program in Manitoba.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) talked about the economic situation. We have been critical of the government from time to time, and we have praised the government from time to time when they have had positive initiatives. We have praised the government on Grow Bonds. We think it has been a good idea. We have praised the government on other initiatives that we think have been positive for our economy. We think there were some improvements. Some of the innovation proposals the government has made could be utilized and enhanced for the sake of all Manitobans.

We have also suggested some other ideas. We have suggested that there has been an increase of some \$200 million in social assistance in the province of Manitoba. We have gone from \$300 million to \$500 million per budget year in the last six years, and we do not believe the solution is a phone line. We believe the solution is jobs. We believe that some of that money should be redeployed to economic job opportunities in the province of Manitoba.

It obviously cannot do anything for the deficit because the deficit has gone up in terms of \$200 million a year in that spending area alone, and we believe that by redeploying money from social assistance to work and hiring people who are able to work and having people being invested in the community, that we will all gain. The private

sector will have more consumers. The capital sector will have more builders and purchasers of homes.

I wish the government well in their reforms with the federal government in terms of really getting money reinvested in our communities, in our infrastructure, in our programs and in work, Madam Deputy Speaker. We all believe in work. Let us get working on getting jobs in the province. We would ask the government to do so.

A couple of years ago we suggested that we have an all-party committee on the economy. I happen to believe that it does not make any sense at all for the one government of the day to go off on a trade mission here and a trade mission there and go to a company over here. Would it not be great if Manitoba was the only province in Canada that sent all three parties together to attract business here? Would it not be great if we all sang from the same hymn book instead of being so interested in getting credit and so interested in criticizing when something falls apart?

I think the public is sick and tired of us taking credit and us blaming each other. We have proposed an economic committee of this Legislature, and I would call on the government to look at a way of all working together. You know, we have talked privately before about this project and that project and this idea and that idea. Maybe we should have a law. You know, we are all talking about laws that we should pass. Maybe we should have a law that we co-operate on getting jobs and economic opportunities in the province.

We have our philosophical differences, yes. But we co-operate for four years and then we have a 35-day campaign where we disagree. Certainly there has to be, in my opinion, a greater opportunity for us to work together, and we leave the idea of an all-party committee on the economy. If we can co-operate on some matters, why can we not co-operate on the most important matter in government, and that is economic opportunity and jobs for our people.

Finally, Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to talk just for a moment about health care. We have 95 committees on health care. We have said before

that these committees, in our opinion, do not reflect the patients, the communities, they do not reflect the full group of professions in the health care field and that they are disproportionately administrative and disproportionately the gatekeepers being the doctors.

We think that the government has to have a strategy on health care. The minister talks about this province and that province and the next province, but other provinces have had a public debate, they have had proposals forward, they have had a strategy, and they are moving ahead with changes in the health care system. Six and a half years later, 95 committees later, we still do not know what the government is going to do in terms of some of the proposals that we have tabled in this Chamber—a thousand layoffs in the two teaching hospitals.

We still do not know what the government is going to do with some of its reports from some of its committees. Is it going to take the one report where it has all the psychiatric beds at the Health Sciences Centre after you built the \$45-million facility? Or are you going to take the Bell-Wade Report that came out after and move all the psychiatric beds back to St. Boniface Hospital?

There is really a lot of confusion in the health care field. There is a tremendous amount of confusion in the health care field of Manitoba. We believe that Manitobans respect and cherish their health care system more than any other program of government. If you fail to heed the words of members opposite, you fail to do so at your own risk and your own peril.

Most Manitobans, for example, believe that we should have Canadians hired by Americans to bring in a Canadian health care system, not have Americans hired by Canadians to bring in an American health care system. That is why it has been such a controversy, and we have a lot of work ahead of us in the health care system, both provincially and federally.

Madam Deputy Speaker, nobody pretends it will be easy. The last federal budget along with the other cutbacks that were exactly the same as the Mulroney budget included a rollback of the health

care funding to the provinces. The same Mulroney-Wilson reduction in health care took place in the Martin budget as it did in the former Mulroney budget. The same reductions in EPF took place in post-secondary education. We have to stop the reductions by the federal government onto the provinces. It was a 50-50 deal.

* (2120)

Health care was a 50-50 proposition, and it started to erode in 1980 and it accelerated in 1985 and it accelerated again in '89 and now it is continuing on, and it is a snowball going down the mountain. We have to push that snowball back up. We all believe in health care, and it is time to stop the cuts from the federal government to the provinces, and the time to stop it is now, no more cuts in no more federal budgets in terms of the old formula.

We also need help from the federal government in other areas. I remember the speeches on drug patent laws, remember the speeches on drug patent laws and generic drugs. Madam Deputy Speaker, I remember the pamphlets in the last federal election. I believe everybody believes this. I do not believe this is just us. I believe that everybody wants to see a drug patent law and a generic drug policy in Canada that keeps prices low and gets value-added jobs in Manitoba. We say rescind the old Mulroney bill on drug patent laws and bring back a level playing field.

Madam Deputy Speaker, as I have said, we have many challenges ahead of us. We have many challenges ahead of us. We believe, as I said before, that we have a lot of work ahead of us and we have a lot of challenges to meet, but we on this side believe that Manitobans want this Legislature to have energy to create jobs. They want fairness in terms of the hard-earned dollars that people pay in their taxes, fairness both in their tax system federally and provincially and fairness in terms of the priorities of government. That is why I have singled out only a few programs tonight, one of them being ACCESS. They want common sense in terms of reforming their health care system and improving our health care system, not having 95

committees spinning off in every different direction.

Manitobans want to co-operate; they want to work together. They want to work together to not only improve their own quality of life, but I believe that Manitobans have always believed in an ability to share and in an ability and a desire to improve the humankind for all Manitobans, and that is why we are so proud to sit on this side of the Chamber and work with all other members, despite our political differences, to improve the human conditions in Manitoba and to always work to improve our great country Canada.

Thank you very, very much, Madam Deputy Speaker.

[applause]

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Mr. Paul Edwards (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, well, the member indicates scattered applause. Well, we are at a disadvantage, I think, when it comes to applause in this Chamber simply because of our numbers, but one hopes that that will change. One hopes.

Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that we seem to carry the weight of the entire federal government here but do not have the numbers to substantiate that. The daily diet in this session has proven very clearly that we apparently are the key and single enemy in this House of the two parties to my other side who have formed a pretty clear marriage of convenience in this session.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, half to two-thirds of the questions are lob balls back and forth. It has been interesting to see them across the session.

An Honourable Member: Well, we remember when you asked federal questions?

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, well, yes, you will always be able to ask federal questions, to my friends on the right. You will be able to ask them for a long time, too.

Mr. Speaker, I want to start by indicating that, as with the other two previous speakers, the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition, I want to make a few recognitions. [interjection] Well, the Premier

will speak and I am sure will join me in these comments.

I want to start by thanking you, Mr. Speaker, for your guidance over this past session. As the other speakers have indicated, I think you have done an outstanding job again. You have guided us in the last six years that I have been a member of the Legislature, which coincided with your being appointed as Speaker in this Chamber. You are the only Speaker that I have had the pleasure of serving in this Chamber under, and we have taken your guidance over these last months, again, always understanding the very difficult job that you have and the very fine line that you walk almost every day in this Chamber and you have done an outstanding job.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank in particular the Pages who have served us in this session. They as well have done an outstanding job, and I think while it has been a relatively short session they have come very early on to have the experience of very seasoned Pages and have done an excellent job in serving all members and indeed the Chamber staff.

As well I want to recognize the Chamber staff again, the members of the staff who have again served us so well, and I think are often taken for granted in this Chamber. But as the hours and days have gone by, they as well have served us all very well, again, certainly to the best of their abilities and, I think, have done an outstanding job.

In addition, I want to indicate my best wishes to the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) as he moves onto a new career. He has spoken very eloquently tonight about the challenges that he faced in his job. In his twelve and three-quarter years, I had the pleasure and honour of being in this House for six of those. The member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs) obviously has known him for a longer period of time. We have come to see him as a very effective member of this Chamber. The Leader of the Opposition mentioned the words "feisty" and "formidable" and I think I would attribute those to the member for Flin Flon as well.

He certainly did his constituents proud in this Chamber with the regularity and the energy with

which he defended their interests in this Chamber. Obviously, there were many disagreements over the years, but we certainly always respected the role he played. I wish him well in his new career, and I wish his family well, as well, because I know it has been difficult on all families that we all have, but he has recognized them tonight. I think it is important that we all express to him our hope that in this new life that they are moving into, there will perhaps be some more time for the types of things they have not had time to do in the past years.

In addition, I want to recognize the member for Riel, Mr. Ducharme, whom I have also known of longer than I have actually known from serving in this Chamber for these last six years. He has come over the years to, I think it is fair to say, become a friend in this service. He is truly one of those people who gets involved from time to time in the partisan thrusts in this Chamber and has certainly played his role, again, with a lot of enthusiasm from time to time but has been able to park it at the door and has been a gentleman and a friend to many, if not all of us, outside the Chamber.

I actually know that he comes—of course, he has a long political background in his family. I know his brother Al, who has also been involved politically and know that that is a long family tradition of public service in this community and in this province. He is well, and his wife and family are moving on to a new chapter of their lives. We wish them well indeed.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to make special note of the new MLAs. The Leader of the Opposition has recognized them, and I want to add my congratulations to those five who have come into this Chamber and have gone through a training of sorts in this session, which has been a fairly unique session—I am going to get into that a little later—but I think have all performed very well. It is, I think, a forum that draws people from all aspects of life and backgrounds, and when they get to this Chamber, they bring that experience and that wealth of knowledge.

The truth is that it is a very specialized place, and it does take time to gain the experience. I think it is difficult moving into this job, and I think all

five of them have proven to us, regardless of the positions they have taken, that they have truly committed themselves to public service in their own ways and represented their constituents in this House, and all of them, I think, deserve congratulations from us, Mr. Speaker, on their performance in this session.

I also want to recognize briefly my former leader, the member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs), who has gone through this session as a former leader. The others have mentioned the different roles that people play in this Chamber and in a career, and the member for River Heights has had many. This last session has been a unique one for her: as a member but not as the leader of our party. I want to recognize formally and on the record her enormous contribution not just to our party in the past and to, I think, this Chamber through her years of service, but also in this last session to me personally and to our caucus as she has assisted us in every way possible and been nothing but a support in this time as she comes to the end of her legislative career, indicating that she will not be running in the next election. The member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) says that she may go on to other things. Well, whatever she goes on to, we will congratulate her, Mr. Speaker, because we wish her well. [interjection] I do not know what it is either, but in any event we wish her well.

* (2130)

I also want to recognize of particular note to me in this last session—and it is the first full session that I have had the privilege and the honour to serve in this Chamber as a Leader of a party—the role of my colleague, the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), to my right, who has been a constant source of support as well to our caucus as our House leader, as our critic for a number of areas. Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I did not recognize his enormous contribution to us and to me personally, given that, as some other members in the Chamber know, leadership races can be difficult and they internally can be stressful. Of course, we had gone through that just a year ago, and I think that a lot of our ability to work together certainly is attributable to his efforts and his

teamwork within our caucus and as evidenced by his work in this Chamber.

This session, I think, deserves an analysis, looking back to the first election of this government in April of 1988 and then their election as a majority government in September of 1990, because we have come to the end, Mr. Speaker, of close to six years of government, two in minority and four in majority. I would synopsise in my estimation this session as really representing the government's position that the status quo is good enough, and what has happened in the past and the things that have been laid in the ground in the past for these six years have, in their opinion, served us well and we do not need to do a lot more. It has been a short and a relatively light session, a very light session, too light a session, in my view, and that is why our caucus put forward a legislative agenda back in March, which we simply asked the government to consider as proposals, as that which we needed to look at in this province to deal with the things that all three parties, and I am sure all three Leaders, will agree that we need and directions that we need to go. It is just a question of how we get there.

Mr. Speaker, my conclusion is, and my view is not changed from the beginning of this session, which is that the status quo is not good enough. Certainly there may be other things, there are other things that members opposite will know about, will have access to and will be thinking about that I do not and that I am not thinking about, but the truth is that what we have seen is a session which really has taken the attitude I believe that it is okay the way we are and things are working out. I do not think they are.

As we look back to those key dates, and I refer in particular to July 21, 1988, the first Speech from the Throne which was brought down by this government, and the key part of that speech specifically indicated in the economic and social priorities that initiatives will be presented to meet the challenge of education and training Manitobans at all levels. That was the statement in 1988.

Today, at the end of this session, at the end of six years we have the public education blueprint. That was a commitment made six years ago. Since that time we have seen not just an erosion of funding but erosion of morale and erosion of standards in our public education system which, in my estimation, Mr. Speaker, is unparalleled in this province, and it is important I think today to reflect back on six years in which that has occurred and the synopsis today that maybe, maybe we can achieve and our goal should be the best education system in the world. Obviously it should be. When? Six years hence, by the year 2000.

It is not good enough. Essentially, the government has said these last six years, the status quo, the problems that we face, the highest high school dropout rate in the country is good enough. It has not been good enough, and I do not think that the effort in this session has been good enough, and I think that needs to be said as we come to the end of this four-year mandate. There may well be another session, but we have come to the end of close to six years in government from this particular government.

Also in that 1988 Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, were some very interesting comments. Specifically at that time you may recall that the Department of Industry, Trade and Technology was consolidated, Technology being dropped as a title of that department. Now, perhaps there is not much to be read into that, but it is somehow ironic I think and symbolic that at that time technology was wound into an overall Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism.

Today the thrust is apparently technology and information technology as we move into the 21st Century. Again, we have come to the end of six years, and we are now in this most current Speech from the Throne apparently talking seriously for the first time about the role of technology and the role of innovation and research and development in our economy.

Mr. Speaker, we see in that report, in that Speech from the Throne in 1988, the discussion about a water strategy, and that was in that specific Speech from the Throne back in 1988. Last week members

received the first comprehensive water strategy put out by this government.

That again is good to have. It is a little late. It is a little late as we end up six years of government, and again I stress, four in a majority situation.

Mr. Speaker, the education statement in this particular Speech from the Throne evidences the commitment early on to build an education system that would serve not only our citizens but obviously our economic growth for the future. That was repeated in October of 1990 when the Speech from the Throne specifically indicated that education would be the key to our future success, and it stated: We will invest in our education system to make it more responsive to the challenges our children will face in the 21st Century. That is virtually word for word what has come out again in a blueprint four years later: We will match the talents of Canadians, new and old alike, to job opportunities, filling critical skill shortages in Manitoba.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we are so far away from that today, we are probably further away than we were four years ago when this government said that that was a commitment of their term, of their four-year term in government. We see ACCESS programs cut. We see training dollars going to unaccountable organizations and in ways that do not produce new jobs.

The truth is that after six years the status quo is not good enough, and much of what was said during that period of time has not come to pass. It has always been, this will happen next year. It is going to be great next year. The economy is going to turn up, jobs are going to be created, and we are going to be able to do things.

Next year is here and long gone, Mr. Speaker. It has been six years, and the truth is that today in this province we still are the child poverty capital of Canada. We still are the high school dropout rate of Canada. We still have a rate of growth over that four-year period which is less than the national average. Taking the 1990-1993 four years, we have had growth of 1.8 percent. The national average has been 5.6 percent at Gross Domestic Product market prices.

The fact is that our population, while globally up 10,000, Mr. Speaker, when you factor out the birth date, the actual out-migration from this province from 1990 to this year, January 1, has been 21,000 people.

Mr. Speaker, it is not good enough. People are leaving this province, and the people more often than not that are leaving are the people under the age of 35. When you lose somebody who is in that age bracket, you are losing someone who is going to contribute to the economy and more likely than not for 20-25 years. It is not good enough— [interjection] The member says, it has always been that way. Maybe. It is not good enough. We are not here to say, it has always been that way, so we will accept it.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) mentions the deplorable conditions in some of our northern communities. Clearly those are problems which must be addressed. We need to accept that our role is not to explain. It is not primarily to tell the people of this province that it is someone else's fault, because there is only one taxpayer, as the Premier has said many times, there is only one citizen which all levels of government serve.

* (2140)

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the session and what I think that Manitobans expect of their legislators as we head into this period of time when the country appears to be teetering, hopefully, and I think all members obviously hope that there is some recovery economically coming in this country, is that we keep up, is that we in Manitoba hold our own. We have not, for many, many years in this country we have not, and we need to keep up because Manitobans deserve the best. This country has been recognized by the United Nations as the finest place on the face of the earth to live. Manitoba has every reason to be within that country, the finest place to live. We have the means, we have the ability. What I think we need is the political will and we need some creative, innovative thinking.

Going through a session which is the shortest in my six years—maybe others have been through shorter sessions, but certainly the shortest in my

years here and the lightest in terms of an agenda and a plan—is not good enough and I am disappointed. I do not want to mislead members and suggest anything else. I am disappointed. I think there were things that could and should have been done. We certainly do not purport to have all the answers, but it has not been enough to deal with some of the—admittedly important from time to time—but not deal with the core problems which we are facing.

All parties, all members will say we wish we had lots of money for health care. We wish we had lots of money for education and social services. We are all here focusing first and foremost on how to pay for those things, not just for the next election but to the next century. We have had 19 years in a row of deficits, and that is not unique. I do not suggest it is. Other jurisdictions around the western world have had that. But the truth is that despite all the talk, this province under this government does continue to have debt, spiralling debt, unacceptable debt. We need economic growth to pay for those things in the future. It is not just about saying to another level of government, do not make cutbacks, do not do this, do not do that. We all do not want that. This government makes those cutbacks to the lower levels of government. You cannot just point the finger one way. It goes both ways.

The truth is, Mr. Speaker, all governments have those deficits. All governments have those financial restraints. All governments must co-operate to find the solutions. The solution, and the only solution, is growth. It is growth and career opportunities that will keep our children here and provide the funds which we need for those jobs in the future—that and that alone. We are still seeing not just the drain of our greatest resource, our young people, but we are seeing the drain of upwards of \$600 million a year in new investment per year from our own citizens out of this province. That is not good enough.

Mr. Speaker, I had outlined, and in these debates over these last months, we have talked about many of the initiatives which the government has taken. We have talked about those which we have put

forward, those that the opposition party has put forward. We are ending letting Manitobans down about what their future is and giving them a future to believe in, because I think that today it is more important than ever before in this province to give people some hope that government can provide leadership to give them jobs, dignity and a future. Clearly, as the Leader of the Opposition has said, there is no party, there certainly is no member, that has all of those answers, but what I think is important to recognize is that we are all after the same thing.

It does not make too many points to stand up and say that it would be great if we could just throw money at health care. We cannot. I agree with the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) on that. We cannot. Endlessly, you cannot throw money at anything. Money and spending alone is not an answer. What we need to do is find ways to have economic growth so that there are revenues indeed to spend.

Mr. Speaker, in addition, I want to say that in addition to the economic problems that we face, the challenge today is not just understanding that change needs to occur but, I think, managing change. I think that is the key to successful government, managing change, finding ways to actually implement it, because one thing that the former Minister of Health certainly knows is, you cannot sign off documents or rules or laws in this Chamber and just expect it to happen. It does not happen that way. You have to build consensus to move forward, and you do not always get what you want. You have to compromise.

What we have seen in the last six years, and certainly the last six months, are parties—but in particular, I think this government has practised the politics of division and has gone out to create an adversarial relationship, the result of which has been most clearly seen in the health care reform, which was derailed so clearly early on in the health care reform agenda. What I think the government will find out is that it will also impact their education reform, it will also impact the other major initiatives that they talk about, as it has for the last six years. It has not worked because you

cannot go out and create enemies, and there is a line which bears repeating, which is, you should not make an enemy until you have to.

This government has gone out of its way to make enemies any time it possibly could with those that it does not perceive are its political allies. The result of that is that I think today we are, in a sense, back at 1988. The government's Speech from the Throne in 1988 could be read again today, and the same problems which so faced that government and that electorate at that time are still here. Most of them are worse.

I do not know if this will be the last session before the election. Only the government knows that. But I do want to say that whether that is true or not, I do hope that the next session—and maybe it will be with this Premier and this government—takes a real look at what is happening in this province and in this country and does not accept the status quo, and does not make as its sole political agenda that of division and that of blaming some other level of government.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise at the end of the session and put a few words on the record. Indeed having been given a very, very fine example by three previous speakers, I think I will attempt to keep it as short as I possibly can.

The member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) is imploring me to take the high road, and I certainly intend to do that if not given reason to be off the high road.

* (2150)

I want to begin by extending thanks to you, Mr. Speaker, for the terrific job that you have done in this session and, indeed, throughout your more than six years as Speaker of this Assembly. This has perhaps been your most difficult and challenging session. The numbers in the House, the manner in which various procedural issues have come to the fore have really tested your patience, your wisdom and your sense of fair play, and as always you have come through with flying colours. I know on behalf of all of my colleagues I

wish to thank you for that. I wish to thank you for the contributions that you make as the impartial arbiter of this House, and we all appreciate very much the difficult circumstances under which you have operated and the excellent job that you have done, Sir.

I want to add my thanks to the Pages, two of whom are represented here, the others perhaps who may be joining us later to celebrate the end of the session, for their contributions. I hope that it has been an enjoyable and a productive and a positive experience for them, and I hope that they will look upon the memories here fondly and as a good experience for them.

I too want to thank the Table officers, the Clerk of the Assembly, the Sergeant-at-Arms, the Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms, the staff in the Legislature Chamber and, indeed, the staff in the building—Hansard, the Clerk's Office, the Journals Branch—all of those people who put in so much work to make it possible for us to do our job and to take care of our responsibilities here. They also assist us, I think, in the smooth functioning of the House.

As well, the Legislative Counsel, who had I think as busy a year as they have ever had, even though the government purposely attempted to keep the legislative load light, there seemed to be much work for them that was put forward by many members, and that is their responsibility. I know that from our desires to get a few things done at the end of the session that they were certainly as busy as they have ever been. I thank them for their dedicated efforts on behalf of all of us in the Chamber.

I want to thank all of the staff of the caucuses and the ministers' offices for the tremendous work that they put in throughout the course of each and every session in each and every year. We have indeed I think a very high calibre, loyal and dedicated staff, all of us, and we ought to be grateful for their efforts. They live under a great deal of pressure. They live under stress that I think is not common to many types of endeavours and occupations. They come through with tremendous

efforts and great dedication and great loyalty. I thank them on behalf of all of my colleagues.

I want to thank the opposition members. Reference has been made to the length of the session and the fact that it was indeed, in terms of a full session, the shortest that I have been through in my 15 years in this Legislature. That is only due to the co-operative attitude and approach that was taken by all members opposite.

Now, some members opposite have the view that if a session is short, if there is not too much legislation, then it is not a good session. I do not believe that and I will talk perhaps a little more about that later. But I believe that we were able to complete the Estimates, the 240 hours mandatory review of Estimates, in a shorter time than normal because we were willing to sit longer hours, many evenings, many morning session, extra time, and I think that there was a tremendous sense of co-operation.

I want to thank not only the government House leader but each of the opposition House leaders, because this could not have happened without their efforts, without the co-operative spirit that was shown by all of their caucus members. I thank them for that because I think it demonstrated that the House need not be something in which it does not have to be eternal to be immortal. It can be done in a reasonable period of time and I thank all members, including particularly the members opposite, for that attitude, that approach and what I think was demonstrative of a successful session without having to be a very long session.

I particularly want to just thank my own caucus, the colleagues in our government caucus, for their loyalty, dedication and support certainly throughout this year, which was a year of more stress, perhaps because of the narrow numbers, the razor-thin majority in the House that has been referred to on numerous occasions.

I thank them all for a dedication to the work that we had to do, the things that we wanted to accomplish, the agenda that we set for ourselves collectively. I thank them all for the dedicated, loyal approach that they took and the togetherness

that they showed throughout the course of this past year.

From time to time I have had people say to me, oh, it is easy for you, Filmon, you have got a government and you have a majority, and all you do is just walk into the House and everybody votes with you; not like us on City Council, you know, it is hard to get consensus, and all that. They do not realize, and it is only in this House that we realize that caucuses are not unanimous on any issue, that there are varying views. [interjection] Well, okay. The member for Osborne (Ms. McCormick) suggests that there is unanimity in the Liberal caucus on everything. I will take her word for it. I have not sat in that caucus.

The time that is spent discussing issues and going through them many, many times in committees and various groupings to try and achieve consensus is the most difficult time, and it is the time that is most important in forging a government policy direction, because you really do have to know that you do represent the consensus view and the view of all your members of caucus, a view that they can support. Many, many countless hours are put into that effort, and it is not just a matter of somebody or some minister standing up and saying, this is what I want to do. Members opposite who have served in cabinets know that, it is not that easy. Particularly at a time like this when we wanted to ensure that there was this consensus, it was important for us to spend the time in forging the consensus on all of the issues.

(Mrs. Louise Dacquay, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair)

I want to add my personal congratulations and best wishes to the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie). I say that in all sincerity. He and I have not often agreed in this House, I can be honest about that. I think we have been very, very forceful enemies most of the time. I think that there has been the odd occasion in which we have agreed. That was indeed very pleasant because I know that he is a fierce competitor, and it is always good to have him onside.

I remember a baseball game against the media one time in which he played a mean shortstop or

third base. I was catching his throws at first base, and he just about put a hole through my glove. He is a fierce competitor in whatever he does. In this House he has been a very fierce competitor.

I am going to miss him for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is that I am going to run out of stories that I can tell on the hustings or at least within our group about times in which I am mistaken for him.

I remember going into the Flin Flon airport, and the first person who approached me said, oh, are you home for the weekend? I had to stop for a second until I realized that they mistook me for the member for Flin Flon. Another time, I was at the Nickel Days in Thompson, and this person was talking to me about having seen me at the meeting, rattling on about something, and it was not making any sense whatsoever, and then he referred to J. Then all of a sudden it hit me, it was the wrong meeting, the wrong party, and it was the member for Flin Flon he was talking about.

The funniest story was when I was campaigning door to door in the Fort Garry by-elections back in about 1984, and as I got to the door, this person said to me, she said, you do not have to tell me, I know who you are. You are that smart aleck who never answers a question right in Question Period. And I said, wait a second, there is something wrong here. I said, I do not answer the questions, I am the one who asks the questions. I am on the opposition side. She said, no, no, you are the smart aleck. Finally, I realized it was the member for Flin Flon she was referring to.

In any case, the member for Flin Flon is doing something that I think we all ought to do, and that is taking control of his own future and making the decision as to when he wants to leave and on what terms he wants to leave this Legislature.

* (2200)

I have talked before about how I admired our former colleague Bob Banman and how I tried to talk him out of leaving and not running again in 1986. He said that there comes a time when we take control of our own destiny. When you are in public life, all too often you get swept with the tide, the enthusiasm, the different feeling of power

and responsibility and authority that you have in public life, and you never stop to think about what you really want to do with your future. He said, I am making the decision before the public makes the decision that I should not be here any longer.

I am not suggesting that the member for Flin Flon ever would have lost his seat, but I am suggesting that he is right in making that decision in consideration of his family and his own future.

On the other hand, he has made some options open to change my mind, because we now are back to the comfortable majority with which we were elected, and heck, we could govern a long time.

In any case, I too want to join in thanking and congratulating the new members, the five new members who joined this Chamber for the first time this session for their contributions. I compliment them on their participation and the contributions that they have made on behalf of their constituents. I thank them for what they have done, and I wish them all well.

The session was one in which I think we were looking for efficiency. The member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) made commentary about the fact that he felt government ought to be doing more. It reminds me of a saying that the dean of this Legislature, the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), often has. He said that the people are most at risk when the government is sitting, because governments tend to want to intervene in their lives and pass laws and regulations that always take power away from the people and put it into the hands of the government and its bureaucrats. Madam Deputy Speaker, there is something to be said for that. Having government intrusion in people's lives, having government intervention in all things and imposing government's will and judgment on all situations is not necessarily the best thing for the people of this or any other province.

Last year we had what was termed by the editorialists and observers perhaps the most ambitious workload in modern memory in this Legislature, things like no-fault insurance, things like French language governance, a new Parks Act and many, many things that had been the result of

long-term development of policy. That does not mean that you have to do that every session.

The most important instrument of public policy that any government has is the budget. It is the thing from which all decisions flow, from which all government priorities stem. It is ultimately the one thing that I think carries the most weight. I am very proud of the fact that for the seventh straight budget we did not raise any of the major taxes in this province.

I am very proud of the fact that this government is on track for a balanced budget by the year 1996-97. I firmly believe we will be the first province in Canada in a long, long time to have a balanced budget, all things in, capital, operating, everything in. I believe that we will have that balanced budget before anybody else. I believe that when you compare us with other provinces we are doing very well. In fact, because the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) was critical, I think that he ought to have a little chat with his colleagues in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland about implying to people that you can do everything. He puts as his major platform creating hope in people. Hope is not an economic strategy. People have to make choices; people have to set priorities; and people have to live with a plan.

Madam Deputy Speaker, a person whom I like very much, Jack Savage, is somebody that he ought to talk to.

An Honourable Member: John Savage.

Mr. Filmon: His friends call him Jack.

Premier Savage is a very astute individual, and he is an individual who came to office, I think, with the thought that he could make major change and turn around the economy of Nova Scotia instantly. Nova Scotia is going through very, very difficult times, but he, like us, is having to make the tough choices today. He cannot meet many of the commitments that he made to the public, and many of the expectations that he created are just gone in dust. I do not blame him for that. The fact is that these are difficult times, and whether you are a New Democrat or whether you are a Liberal or whether you are a Conservative, you have to deal with reality. It is only when you are in

opposition that you can be irresponsible and say to people, we will handle all of that and we will do everything and we will change everything. You cannot do that, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Earlier on he was criticizing us for leaving until the end of a six-year term to accomplish things in education, to accomplish things in health, to accomplish things in other areas. You know, there is an old saying that says, the best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago; the second best time is today. So the fact of the matter is that, regardless of when these initiatives are undertaken, it is important to undertake them and not to criticize because they take place six years—[interjection]

Well, some people have never done it. Some people have been in office eight years. Liberal governments have been in office eight years and never done it. It is important to do the things that are within your power to do and things that are important for the people to do, not to say, well, you should have done it years ago. Should have done, could have done—those are the words of people who are always in opposition. I say that to members with all due respect and with all kindness, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The fact is that our economy is picking up. We have 13,000 more people employed today than were employed a year ago in this province. Last year we had the third best job creation rate in the country in '93. [interjection]

Well, the member opposite—at least the members of the New Democratic Party acknowledged that we have been in office at a time when we have gone through a recession and a global restructuring, a restructuring that has seen massive shifts in resources of companies. All the multinational companies are shifting resources. Some of those decisions have not been kind for Canada. Period. I mean, there are 300,000 jobs lost in Ontario, and I can go through the numbers in every single province. The fact is that we are working at it, that we do have growth in technology areas.

The member opposite makes the statement which I have heard many of his colleagues make about, is it not terrible that people with education

and training in specialty areas have to move away from this province. Well, you know what? We have lost in the high technology areas as a result of decisions made by his federal Liberal government, 350 jobs that we were supposed to get with the AH-101 contract here. There will be another over 200 jobs lost as a result of the cuts made to the CF-5 program—another over 200 jobs, high-tech engineering jobs for university graduates gone as a result of the decisions made by his federal Liberal colleagues. Those are the kinds of things that we have to fight against every day.

Madam Deputy Speaker, telecommunications, the call centres—a bright spot for our economy, an opportunity. Manufacturing—last year our investment in manufacturing was up 35 percent. It was by far the highest in the country. Our manufacturing jobs have been coming up over the last number of months getting back toward levels that they were at at the peak of the employment levels in about 1990. We are starting to get back to that level in manufacturing. Good signs.

Exports are way up. Exports are growing leaps and bounds. To a market like the United States which is our largest market, they are up 40 percent in the last three years alone. Markets—all the new areas like Korea, Brazil, Spain and Mexico—growing very, very rapidly. That is a positive sign.

* (2210)

Mining—we had the largest investment in mineral exploration and oil exploration of any year in our history last year. Mining is starting to become one of the bright spots on the horizon.

The interesting thing is that we are going through challenges that have not been seen probably this century in this province or this country. Despite all of those major challenges—and all you need to do is go to a place like the World Economic Forum and listen to the tales of woe of some of the major industrialized countries of the world where they are looking at no growth in the foreseeable future in places like Germany or even Japan, where Sweden has lost one-sixth of its entire workforce in three years.

Looking at all of those things, Mr. Speaker, what are they saying? They are saying that these are challenges that we have to come to grips with, with programs and policies and changes that have not been seen before. They are saying in those countries that the social safety net has absolutely crippled their competitiveness and they have to totally dismantle the social safety net, not add to it as is being advocated every day in this House by members of the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party. Every day they are saying, add more, add more, add more to the social safety net.

The fact of the matter is no country in this world can do that. We cannot add to the taxes. We are among the highest-taxed nations in the world. We cannot add to the debt of the G-7 nations on a per capita basis. We are only next to Italy in terms of our per capita debt.

The members opposite will have their opportunity to offer their solutions, but the fact of the matter is that the solutions that they have been giving us for the past six years in this House are not solutions that would help Manitobans. They would cripple Manitobans.

We look at the area of health care and look at that as an issue, or education—two areas of tremendous heat in this House. Those two areas are areas in which I would argue major, major things are happening.

I have had the great pleasure of listening to and visiting with many of our health care professionals in recent times. We have people who want to do a tremendous job for this province. We have people who are doing a tremendous job for this province. We have professionals who are committed deeply to health care reform and are contributing to it each and every day, whether that be Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses or MMA and the College of Physicians and Surgeons.

I recently had a discussion with a board member of the St. Boniface General Hospital. They will have a balanced budget by the end of this fiscal year. It is an incredible change over what they have gone through in years past. It goes all the way back to New Democratic years that they were fighting, fighting, and over the budget year after year. They

now have taken control of their destiny and their problems, and they are saying that we will have our budget balanced by the end of this fiscal year—a tremendous achievement.

We have been making the shifts. Our increases in support for Support Services to Seniors have been in the hundreds of percent since we have taken office. We have had almost a doubling of the entire funding to our Home Care programs. Personal care beds have gone up by the hundreds in this province. There used to be tremendous waiting lists at great costs as these people were being put in acute care beds. Now we are getting to the point where we are meeting our needs by putting so many more resources into more appropriate care for people in home care.

Nurse-managed care, a project and opportunity that will give nurses the opportunity they have been looking for to apply the skills and the training that they have to better use in the health care system—and better cost effectiveness and efficiency for the people of this province. Self-managed care, nurse-managed care—areas that will greatly contribute to the effectiveness of the delivery of health care in this province, and in the long run will be more cost efficient than the things that we have been doing before.

Education reform—now, education reform, of course, is something that many are fighting. Many are fighting, suggesting that education reform is something that is bad. Education has to continue to renew, regenerate itself and to reform the way in which it is delivered. We have to do it. It is absolutely fundamental to ensuring that we have the qualified workforce that we need in the future, that we are able to meet the challenges of competition around the world. We must have quality people. The investment that we make in our human resources is absolutely the most important one, and we have to do it in the most efficient and effective way possible. We cannot just do it the way we have always done in the past.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Mr. Speaker, I just want to, in closing, say that I have enjoyed the opportunity to listen to members

opposite, to have an opportunity to debate with them. I thank them for their contributions.

I want to just add one thing. When the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) was talking about singing from the same song book, it sounded rather incongruous to me. One thing I knew for sure was it would not be Home on the Range, because this is not a place where seldom is heard a discouraging word. [interjection] Mr. Speaker, with all of this encouragement, I am tempted to go to the notes that have been developed for me outlining all of the accomplishments of our government during the past number of years.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to say in all sincerity that although we may well be back in session and have the opportunity to go through further debates, I want to pay tribute to the member for Riel (Mr. Ducharme) for all of his contributions, for the service he has given to his constituents, to an adult lifetime of service to the people of St. Vital. The people of St. Vital have been very privileged to have, I believe, the representation of the member for Riel. He served them as a member of the school board, ultimately as its chair. He served on City Council, ultimately as chair of the executive committee, and he has served in the cabinet of this province with great distinction.

The member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) referred to the privilege that those of us who have served in cabinet have had. Not long ago, I went through to try and determine how many people had served in the cabinet of the Province of Manitoba in the history of this province—and we are 125 years next year—and it is fewer than 500 people. So it is really a privilege that I think should be taken very seriously and one that people ought to take as a life's accomplishment, Mr. Speaker.

I compliment the member for Riel (Mr. Ducharme).

I compliment the member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs) for her contributions and her service to this Legislature. I wish her well in her future endeavours, whatever those may be. Like the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer), I may want to read back some of her comments about

patronage appointments when the appropriate time comes, but I compliment her, and I wish her well.

* (2220)

I, in closing, wish all of the members opposite an enjoyable time recharging their batteries, spending time with their families and loved ones, and hope that they enjoy the summer, the fall and look forward to seeing them back here soon, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker: Prior to putting the question, I will take this opportunity to thank each and every one of the 56 members presently before me on behalf of the individuals that we do see but we do not hear, namely the table officers, Legislative Counsel, Sergeant-at-Arms, Chamber branch, the Pages, indeed, Hansard. It has been our privilege to serve each and every one of you.

An old saying that I once heard: It is always happy to meet, happy to part, but it is always happy to meet again.

Everybody, have a safe holiday.

Mr. Speaker: Now I believe I am informed that the Sergeant-at-Arms is about to enter the Chamber.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? [agreed]

All rise.

ROYAL ASSENT

Sergeant-at-Arms (Mr. Dennis Gray): His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.

His Honour W. Yvon Dumont, Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Manitoba, having entered the House and being seated on the Throne, Mr. Speaker addressed His Honour in the following words.

Mr. Speaker: May it please Your Honour:

The Legislative Assembly, at its present session, passed bills, which in the name of the Assembly, I present to Your Honour and to which bills I respectfully request Your Honour's Assent:

Bill 2, The Prescription Drugs Cost Assistance Amendment and Pharmaceutical Amendment Act;

Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aide à l'achat de médicaments sur ordonnance et la Loi sur les pharmacies

Bill 3, The Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Fondation de traitement du cancer et de recherche en cancérologie

Bill 4, The Energy and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi sur l'énergie et apportant des modifications corrélatives

Bill 5, The Highway Traffic Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi modifiant le Code de la route et apportant des modifications corrélatives

Bill 7, The Crown Lands Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les terres domaniales

Bill 8, The Fisheries Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la pêche

Bill 9, The Convention Centre Corporation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Corporation du Centre des congrès

Bill 10, The Wildlife Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la conservation de la faune

Bill 11, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative

Bill 12, The Provincial Auditor's Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le vérificateur provincial

Bill 13, The Condominium Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les condominiums

Bill 14, The Real Estate Brokers Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les courtiers en immeubles

Bill 15, The Law Society Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société du Barreau

Bill 16, The Provincial Court Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Cour provinciale

Bill 17, The City of Winnipeg Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Ville de Winnipeg et apportant des modifications corrélatives

Bill 18, The Insurance Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les assurances

Bill 19, The Mental Health Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la santé mentale

Bill 20, The Municipal Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les municipalités

Bill 21, The Manitoba Medical Association Dues Act; Loi sur la cotisation de l'Association médicale du Manitoba

Bill 22, The Statute Law Amendment Act, 1994; Loi de 1994 modifiant diverses dispositions législatives

Bill 23, The Manitoba Historical Society Property Act; Loi sur les biens de la Société historique du Manitoba

Bill 24, The Waste Reduction and Prevention Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la réduction du volume et de la production des déchets

Bill 25, The Statute Law Amendment (Taxation) Act, 1994; Loi de 1994 modifiant diverses dispositions législatives en matière de fiscalité

Bill 26, An Act to amend An Act to Protect the Health of Non-Smokers (2); Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur la protection de la santé des non-fumeurs

Bill 27, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act; Loi modifiant le Code de la route

Bill 28, The Off-Road Vehicles Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les véhicules à caractère non routier

Bill 31, The Manitoba Employee Ownership Fund Corporation Amendment and Income Tax Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi constituant en corporation le Fonds de participation des travailleurs du Manitoba et la Loi de l'impôt sur le revenu

Bill 206, The Coat of Arms, Emblems and the Manitoba Tartan Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les armoiries, les emblèmes et le tartan du Manitoba

Bill 300, An Act to amend an Act to continue Brandon University Foundation; Loi modifiant la Loi prorogeant la Fondation de l'Université de Brandon

Bill 301, The Misericordia General Hospital Incorporation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi constituant en corporation le "Misericordia General Hospital"

Bill 302, The Manitoba Historical Society Incorporation Act; Loi constituant la Société historique du Manitoba.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): In Her Majesty's name, His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor doth assent to these bills.

Mr. Speaker: May it please Your Honour:

We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and faithful subjects, the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba in session assembled, approach Your Honour with sentiments of unfeigned devotion and loyalty to Her Majesty's person and government, and beg for Your Honour the acceptance of these bills:

Bill 29, The Loan Act, 1994; Loi d'emprunt de 1994

Bill 30, The Appropriation Act, 1994; Loi de 1994 portant affectation de crédits.

Mr. Clerk: His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor doth thank Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, accepts their benevolence and assents to these bills in Her Majesty's name.

His Honour was then pleased to retire

God Save the Queen was sung

O Canada! was sung

* (2230)

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), that the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to, and the House adjourned and stands adjourned until a time fixed by Mr. Speaker upon the request of the government.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, July 5, 1994

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Bill 15, Law Society Amendment Act

Bill 16, Provincial Court Amendment Act

Bill 17, City of Winnipeg Amendment
and Consequential Amendments Act

Bill 18, Insurance Amendment Act

Bill 19, Mental Health Amendment Act

Bill 20, Municipal Amendment Act

Bill 21, Manitoba Medical Association
Dues Act

Bill 22, Statute Law Amendment Act,
1994

Bill 23, Manitoba Historical Society
Property Act

Bill 24, Waste Reduction and Prevention
Amendment Act

Bill 25, Statute Law Amendment
(Taxation) Act, 1994

**Bill 26, An Act to amend An Act to
Protect the Health of Non-Smokers (2)**

Bill 27, Highway Traffic Amendment Act

**Bill 28, Off-Road Vehicles
Amendment Act**

**Bill 31, Manitoba Employee Ownership
Fund Corporation Amendment and
Income Tax Amendment Act**

**Bill 206, Coat of Arms, Emblems and the
Manitoba Tartan Amendment Act**

**Bill 300, An Act to amend an Act to
continue Brandon University Foundation**

**Bill 301, Misericordia General Hospital
Incorporation Amendment Act**

**Bill 302, Manitoba Historical Society
Incorporation Act**

PROCLAMATION

Yvon M. Dumont
Lieutenant Governor.

**CANADA
PROVINCE OF MANITOBA**

ELIZABETH THE SECOND, by the Grace of God of The United Kingdom, Canada and Her other Realms and Territories, QUEEN, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith.

PROCLAMATION

To our beloved and faithful the Members elected to serve in the Legislative Assembly of our Province of Manitoba, and to each and every of you — GREETING.

WHEREAS the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Manitoba now stands adjourned;

AND WHEREAS it is deemed appropriate to request His Honour the Lieutenant Governor by a Royal Proclamation effective on the thirtieth day of November, 1994, to prorogue the Fifth Session of the Thirty-Fifth Legislature of the Province of Manitoba and to summon the said Legislature for the dispatch of business on the first day of December, 1994;

NOW KNOW YE THAT, for divers causes and consideration, and taking into consideration the ease and convenience of our loving subjects, we have thought fit, by and with the advice and consent of our Executive Council of our Province of Manitoba, to hereby prorogue the Fifth Session of the Thirty-Fifth Legislature of the Province of Manitoba effective on Wednesday, the thirtieth day of November, 1994, and to convene the Sixth Session of the Thirty-Fifth Legislature of the Province of Manitoba on Thursday, the first day of December, 1994, at the hour of 1:30 o'clock in the afternoon for the dispatch of business in our Legislative Assembly of our Province of Manitoba, in our City of Winnipeg, there to take into consideration the state and welfare of our said Province of Manitoba and therein to do as may seem necessary.

HEREIN FAIL NOT.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF We have caused these Our Letters to be made Patent, and the Great Seal of Our Province of Manitoba to be hereunto affixed;

WITNESS, His Honour Yvon M. Dumont, Lieutenant Governor of the Government of the Province of Manitoba;

AT OUR GOVERNMENT HOUSE, at Our City of Winnipeg, in the Province of Manitoba, this second day of November, in the year of Our Lord one thousand nine hundred and ninety-four, and in the forty-third year of Our Reign.

BY COMMAND,

ROSEMARY VODREY
Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

W. Yvon Dumont
Lieutenant-gouverneur.

**CANADA
PROVINCE DU MANITOBA**

ELIZABETH II, par la grâce de Dieu, REINE du Royaume-Uni, du Canada et de ses autres royaumes et territoires, Chef du Commonwealth, Défenseur de la Foi.

PROCLAMATION

À nos bien-aimés et fidèles députés élus à l'Assemblée législative de Notre province du Manitoba, et à chacun d'entre vous, SALUT.

ATTENDU QUE l'Assemblée législative du Manitoba est actuellement ajournée;

ATTENDU QU'il a été jugé opportun de demander du lieutenant-gouverneur de lancer une proclamation fixant au trente novembre 1994 la date de clôture de la cinquième session de la trente-cinquième législature de la province du Manitoba et convoquant l'Assemblée législative pour la reprise des travaux le premier décembre 1994;

SACHEZ DONC MAINTENANT QUE, pour divers motifs et de l'intérêt de Nos aimés sujets, Nous avons jugé à-propos, sur l'avis et du consentement de notre Conseil exécutif pour la province du Manitoba, par les présentes de clore la cinquième session de la trente-cinquième législature de la province du Manitoba le mercredi trente novembre 1994 et de vous convoquer à l'ouverture de la sixième session de la trente-cinquième législature de la province du Manitoba le jeudi premier décembre 1994, à 13 h 30, en Notre Assemblée législative pour la province du Manitoba, en Notre Ville de Winnipeg, pour la reprise des travaux, ce afin de porter votre attention sur l'état et le bien-être de la province du Manitoba et de poser les actes appropriés.

CE À QUOI VOUS NE DEVEZ FAILLIR.

EN FOI DE QUOI Nous avons fait délivrer les présentes Lettres patentes et à icelles fait apposer le Grand Sceau de Notre province du Manitoba.

TÉMOIN: W. Yvon Dumont, lieutenant-gouverneur de Notre province du Manitoba.

EN NOTRE PALAIS DU GOUVERNEMENT, en Notre Ville de Winnipeg, dans la province du Manitoba, ce deuxième jour de novembre de l'an de grâce mil neuf cent quatre-vingt-quatorze, dans la quarante-troisième année de Notre Règne.

PAR ORDRE.

La ministre de la Justice et procureure général.
ROSEMARY VODREY