



Third Session - Thirty-Seventh Legislature

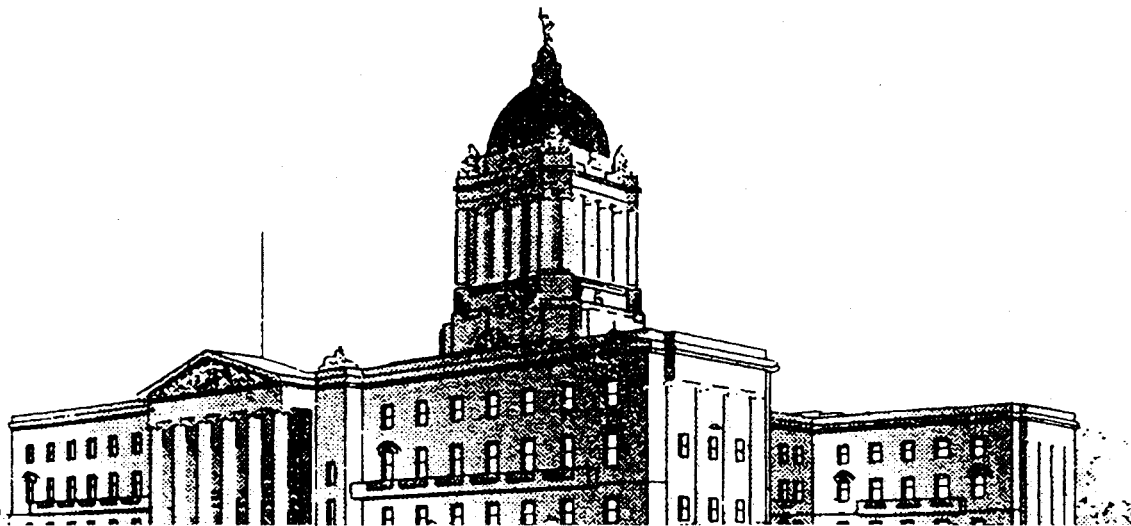
of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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The Honourable George Hickes
Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Seventh Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, July 25, 2002

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Meetings:

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Your committee met on Tuesday, July 23, 2002, at 6:30 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Transcona-Springfield School Division

Matters Under Consideration:

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

Bill 19—The Mines and Minerals Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les mines et les minéraux

Trans-Canada Highway—Twinning (Virden)

Bill 22—The Public Schools Amendment Act (Francophone School Division Governance Structure)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (structure de gestion de la division scolaire de langue française)

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): I beg to present the petition of Marilyn Clayton, Margaret Twigg, Brian Clayton and others praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Minister of Transportation and Government Services (Mr. Ashton) consider making the completion of the twinning of the Trans-Canada Highway between Virden and the Saskatchewan border an immediate fiscal priority for his Government and to consider taking whatever steps are necessary to ensure that work begins in the 2002 construction year.

Bill 32—The Fatality Inquiries Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les enquêtes médico-légales

Bill 33—The Private Vocational Institutions Act/Loi sur les établissements d'enseignement professionnel privés

Bill 43—The Polar Bear Protection Act/Loi sur la protection des ours polaires

Bill 44—The Provincial Police Amendment (Aboriginal Policing) Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Sûreté du Manitoba (services de police autochtones)

**PRESENTING REPORTS BY
STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

**Standing Committee on Law Amendments
Seventh Report**

Membership Resignations / Elections:

Substitutions received prior to commencement of the meeting:

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

Mr. Gilleshammer for Mrs. Driedger

Mr. Enns for Mr. Dyck

Mrs. Stefanson for Mr. Rocan

Ms. Korzeniowski for Hon. Mr. Chomiak

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

Hon. Ms. Mihychuk for Hon. Ms. Barrett

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Hon. Mr. Lathlin for Mr. Jennissen
Hon. Ms. McGifford for Ms. Korzeniowski
Hon. Mr. Caldwell for Mr. Nevakshonoff

Substitutions made, by leave, during committee proceedings:

Mr. Derkach for Mr. Gilleshammer

Public Presentations:

Your committee heard three presentations on Bill 19—The Mines and Minerals Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les mines et les minéraux from the following individuals and/or organizations:

Grand Chief Francis Flett, Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak
Michael Anderson, Private Citizen
Ed Huebert, Mining Association of Manitoba

Your committee heard one presentation on Bill 22—The Public Schools Amendment Act (Francophone School Division Governance Structure)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (structure de gestion de la division scolaire de langue française) from the following organization:

Claude Lemoine and Leo Robert, D.S.F.M #49

Your committee heard one presentation on Bill 33—The Private Vocational Institutions Act/Loi sur les établissements d'enseignement professionnel privés from the following organization:

Ken Penner, Midwestern School of Business and Technology and Robertson College

Your committee heard six presentations on Bill 44—The Provincial Police Amendment (Aboriginal Policing) Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Sûreté du Manitoba (services de police autochtones) from the following individuals:

Marjorie Prince, Private Citizen
Diana Traverse, Private Citizen
Edward Pashe, Private Citizen
Sheila James, Private Citizen
Lorraine Elk, Private Citizen
David G. Newman, Private Citizen

Bills Considered but not Reported:

Bill 44—The Provincial Police Amendment (Aboriginal Policing) Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Sûreté du Manitoba (services de police autochtones)

Your committee commenced clause by clause consideration of this bill but agreed to defer completion of the consideration to a future meeting of the committee.

Bills Considered and Reported:

Bill 19—The Mines and Minerals Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les mines et les minéraux

Your committee agreed to report this bill without amendment.

Bill 22—The Public Schools Amendment Act (Francophone School Division Governance Structure)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (structure de gestion de la division scolaire de langue française)

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

THAT the proposed clause 21.38(2)(b), as set out in section 21 of the Bill, be replaced with the following:

(b) elected or appointed as a member of the Legislative Assembly, the Senate or House of Commons of Canada, or the council of a municipality;

(b.1) elected or appointed to the board of another school division or school district; or

THAT section 25 of the Bill be replaced with the following:

Coming into force

25(1) Subject to subsection (2), this Act comes into force on the day it receives royal assent.

25(2) Clause 21.38(2)(b) comes into force on July 1, 2003.

Bill 32—The Fatality Inquiries Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les enquêtes médico-légales

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

THAT subsection 9(2) of the Bill be amended by striking out "this Act comes into force" and substituting "section 4 of this Act comes into force".

THAT section 10 of the Bill be amended by striking out "this Act comes into force" and substituting "section 6 comes into force".

THAT section 11 of the Bill be replaced with the following:

Coming into force

11(1) This Act, except section 6, comes into force on the day it receives royal assent.

Coming into force: section 6

11(2) Section 6 comes into force on a day fixed by proclamation.

Bill 33—The Private Vocational Institutions Act/Loi sur les établissements d'enseignement professionnel privés

Your committee agreed to report this bill without amendment.

Bill 43—The Polar Bear Protection Act/Loi sur la protection des ours polaires

Your committee agreed to report this bill without amendment.

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

Motion agreed to.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

North American Indigenous Games

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister responsible for Sport): I apologize, Mr. Speaker. I do not have additional copies with me at this time. I would ask leave to give the statement and I will get copies as soon as I can.

Mr. Speaker: Could we ask the honourable member if he could hand this copy to the page

and maybe we can get some made up, because the critics will need a copy to respond? I also need a copy to make sure the minister follows the words that are in his statement.

Point of Order

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

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Perhaps we could reserve this matter and perhaps we could get leave now to revert back later in Routine Proceedings.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave for the House to revert back at a later stage when we have the copies available? *[Agreed]* But not in the middle of Question Period? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Speaker: What is the will of the House? End of Question Period, or wait?

Mr. Mackintosh: I would suggest we do that at the end of Question Period, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The agreement is that we will do it after Question Period is over.

* (13:35)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

West Nile Virus

Mosquito Fogging—Notification

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, this morning we have learned that 100 percent of the city of Winnipeg has been fogged for mosquitoes after Wolseley was fogged in the middle of the night last night. Residents in the area have said this morning that they were given no notice when the fogging was going to take place, and that in fact took place last night.

Can the Premier explain why the residents of Wolseley were not informed that fogging would take place in the middle of the night?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Not only did the member opposite call upon us to immediately complete the order, Mr. Speaker, in this House, but I think my answer—*[interjection]*

Not only did the member opposite for the last 48 hours call upon action to be taken, we

answered in the House that the order stood and fogging would be completed in Wolseley. In the House; two days in a row.

Mr. Murray: I would ask the Premier: Does he believe that Winnipeggers should be notified that mosquito fogging will be taking place in their community?

Mr. Doer: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, can I ask: Was the Deputy Premier (Ms. Friesen) aware yesterday that fogging was going to take place in the middle of the night?

Mr. Doer: As I understand it, Mr. Speaker, it always takes place in the so-called middle of the night. *[interjection]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, the City of Winnipeg public affairs manager yesterday, July 24, put out a notice: Fogging will continue in Wolseley and other neighbourhoods over the next week to 10 days, weather permitting. It sounds like notice was met.

Livestock Industry Tuberculosis—Quarantine

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, as we all know in this House, the tubercular outbreak in the Riding Mountain area is going to cause and is causing significant economic impact in this province. This Legislature today passed a piece of legislation, that we all supported because we think it is good legislation, giving the Province the power to enact a quarantine situation.

I want to ask the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) or the Premier (Mr. Doer), whomever would want to answer this, whether this province is now prepared to take action to enact quarantine measures around Riding Mountain National Park.

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Acting Minister of Agriculture and Food): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take that question as notice.

* (13:40)

Mr. Jack Penner: Mr. Speaker, it would appear that the Province might have had a plan of action in place seeing that they put this legislation forward giving them the powers.

My question is to the Minister of Agriculture or the Premier. When will the Province recognize the danger zone that we are in today and the economic impact that this disease problem is having to the province? When is the minister or the Province of Manitoba going to take action to ensure that we quarantine and contain the disease that is prevalent in Riding Mountain National Park?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, we are working with the federal government on the national park. Secondly, the existing buffer levels were established in 1992. The minister of environment and conservation has been working with the Minister of Agriculture on an additional zone. We are looking at tripling the zone from some 300 metres to either 800 or 900 metres. That announcement and Order-in-Council will be signed very shortly. We are also increasing the hunt to decrease the population.

Mr. Speaker, the first case took place in 1997. There was no increase in the buffer zone. This minister is going to take extra action.

Mr. Jack Penner: Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Premier whether he is aware that, under his own legislation that was passed in the House today, he has been now given the authority or given his director of Veterinary Services that authority to quarantine Riding Mountain National Park. Are you going to take action to eliminate that TB problem in the hot spots that have been identified in the Riding Mountain National Park? Will you take action to contain the disease in the park?

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the members have dealt with the bill, I believe Bill 2. *[interjection]* Bill 11, thank you very much. We have so much good legislation on the Order Paper. I am pleased that we finally have had that. I had complaints about the member opposite not passing it earlier dealing with evacuation orders during floods. Thankfully, this legislation has been passed.

Mr. Speaker, we will look at all measures we can take to try to deal with the problems of

wildlife from Riding Mountain National Park going into the domestic livestock population and having the unfortunate results of increasing the risk of tuberculosis. We think this is a very serious challenge for us and the federal government that has jurisdiction at Riding Mountain National Park.

That is why the minister is looking at tripling the buffer zone. That is why we are doubling the hunt's abilities this fall to decrease the population of problem elk. We think it is important where there is baiting. Where there is potential baiting with various materials in and around the Riding Mountain Park, we are going to triple that area to prevent additional or potential baiting for animals to be baited out of the park into the domestic livestock population. That is why I am pleased the minister is tripling the buffer zone.

Adoption Standards of Practice

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, Swan Lake First Nation through Dakota Ojibway Child and Family Services has blocked the adoption of an Aboriginal three-year-old child by a non-Aboriginal family. Can the Minister of Family Services indicate whether the family will have another opportunity to apply to adopt their Aboriginal foster child if no Aboriginal family comes forward to adopt her? And is there a time limit, a statute of limitations per se on the First Nation's veto right?

Hon. Tim Sale (Minister of Family Services and Housing): I thank the member, Mr. Speaker, for that question. This is obviously an issue of great sensitivity, an issue which I think every parent's heart is touched by the plight of a small child.

I should tell the members, standard 421 under which the band committee exercised its right to raise questions was established in October 1988 when the former government was in office. That is not a political statement. It is just the reality. It has been around for 14 years and it has been used successfully many times to make sure Aboriginal communities are aware every time one of their children might be facing a permanent order.

However, it is not a veto and it does not exist in law. It is a standard in our standards of

practice. Therefore, there is a process for appeal. Ultimately, that appeal is to the director of Child and Family Services, the director who has the legal position. His or her decision when that appeal goes forward is what will make the ultimate determination in this case.

* (13:45)

Mr. Hawranik: Mr. Speaker, does the Minister of Family Services feel it is in the best interests of this three-year-old little girl to prevent her non-Aboriginal foster family from adopting her when the First Nation blocking her adoption does not have a relationship with her?

Mr. Sale: Ultimately, the issue of the best interests of the child is the test of all of The Child and Family Services Act. The ultimate decision as to adjudicating best interests lies, depending on the issue, either with the agency, with the director of child welfare or with the courts.

It is not for me to make an opinion on an issue as serious as this. It is something that needs to be carefully worked through with the appropriate steps and the appropriate authorities. In this case that process is not finished.

Mr. Hawranik: Mr. Speaker, does the Minister of Family Services have a mechanism in Bill 35, a mechanism to ensure the best interests of the children are served? As an example, if there are not enough Aboriginal or Métis foster or adoptive parents, will non-Aboriginals be able to foster or adopt Aboriginal children?

Mr. Sale: Firstly, Mr. Speaker, Bill 35 amends the existing act and the existing act remains in place. So all the processes, procedures, standards, appeal mechanisms that are now in place remain in place.

Aboriginal child welfare directors have replied to that question saying that they will continue to use high quality foster families of all races and nations, that they welcome the involvement of people who care for children in their agencies, and they do use them now, so I do not see that situation changing. The goal here is to ensure that Aboriginal agencies have the capacity and the mandate to recruit more foster

families and more adoptive families so that this little girl's plight does not occur again.

Dakota Tipi First Nation Gaming Revenues

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): The Minister responsible for the Gaming Commission is also responsible for ensuring that gaming in the province of Manitoba, including on reserves, is conducted in accordance with the act and in accordance with the gaming agreements that have been signed between the Province and the various First Nations.

I would like to table a copy of the agreement between the Government of Manitoba and the Dakota Tipi First Nation Band. Article 7 of the agreement states that the purpose of funds received from the gaming revenues should be used for religious or charitable purposes or projects.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the minister why he is allowing the diversion of these funds from those kinds of activities on the Dakota Tipi First Nation when that is a breach of the agreement.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister charged with the administration of The Gaming Control Act): We have made it very clear in terms of our relationship with this gaming authority and other gaming authorities that our goal is to bring the gaming commissions into compliance. I indicated before we have made some progress. We have also indicated where non-compliance does occur, unlike the situation two and a half years ago, we will act. I can indicate on behalf of the Minister of Lotteries (Ms. McGifford) that the VLTs at Dakota Tipi were shut down based on non-compliance with the requirements of the siteholder agreement. I indicated before, and I will indicate it again, that we continue to work to make sure that compliance is put in place. When, as was the case with VLTs, there was non-compliance, we acted.

Gaming Agreement Termination

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the minister whether he is prepared to terminate immediately the gaming agreement between the Province of Manitoba and the

Dakota Tipi First Nation, seeing that the diversion of these funds is going to projects which are not compliant with the agreement that has been signed by the gaming commission in the province of Manitoba.

* (13:50)

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister charged with the administration of The Gaming Control Act): The member opposite who was part of the government that put in place the agreement, I assume he is talking about the 1994 agreement which established the gaming commission, not the siteholder agreement; he should be aware that there is a notice provision in place. Once again, and I want to indicate this on the record, whenever any issues have been raised in terms of concerns about anything with regard to non-compliance, and most recently in regard to the VLTs, we have asked that those be substantiated and be raised with either the gaming commission or with Lotteries. We have acted on the Lotteries side.

I want to indicate on behalf of the Minister of Lotteries (Ms. McGifford) that VLTs were shut down because of a non-compliance issue. If there is evidence of other non-compliance related to the gaming commission itself, we will act. Given the situation two and a half years ago when the commission was not in compliance in regard to very basic regulations, that continues to be our standard. That is why we moved on the VLTs.

Mr. Derkach: I want to ask the minister why he misled this House when he said that the Dakota Tipi First Nation was in compliance when today he is admitting that they are not in compliance. Under the siteholder agreement, the Minister responsible for Lotteries can shut down that agreement immediately. This is the minister who is responsible for supervising that. I want to ask him whether he is prepared today to terminate that agreement immediately.

Mr. Speaker: Before I recognize the honourable minister, I would like to remind our guests that are in the gallery there is to be no participation, and that includes applauding. I would ask the co-operation of all our guests up in the gallery.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, either the member opposite does not know or chooses not to know

the framework that his Government set up in 1994 and the siteholder agreement. There are two dimensions here. One is—*[interjection]*

Well, Mr. Speaker, if the member wants to shout from his seat, that is fine. If he wants an answer, I am prepared to give one. I want to indicate, in terms of compliance, when we came into government Dakota Tipi was not in compliance in terms of—*[interjection]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite wants to ask a question, I would assume he wants me to give an answer. I want to indicate the kind of situations we dealt with. We had situations where improper material was being used, material that was not authorized by Lotteries, and we stopped that practice. That is what I indicated. They moved in terms of compliance, in terms of the operation of the gaming procedures, but in terms of VLTs, when they were not in compliance on Tuesday they were shut down. So we are living up to the requirements of the agreement. We are doing far more than was done when the members were in opposite. They signed the agreement and they allowed non-compliance to continue and did nothing about it.

Dakota Tipi First Nation Gaming Agreement Compliance

Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain): I would just like to remind the Minister of Gaming that on July 16 he stood in this House and said: It, meaning Dakota Tipi, is in fact in compliance with gaming regulations. Again, on July 23, he stood on his feet and said, indeed, Dakota Tipi is in compliance. He said it later in questioning. Dakota Tipi is in compliance, and again in that statement he said: They are in compliance.

Mr. Speaker, he only changed his tune after we presented the financial statements of Dakota Tipi. My question to the minister is: Can he confirm today for Manitobans his statements from yesterday that Dakota Tipi is not in compliance?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister charged with the administration of The Gaming Control Act): Mr. Speaker, the members should get their dates

straight. They talked about July 16. The VLTs were shut down on July 23 because they were in non-compliance with the requirements of the siteholder agreement with Manitoba Lotteries, not with the gaming agreement that was signed in 1994.

When they came into non-compliance and they could not provide trained employees on site, Lotteries acted and shut down the VLTs. That is why I re-emphasize, unlike the previous government that ignored this from 1994 until 1999, we have acted. When there is evidence of any non-compliance, as we did with Lotteries, we will continue to take direct action. We closed down the VLTs when they were not in compliance two days ago.

Mr. Tweed: I think the truth is, Mr. Speaker, these VLTs were shut down because the women of Dakota Tipi had a sit-in and forced it to be.

Mr. Speaker, my question for the minister is: Why did the minister mislead this House when he stated that Dakota Tipi were in compliance when in fact they were not?

* (13:55)

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, we have another member who either does not know or chooses not to understand the agreement they signed in 1994. There are two separate agreements that govern gaming on the First Nations committee. The first one is what they signed in 1994 which set up the gaming commission; the second was the siteholder agreement which deals with the VLTs.

When it became clear, not because of anything internal to the committee, but the fact that Manitoba Lotteries could not guarantee that trained operators were in place which is an absolute fundamental requirement of the VLTs, they were shut down July 23 at 3:55. Manitoba Lotteries took the appropriate thing out of the siteholder agreement and under the gaming agreement. Unlike the previous government, we did not allow the kind of situation to develop where illegal improper materials were sold from 1994 to 1999. We did move on that.

So no one is misleading the House. What is happening is we are being responsible in dealing with the concerns being raised.

Mr. Tweed: It is the Minister of Gaming who does not get it; they were not in compliance because they have not had their '01-02 financial statements audited and approved. That is the reason why they are not in compliance.

I ask the minister again: Why did he mislead this House in stating the Dakota Tipi were in fact in compliance when they were not?

Mr. Ashton: Well, I take great offence to that statement, Mr. Speaker, because if the member—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

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

Mr. Tweed: Yes, *Beauchesne* 417: Should not provoke debate. He should be ashamed of the way they have handled this issue.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I would like to remind all honourable members, when rising on a point of order, it is to point out to the Speaker a breach of a rule or departure from procedure, not to be used for debate.

On the point of order, it is not a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Ashton: I do not know if the member reads Hansard and I cannot comment whether he was here in Question Period. Maybe the member should read Hansard in which I indicated in 1999, and I have it from yesterday, Dakota Tipi Gaming Commission was not in compliance with fundamental requirements. They had no problem when they were in government with that.

I can indicate, I indicated before that we brought them in compliance with fundamental aspects of the gaming commission. I indicated in Hansard, in terms of the auditing requirements, that audits were provided but they did not provide satisfactory information. We require that and continue to do so.

So I ask the member to read even from yesterday where I specifically referenced the situation. Once again he should be aware that in terms of the VLTs, under the siteholder agreement where there was clear evidence of non-compliance, those machines were shut down on Tuesday of this week.

Kindle Report Terms of Reference

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, the report of Ruth Krindle is an absolute disaster from the point of view of the WRHA and the minister because it does not answer the critical question: Was Doctor Del Rizzo a good surgeon or not? Whoever made the decision to set the terms of reference goofed trying to manipulate the inquiry for political purposes to protect the decision of the WRHA to operate under the cloak of darkness and gossip rather than under the light of evidence. It is a big problem because it undermines the credibility of the WRHA and the minister with this kind of manipulative control of inquiries.

I ask the Minister of Health why on earth he did not ensure from the very beginning of the Krindle inquiry that it was set up to answer the critical question: Is Doctor Del Rizzo a high-quality cardiac surgeon or not?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, this member, who has been wrong before and forced to apologize in his judgments, has now said that the WRHA is wrong, that the surgeons are wrong, that the people who complained are wrong, that all of the people who provided, and the judge, the independent judge, Ruth Krindle, who looked at this report, is wrong. I suggest the member ought to apologize to that judge, to this Chamber and to the people of Manitoba for his tactics.

* (14:00)

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Health why, when objective statistics showed Doctor Del Rizzo an excellent surgeon, when even Doctor Postl admitted on CJOB yesterday, certain procedures, he believes this to be true, why did the Minister of Health not set up a formal process to look at the critical approach of whether Doctor Del Rizzo was a good surgeon

or not? Why would he support anecdotal gossip rather than undermining the concept, the approach of evidence-based medicine?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, quoting from the Krindle report, I do not know if the member has had a chance to read it, and I quote Judge Krindle: I am satisfied that the complaints against Doctor Del Rizzo on each of these two dates were numerous, were diverse in nature, were serious, came from many reliable sources and frequently involved conduct similar to that which had previously been dealt with on an informal basis and which apparently persisted.

Based upon these facts, I am satisfied that the WRHA had a reasonable basis to refer these complaints to the formal process or the by-law to rescind the privileges of Doctor Del Rizzo. I am satisfied that the process followed by the WRHA was reasonable and fair. The complaints were investigated by persons competent to perform the investigation. No bias has been shown on their part. Doctor Del Rizzo was, at all material times, represented by able counsel experienced in the defence of doctors.

Doctor Del Rizzo was on each of the two occasions given an outline of the concern to the WRHA and given ample time and distance to consider his position and to make his decisions. I am satisfied that Doctor Del Rizzo arrived at his decision to restrict his practice and to resign voluntarily, rather than to proceed through the formal route provided by the by-law, free of all improper pressure from the WRHA.

Mr. Gerrard: The minister had an opportunity to bring closure but he failed to look at objective evidence. I would ask the minister: Why does the foggy-thinking minister continue to operate, as he did in this case and last night in Wolseley, under the cloak of stealth, darkness and obfuscation rather than the light of due notice, helpful information and objective evidence?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. If the members wish to have conversation, we have two loges here that you are welcome to use.

Order, please.

Point of Order

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

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I can understand why the honourable member would not want to pursue the line of questioning with his second supplementary, but my understanding from hearing the question was that it was a new matter, it was not related and did not seek the elucidation of answers to the earlier questions.

My understanding is that a supplementary question must follow the lead question and the first supplementary.

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

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, it is very clear. I talked in the first question about the way the minister operates under the cloak of stealth and darkness. I continued this thread in the supplement, the second supplement. These are on the same frame of reference. This is the same approach. This is a logical sequence of questions.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Government House Leader, when supplementary questions are, in *Beauchesne*, there should be a follow-up question to the main question that was asked. I was listening very carefully and from the main question that the honourable member had raised, it was tied in to the actions of the Health Minister pertaining to the same actions on the issue pertaining to Wolseley. So I will allow the question.

* * *

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite has been forced to apologize for other statements he has made publicly with respect to those kinds of allegations. I think he ought to consider his statements and what he said about Judge Ruth Krindle.

With respect to the specific question, I want to quote from the City of Winnipeg press release that says, fogging will continue in Wolseley and other neighbourhoods over the next week to 10 days, weather permitting. That is from the City of Winnipeg, with respect to notification in Wolseley.

I know the member did not read the report from Judge Krindle. Obviously, the member did not read the press release from the City that talked about fogging.

I suggest very seriously, as I have suggested to the member on numerous occasions, it is not my place to judge physicians, nor is it his place to judge physicians. We have specialists who do that. Judge Krindle reviewed it. I will provide a copy of the report where she said: I am satisfied the process was followed.

If the member wants me to quote chapter and verse, I will take the time to read this entire report for all members of the Legislature or provide them copies, because I suggest all members read this report.

Emergency Services Rural Manitoba

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin-Roblin): My question is for the Minister of Health and it deals with rural ambulances. Back in the dark ages of Tory rule, there was little or no support for rural EMS in this province, even though many rural Manitobans live great distances from health care facilities.

Today, Mr. Speaker, there are some very exciting things happening with rural EMS. I would like to ask the minister: Can he explain and update to this House our Government's action recently to provide rural Manitobans with important emergency medical service care?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased the Premier (Mr. Doer) could join the chair of Central Region to announce the delivery of two new ambulances to the region as part of Manitoba Health province-wide. These vehicles are among the 80 new ambulances recently purchased by the Manitoba government for \$7 million. Earlier this year, 60 ambulances were delivered to communities throughout the province, 10 more ambulances this summer. The remaining 10 will arrive this fall. In addition, the bulk purchase of those ambulances has saved over \$2 million that we were able to reinvest in health care, something that never happened during the dark ages of the Tory regime, as quoted by the president of the MMA.

Dakota Tipi First Nation Band Chief

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet): On April 1 of this year, the federal Minister of Indian Affairs, the Honourable Robert Nault, called for an election to be held on the Dakota Tipi First Nation. Until an election for chief and council is conducted, Minister Nault put third-party managers in place to manage the medical services and the INAC affairs on the First Nation.

Last week the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Robinson) indicated he recognizes Dennis Pashe as chief. Why is this minister recognizing Dennis Pashe as chief of Dakota Tipi First Nation when the federal minister does not recognize him as chief? Why is this minister recognizing him?

Hon. Eric Robinson (Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs): I have risen in this House prior to respond to a question of a similar nature. The way we understand the issue the federal government indeed warned the Dakota Tipi First Nation. However, it did not invoke section 74 on the community. Therefore, the federal government has no alternative either but to recognize Chief Pashe as the current leader of the community. To the best of our knowledge, the difficulty that is being experienced now, both Justice Canada and Indian Affairs are also confronted with the same issue as we are here with the Province of Manitoba, as to who the true chief and council are.

I would suggest that Indian Affairs, being the perpetrator of the current problem we are experiencing and the many arguments we are hearing from all sides at Dakota Tipi, has to take the responsibility and appoint a mediator to settle the disputes that exist in the community.

Band Chief—Investigation

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet): Is the minister willing, in light of what has happened at Dakota Tipi and in light of what was said today and yesterday and at committee, wherein Dennis Pashe controls the police and the police are not controlling the terrorism on that reserve, are you

willing to recommend an investigation into the actions of Dennis Pashe and his council?

* (14:10)

Hon. Eric Robinson (Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs): I do not know how many times I have to rise to my feet to indicate that this is primarily a federal responsibility of the Department of Indian Affairs. Yes, the Province does have some business and interest, as has been pointed out by my colleagues. We are prepared to act in a responsible way.

We have recommended to the federal government that they appoint a mediator to bring about some contracts, if you will, so there is peace and harmony within the community for the good of the children. We have suggested that to the federal government and we are prepared to stand by that.

Further, this is a divided community. We are all aware of that. I think what the community needs to do, because ultimately they will still be relatives years down the road, they will still be blood, so I think what we have to do to ensure there is no spillage of this blood is to ensure we, as responsible representatives of the people of Manitoba, recommend to the best of our ability what is best for the community, and that is what we are doing, Mr. Speaker.

Dakota Tipi First Nation Mediation

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs.

Mr. Speaker, how can he possibly believe that mediation will do anything when there is criminal activity ongoing right now on Dakota Tipi and there is an unlevel playing field where millions of dollars from lotteries revenues are flowing to one side in this dispute and the others are getting nothing?

Hon. Eric Robinson (Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I would ask my colleagues in this House, all of us, to join together because what we are dealing with here is a very important issue, and I do not think we should be politicizing an already very difficult

situation at Dakota Tipi. I think what we should be doing, because I have not heard a better suggestion by anybody else in this House, we are suggesting a mediator to bring about some peace and harmony with all the parties in the community.

Perhaps if the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) has a better idea, he can get up on his feet and suggest it, but allow me to say that a third-party manager was appointed by the federal government to deal with the day-to-day affairs of the community, the First Nation. Another third-party manager was appointed by Health Canada to deal with matters relating to the gaming.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that all members in this House are sincere about their apparent—

An Honourable Member: Why do you not be sincere?

Mr. Robinson: We will talk about it outside. Mr. Speaker—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

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

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Speaker, I cannot quote the section of *Beauchesne*, but every member in this House should be free from fear of being threatened by another member of this House. I have just had a threat uttered to me by the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs who threatened me to step out into the hallway where he would deal with me with this matter.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, on the same point of order.

Mr. Robinson: On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker, I am sorry that the member would feel this way. I do not think I would bother threatening a person.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. This is a very serious matter. The honourable member got on his feet

to ask me to make a decision that I will have to make, and I ask the co-operation of all. How can you expect me to do that if I cannot hear the member who has the floor? I ask the honourable members, please, because this is a very, very serious matter and I need to hear every word that is spoken. I ask the co-operation of all honourable members.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, the Member for Russell had a lot to say about me yesterday in committee, and if he would like to talk to me about that on a personal level, I certainly am free to talk to him. I can talk to him in the loge or outside, and that is what I was referring to.

Now, with specific reference to what we were talking about earlier on, if the members would allow me to finish, I was trying to respond to the question raised by the Member for River East, and I believe that I was doing the best that I could. I need no help from the Member for Russell on a very delicate issue. If he wants to talk to me, we will talk about it outside. Mr. Speaker, that simply is what I was implying.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I do not want this to turn into a debate.

The honourable Member for Turtle Mountain, with new information.

Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I would just like to put on the record that while sitting in my chair—and we are discussing a very, very sensitive issue. In fact, the same principles that we are talking about in this point of order are the very principles that we are talking about at Dakota Tipi, where people in positions of authority challenge people and use their muscle and their brunt rather than their thinking, which is what the minister did today when he challenged the Member for Russell that he would be prepared to take him outside of this Chamber and settle this issue. I think that is very reflective of this entire issue. I think the minister should take it more seriously and withdraw his remarks.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Well, Mr. Speaker, on the point of order. The honourable minister was at the moment during his answer talking about the need for self-restraint. He was getting to the point of talking about how it is important, I

understood from his comments, that we not contribute, if we are concerned about the situation there, to an escalation of tensions, because we have to remember that we are persons in this Chamber in authority who live outside that community. It is a time for restraint and for measured comment. We cannot be exacerbating, I do not think, divisions. At that time there were interjections from the seat of the Member for Russell that were heard by all.

The honourable minister explained what his comments were. There may be interpretations that can be argued about, but the honourable minister, who has first-hand knowledge of what was said, got up here and explained that that was about taking comments outside the House. So I think in light of the situation here, we should all exercise the self-restraint that I think should be exercised particularly on this matter, because I think all of us and all Manitobans should be concerned about the need for healing in that community.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Member for Russell, I am going to take it under advisement. I am going to peruse Hansard and I will come back with a ruling.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, to conclude your answer.

Mr. Robinson: The bottom line, Mr. Speaker, the community is in need of healing. That is what our Government is recommending, and we will support the federal government in their initiative as they proceed in that direction.

Dakota Tipi First Nation Operations Audit

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Gaming admitted in the halls that Dakota Tipi—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Derkach: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Minister of Gaming

admitted in the halls that Dakota Tipi, specifically Dennis Pashe, has hired David Doer and Soaring Eagle to audit the Bingo Palace.

This raises certain questions, because, at the same time, Doer and Soaring Eagle are currently third-party managers on the reserve. Doer was recommended by Pashe to the federal government to manage the third-party affairs on the reserve.

I want to ask the Minister responsible for the Gaming Commission whether or not he is prepared to accept an audit of Dakota Tipi's operations that is going to be done by Doer and Soaring Eagle as an independent audit.

* (14:20)

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister charged with the administration of The Gaming Control Act): Mr. Speaker, let us put this clearly on the table here. We have an individual who works for a firm that is hired by the federal Department of Health and is hired by Dakota Tipi. That individual, that firm, was not hired by the provincial government, period. Clearly, the individual involved, the company that is involved, if they have the requisite professional expertise, we would accept that.

I am surprised that members opposite would use this kind of tactic, Mr. Speaker, because, quite frankly, they should put on the record again that it is not the provincial government that hired this company. It was the federal government and Dakota Tipi.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister of Gaming—well, perhaps I should ask the Premier whether or not the Premier of this province would accept an audit of hotel VLTs done by a hotel manager, by that same hotel manager as an independent audit for the purposes of auditing in this province of Manitoba.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I know the members opposite are attempting political guilt by association, and I appreciate their tactical effort in this regard.

Let me just state that I believe strongly, and the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Robinson) has stated time and time again,

that the decision that was made and announced in April by the federal minister, Mr. Nault, we believe, should be carried out, and it requires an Order-in-Council by a federal cabinet minister, under section 74 of the act, to carry out fully the statement made by Minister Nault.

In the interim, the whole community and I suggest this Legislature has been put in a very awkward situation.

We have an individual who has been unelected for some number of years, including in years that members opposite signed a number of agreements that we have to now, as legal documents, enforce. We have a number of agreements in place, Mr. Speaker. We have a situation where the Order-in-Council dealing with the existing chief has not been signed by the federal government.

I do not have any say over who the existing chief or who the existing federal Department of Health hires. I do support the action and announcement made by Minister Nault, that there has to be an election in the Dakota Ojibway community. The sooner that can happen, Mr. Speaker, and the sooner we can get a mediator as suggested by the provincial minister, the better off all Manitobans will be.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Dakota Tipi First Nation

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Russell, on a matter of privilege.

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Speaker, on a matter of privilege, as it relates to the Dakota Tipi situation that we have been dealing with in this House for the last several days.

I do not rise on a matter of privilege often, but today I rise because today the minister who is responsible for the gaming commission clearly, clearly, in this House, admitted that the Dakota Tipi gaming commission is not in compliance. He admitted that today on the record.

Mr. Speaker, we asked questions about the gaming commission being in compliance as far

back as July 16, and on July 16, in the House, I contend that this minister who is responsible for gaming—now this the minister who has an enormous amount of power vested in his hands to ensure that there is absolute proper procedures carried out as it relates to gaming and all establishments in the province, including on reserves. In addition to this, Mr. Speaker, he has the power in his hands to order the Minister of Lotteries to ensure that there is compliance in all aspects as it relates to gaming.

On July 16, when I asked the question of whether or not the Dakota Tipi gaming commission was in compliance, the minister said, and I want to quote: "This agreement set up a gaming commission which is still in operation. It is in fact in compliance with gaming regulations."

Today the minister finally admitted, after we tabled the incomplete financial statements for 2001, that indeed the gaming commission is not in compliance. Now I understand that, in order for a matter of privilege to be recognized and to be dealt with in this House, there are two requirements in order for that to take place.

The first requirement is that this is brought to the attention of the House at the earliest possible opportunity. Mr. Speaker, it was only today that the minister finally, unequivocally admitted in this House that the gaming commission is not in compliance and that in fact they are working towards compliance but that they are not in compliance, a contradiction to what he said on July 16 when he said that the gaming commission was in fact in compliance.

The other case is that this is a *prima facie* case. I contend that the case is that the minister who said that the gaming commission was in compliance was in fact erroneous and that this minister in fact has misled the members of this Legislature. There are consequences, Mr. Speaker, when a member deliberately misleads the House after evidence has presented that in fact the information before him is clear enough to indicate the opposite.

Mr. Speaker, this is not just an off-handed case to deal with. This is a very serious matter, because the diversion of funds from their intended purpose could be a criminal issue. So

this minister is dealing with a matter that could have criminal consequences. He has the responsibility, as the highest order of authority for ensuring that gaming is conducted properly in this province, to be able, without cause or with cause or for both reasons, to shut down an operation immediately and to launch an investigation automatically to show that in fact everything is being done aboveboard.

Mr. Speaker, it took women and children sitting in front of the bingo palace at Dakota Tipi to shut down the operation. It was not this Government. It was not the minister. Neither the Minister responsible for Gaming nor the Minister responsible for Lotteries took the initiative to see what was going on, to launch an investigation; it took women and children to sit in front of the bingo palace to shut it down.

And what were the consequences? The consequences, Mr. Speaker, were that their cars were turned over and smashed. Another consequence, a woman standing in front of the committee said, because of the actions that she took with her children, she has suffered beatings, and those beatings were evident on her face, and yet this Government sits by and does nothing.

Mr. Speaker, there is enough evidence here. No matter how blind you are, you would want to satisfy yourself as a respectable authority to ensure that those kinds of criminal activities, those kinds of illegal activities are addressed immediately.

Today the Minister responsible for Lotteries and some of her colleagues, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Ms. Friesen), the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Sale), met with the women from Dakota Tipi and they met with the Provincial Council of Women. If they have any conscience at all they would have to at least listen to what these people are telling them and be concerned enough to at least cut off the source of funds so that justice can be returned to the people on that reserve.

If nothing else, allow justice to be returned to that reserve, because we have heard allegations of the police, the Dakota Ojibway police force being in the pocket of the dictator chief. I do not know the chief, but these are all allegations and if there is a shred of truth in

anything these people are saying then that should be addressed.

* (14:30)

Mr. Speaker, I have heard comments from the opposite side that say, well, there is blame on both sides. There is blame. One side is as bad as the other, so why would we want to interfere? Well, I do not care about that. I care when a woman is beaten.

This Government prides itself with no tolerance, zero tolerance to violence. It does not matter where that person comes from, what that person's religion or creed, if there is violence toward that person, you shut it down, you investigate it. The Minister of Family Services (Mr. Sale) has responsibility for that.

An Honourable Member: No, I do not.

Mr. Derkach: He says no, he does not, but, Mr. Speaker, he is the Minister of Family Services. He converses with the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh). He converses with the Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Ms. McGifford). So the only thing he can do perhaps is to request that an investigation be launched. Has he done that? Has the Minister of Family Services done that? Has he asked the Minister of Justice to immediately launch an investigation into this matter so the matter can be put to rest?

Mr. Speaker, after those women presented to the House two nights ago, they had to return to their homes. They had to return to their families, to their children, but I daresay those women are very courageous to, first of all, step forward and make their cases known and then in fear to go back to their homes to protect their children and their families. We do not understand what kind of courage that must take. I do not understand it perhaps because I do not return to my home under fear yet.

Regardless of what happens, every minister in this House took an oath, an oath which says he has to act or she has to act without fear or favour on every matter. So I ask them to exercise their responsibilities, to act without fear or favour, to ensure justice is done to the people on this reserve.

All of these things that are coming before us are all allegations. That is why we are asking

this Government to shut down the Bingo Palace immediately, to launch an investigation, to do a proper audit. Instead what is happening? We have the minister of northern and native affairs still supporting Dennis Pashe, the outlaw chief of that reserve. We still have this Government refusing to take action on those very serious matters. We have a Minister of Gaming, responsible for the gaming commission in this province, who says on July 16 that the gaming commission on Dakota Tipi is indeed in compliance, when it is not. Today, he finally admits, after pressure, that they are not in compliance.

Mr. Speaker, the March 31, 2002 audit, by law, is supposed to be tabled by June 30. That has not been done. That in itself shows they are not in compliance. The 2001 audit, by what the accountants have said about it, and I will quote the section where it says, and I quote: "Our examination indicated serious deficiencies in internal controls over the accounting records. As a consequence, we are unable to satisfy ourselves that all revenue and expenditures of the Bingo Palace had been recorded or existed. Nor were we able to satisfy ourselves that the recorded transactions were proper."

That is a damning statement to be made by a chartered accountant on the account situation of this entity. That minister, under the act, has the obligation to act because the act says that the commission is to make observations, recommendations and comments to the minister. Then the minister must act. The minister must act without fear or favour, which means that he has to advise the Minister of Lotteries to do something under the agreement, the siteholder agreement that she signed.

The siteholder agreement has seven articles in it which relate specifically to the termination of the gaming agreement. The Minister of Lotteries has every opportunity to terminate the agreement and thus shut down the operation until such time that the minister responsible for the gaming commission is satisfied that everything is in order to proceed.

As I said, section 8, there are seven articles, and there is one article that I will quote to the minister. Section 8, subsection 7, states: engaging in conduct that is contrary to the public

interest or harmful to the integrity or the reputation of the video lotteries scheme. That in itself should cause this minister to be able to terminate the agreement, shut the Palace down until such time that he is satisfied that there is no diversion of monies to places where that money should not be going.

We have heard accounts of women having to take their children to food banks in order to feed them because they are not getting the money that is supposed to be coming to them through the proper channels of social assistance. They have stated that. That is an allegation. Somebody has to do an investigation. The minister of northern and native affairs says that is federal responsibility, but there are things which this provincial government is responsible for.

The provincial government, through the minister of northern and native affairs, has injected itself on reserves by announcing all kinds of programs on reserves which give them some popularity on reserves. If you want that kind of credit, then you have to be able to be responsible and address the situations which are causing people to be hungry, which are causing people to live in fear, which are causing children not to go to school. As a matter of fact, we heard a mother who has had to move her children, not just off the reserve, but into Winnipeg, away from the community, to attend school because of the fear they have living on the reserve. What kind of lifestyle is that?

My point, coming back to the issue here, is that we have a minister who has not conducted himself appropriately. He has deliberately misled this House to try to avoid the situation. I come back to his quote. If we did not have that before, it is in Hansard, then I might let the minister get away with it, but he said deliberately, on the record, and he did not say that once, he said that a number of times. It is, in fact, in compliance with the gaming regulations.

Today, he admitted that they are not in compliance with the gaming regulations. Then he is going to split hairs because he is going to talk about certain segments. It does not matter what segment you are talking about. If they are not in compliance, they are not in compliance. The minister admitted it today.

Therefore, I move, seconded by the Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson), that this House censure the Minister of Transportation and Government Services (Mr. Ashton) for deliberately misleading the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba and that this matter be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections for review.

Mr. Speaker: Before I recognize any other members to speak, I would remind the House that contributions at this time of honourable members are to be limited to strictly relevant comments as to whether an alleged matter of privilege has been raised at the earliest opportunity and whether a prima facie case has been established.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister charged with the administration of The Gaming Control Act): I express on the record my disappointment that a member of this House who has been here since, I believe, 1986, and I understand in the heat of debate at times we say and do things, but I take very seriously any suggestion that is put forward in this motion in terms of misleading the House, because this member himself is either misleading the House in his comments or does not understand the agreements, including the agreement his government signed in 1994.

* (14:40)

He made a number of comments, and I want to indicate the degree to which his comments have not only not helped clarify the situation but have left a completely false impression to many people who are involved in terms of this, including many of the residents of Dakota Tipi.

I want to start with the 1994 agreement. The member said it could be terminated immediately. Not true, Mr. Speaker. The agreement they signed in government could be terminated with 90 days' notice, and even then it can be appealed. I will go through in a moment this 1994 agreement because I would like to reference the fact that there is a second agreement, a siteholder agreement which deals with VLTs. Even that has provisions in terms of the termination of the agreement that the member again did not put on the record.

So let us deal with it. There are the gaming commission agreement signed in 1994 and the

siteholder agreement, both of which are standard agreements that apply across the province to all First Nations communities. I want to deal with that. I find it amazing. I wonder the degree to which members opposite really care about the facts when I hear them saying, well, the minister said on July 16 that they were in compliance and he said yesterday—*[interjection]* Well, let us deal with that. Because—if members opposite want to put the comments they make from their seat about lying, let them put it on the record. I would say when you have a matter of privilege you allow a member to respond. It is my right as a member. If they do not want to hear the facts I would suggest they not raise this bogus matter of privilege.

I want to deal with it in a moment because the VLTs were shut down. When? They were shut down on the Tuesday, not by the gaming commission because the gaming commission agreement is the 1994 agreement, but under the siteholder agreement which is Manitoba Lotteries. They were not shut down because of political pressure. It was an operational decision based on the fact that they could not verify that trained people were in place to ensure the integrity of the gaming.

So they talk about July 16, and then they talk about July 23. They do not really care about the dates because obviously it does not fit with their attempt to try and make this into something it is not. Well, let us deal with the gaming commission agreement. Let us put this on the one side. The VLT siteholder agreement, when they were not following the requirements in terms of trained personnel, Lotteries acted. They shut it down.

I want to deal with the 1994 agreement, Mr. Speaker, because this is something, opposite, no member has yet put on the record, why they signed an agreement in 1994 and then when we came into Government that First Nations community was clearly not compliant. It is funny they talk about compliance, but I will tell you the section they were not complying with. Some very serious concerns, particularly section 5, the gaming product agreement. They were not following the regulations that were established.

Now what did we do? We acted and brought them into compliance under section 5. So let us

put that on the record; 1994 to 1999 they turned a blind eye, we did not. That is really important to put on the record.

I want to put on the record, too, Mr. Speaker, and the member can read my comments yesterday in Hansard, 3747, he can read where specifically I referenced that indeed we did bring it in compliance with the regulations they signed.

Indeed, I flag and I have always been up front with my comments in terms of the inadequacies of the audit. I refer the member to the agreement again that there is a process in place for that, and that is the process we are following. We are following the process as we would do in any situation, which is where information needs to be provided. *[interjection]* Mr. Speaker, this is a matter of privilege. I would appreciate it if you would ask members to at least give me the opportunity to respond to it—it is a very serious matter—without the comments from their seats.

An Honourable Member: Just giving you a little bit of what you dish out.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, the House Leader says you just give me "a little bit of what you dish out." I do not know how that fits in a debate on a matter of privilege.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am sure we will all agree that a matter of privilege is very serious, and we need to hear every word. I ask the co-operation of all honourable members, please.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, maybe because of what happened in 1996 with MTS I am a little bit sensitive about being allowed to speak.

I want to say that once again, when it came down to it, the member opposite, I do not think he really wanted to establish a matter of privilege. There is no prima facie case. At best it is a dispute over the facts. In fact, if you look at it, there is not dispute over the facts. The member is incorrect, and he knows that. He says the agreements can be terminated on a moment's notice. He is wrong. I do not know where he was when they signed this agreement, 90 days' requirement. He talks about the VLT siteholder agreement and he talks about the gaming

commission agreement. Then he says, well, you said on July 16, Mr. Speaker, July 23 it was shut down in terms of the VLTs under the siteholder agreement.

Now, I realize that members opposite do not particularly, I think, care about the facts in this particular case, but what I want to put on the record is as follows, and that is as a member of this Legislature I do not deliberately mislead. If I ever were to be involved in any situation, even yesterday I rose on a matter that was raised in regard to language I raised, and I withdrew it. The word "scurrilous," I withdrew it, even though the Government House Leader had not referenced it, because we all go across the line certainly in terms of language. I think every member in this House has done it or come close. There are no Lady Byng Trophy award winners. We all do that from time to time.

But at least when we are dealing with a matter that is as sensitive as this and as important as this, try and stick to the facts. The facts are, there are very serious allegations that have been raised by members of Dakota Tipi. I reflect the comments of the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh). Everyone should take those seriously. Any accusations of abuse or criminal activity have to be taken seriously. But when it comes in terms of the gaming side, I have always indicated, where there are concerns about any violations potentially on the gaming side that they be raised directly with the appropriate authorities, whether it be the gaming commission in terms of the '94 agreement or with Lotteries with the siteholder agreement. That is how you deal with it. It is nice for the member to get up and say, well, terminate the agreement tomorrow. It cannot be done legally because of the agreement they signed in 1994. *[interjection]* Well, Mr. Speaker, the member says wrong.

He has either not read the agreement, is not aware of the contents of the agreement, but I would encourage him to do so. I am quite willing to meet with the member at any time, provide staff to explain the situation, because I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, what has happened with VLTs, Lotteries took the operational decision on Tuesday, the appropriate thing to do. We took action back in 1999 to stop the improper use of gaming product. I want to put

on the record, as I have before, that we will continue to review any and all of the concerns that are raised, whether it be by band members at Dakota Tipi or others, including members of the Opposition, and within the context of reality, not the fantasyland approach that the member opposite has, the fact that we have an agreement in place and there are provisions under the agreement. Lotteries acted with the VLTs. That was the appropriate thing to do.

I would urge the member, rather than grandstanding on this bogus point of order, if he wishes to raise further information, that we make that information directly available to Gaming. That was the response that I took right from day one was to urge anyone involved in this to get that information directly to the gaming commission, and if there is further information out there, Mr. Speaker, that has recently come to public life, then indeed we will look at that as well.

I want to finish on this note in terms of the facts of the situation. It was the previous government that set up this agreement; 32 agreements actually have been signed across the province. They set up a gaming commission. They set up the legal framework. Now, if they want to get up and say there is a problem with that legal framework, that is a political debate. But for them to get up and misstate the legal framework, and I think give false hope to people that have a very serious concern in this particular matter, I think is irresponsible.

I would suggest to the member from Russell, whom I have a lot of respect for on a personal basis—he has been in this House for 16 years—if he were to look at his comments, what really he did was put on comments on political speeches, I think some clear inaccuracies, but he will find no evidence in terms of deliberately misleading this House.

I am not perfect, Mr. Speaker. I do not think any of us are. But I have gone through this. The agreement, I have gone through it inside out. I have gone through the siteholder agreement. I have outlined it in as recently as Hansard, 3747, yesterday. I indicated in terms of the compliance and what has happened and the action we have

taken. I indicated in terms of the deficiencies of the audit and the fact that we are also requiring further information in terms of the audit. That is something that is, by the way, in the agreement. There is a dispute resolution mechanism.

* (14:50)

I say, Mr. Speaker, that on this issue, this type of approach I think does a disservice to a very difficult situation, and there are two things that have to happen. If there is any violation of the law or of anything involving the gaming side, action has to be taken by the appropriate authorities. The Justice Minister talked about the justice system. The gaming commission has a certain degree of authority. Lotteries has already acted in terms of some technical violations that are not in compliance, but that is the approach that should be taken, because fundamentally we are talking about people here. We are talking about a community that we all know is in crisis. This does not help.

If it was about, as maybe the Government House Leader (Mr. Mackintosh) suggested, payback time, Mr. Speaker, as I have been vocal in the past in this House, I regret that. I can tell members opposite I will probably continue to be vocal, because I think that is why we are all here. I would hope that there is not that element there, because if I notice one thing that concerns me, and I have been in this House for many years and I have seen the ups and downs of tension, and we all know specific incidents. *[interjection]* Well, the former Speaker talks from her seat. I am not going to talk about who was right and who was wrong. This is not a kindergarten. It is not who started it. When you are faced with this kind of situation, Mr. Speaker, there are times—

An Honourable Member: You started it.

Mr. Ashton: You started that. I feel like I am a—no, I will not get into the kindergarten analogy. Sharon Carstairs is long gone. She got into some trouble for that.

But, Mr. Speaker, let us deal with the issues that are here. I do take very seriously the issues that have been raised and the responsibility that I have as Minister of Gaming, and members

opposite may disagree with my approach and the Government's approach. They may even have an interpretation that is different than ours. That is legitimate. That is legitimate in Question Period. It is legitimately raised in a forum, but it does not get down to any matter of privilege.

I did not deliberately mislead the House. I do not believe I misled the House at all, and I would urge that we dispose of this matter of privilege. It is not a matter of privilege. It really is not even only a dispute over the facts; it is more of a political debate. If the members opposite want that, we had I think a very good exchange in Question Period, but I say absolutely on the record that I have tried to provide the information. Even when members opposite do not agree with it or would prefer that it was not the case, I have tried to provide information. If they do not like that information, that is fair enough. That is part of what debate is all about. But to put on a matter of censure, saying that I deliberately misled the House, I think the facts show otherwise.

Mr. Speaker: Before recognizing any other members to speak, I would once again remind the House that contributions of this kind by honourable members are to be limited to strictly relevant comments as to whether the alleged matter of privilege has been raised at the earliest opportunity, whether a prima facie case has been established.

Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain): I do understand that, when a matter of privilege is brought forward, you have to acknowledge that it is your first opportunity to speak to the issue, at the earliest opportunity, and present the prima facie case. I find it quite interesting listening to the Minister of Gaming give his explanation when, in reality, the order of the events that took place would suggest exactly the opposite and support the member from Russell's motion.

In his comments, when I asked the minister recently, and I asked him also in writing, if any of the Aboriginal gaming commissions were out of compliance, he sent me a letter back and stated that none were. He actually took great liberty in the House the other day to acknowledge that he had actually sent me that letter stating that all were in compliance. Yet, when he is asked if they are in the House—and we will

follow the chronological order. On July 16, he was asked in this House—I think it is very interesting and I think it is important that members listen to the words and to the change in direction of the words that the minister put forward and put on the record.

On July 16, when he was asked if Dakota Tipi were in compliance, his quote directly on Hansard is: "It"—referring to Dakota Tipi—"is in fact in compliance with gaming regulations." On July 23, again, following the order of the questions that were being asked and the responses from the minister, he replied to a question: "Indeed, Dakota Tipi is in compliance." Later, in that same Question Period, July 23, he stated, and I quote from Hansard: "I have indicated also and I indicate to the member again that, indeed, Dakota Tipi is in compliance." Again, he puts on the record that they are in compliance. Later, in the same Question Period, July 23, the Minister of Gaming stands, and he says: "I can indicate they are in compliance."

As honourable members and as honourable members in this House, we expect the minister to tell us the truth. Yet, in that same day, July 23, after the financial statements were tabled by the member from Roblin, we see a change in the minister's dialogue. We see a change in the terminology that he is using. After the statements were tabled, the minister quotes: "We are working with First Nations communities, including this community, to make sure they do come in compliance." I think that directly confirms that, in his prior statements and his prior commitments, he has deliberately misled this House because he is now acknowledging that they are not. On the very same day that he said they were in compliance, he now states that they were not in compliance.

Later, on July 24, and, again, I ask the House and I ask honourable members to pay close attention to the language that is being used. On July 24, the day after he said that they were in compliance and then he started backing off from his position and said that we are working to make sure that they come into compliance, the same minister says to this House: "We have been working very hard, over the past last period of time we have been in office, to bring that

committee into compliance." All of a sudden, the terminology has changed.

Later, same day, July 24, he says: "This committee has made significant progress in terms of coming into compliance." Again, that same day: "The only remaining issue within the confines of this agreement signed by the previous government we are dealing with is in terms of the audits from '01 and '02." He has acknowledged that since 2001 this organization has not been in compliance because their financial audited records indicate they are not and the auditor who did the statement clearly states in his comments he could not make any further comment because of the confusion in the issues that related around the financial statements. It sent a flag up obviously to the minister or at least to his department.

Later the same day, the Minister of Gaming says: "I want to say we are continuing to work on a daily basis to bring them into compliance." Now he is starting to acknowledge they are not in compliance, after stating previous days on previous questions that they were in compliance.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, what he says is—this is on the same day, July 24: "We will continue to do the responsible thing, which is to bring the community into compliance in terms of the gaming regulations."

The record clearly states for itself that the member has misled this House. I believe that in some form he has deliberately misled this House, because you see a change in the terminology that he is using, you see in his argument that he presented here. We know for a fact that this community, this gaming organization has not been in compliance since the '01 statements. We know that the Government gave the Dakota Tipi gaming commission time to correct their audited statements and that, at this point, to date has not been completed from 2001 as well as 2002. So it does create a serious case of doubt on this side that the minister was telling us the truth when he told us and when he boastfully said in this House that all gaming commissions are within compliance.

Mr. Speaker, the minister in his statement says he does not have the authority to shut the gaming situation down on Dakota Tipi

immediately. Well, he has not obviously issued the 90-day notice that they are not in compliance, which he should have done back in '01 when he was made aware that their financial statements were not in order, therefore, they are not in compliance.

* (15:00)

We would also ask the minister who is responsible for Lotteries, when they talk about the duration and termination of agreement, section 8, clause (c), and it is talking about termination of agreement for cause by the corporation without notice to the siteholder, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the following events shall be deemed to be cause for termination without notice. Section 1 of that, (c) section (i), spells it out very clearly for the Gaming Minister and also for the Minister of Lotteries that they can cause termination without notice for failure to ensure all gaming on their reserve land is in compliance with the Criminal Code, existing gaming agreements within Manitoba, The Gaming Control Act and any regulations thereto, the Manitoba lotteries commission act, and any regulations thereto, the rules and directives of the corporation concerning video lottery schemes and the rules and directives of the Manitoba gaming commission.

So the minister can stand and say he is doing all he can and all that is within possible. We would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that he has not done that. What he has done is he has tried to mask it, to cover it up, to not expose the public and, particularly on this side of the House, not inform the Opposition when they ask a direct question of the minister. Again, when that question was asked, on one day he said they were in compliance, days later he said they were in compliance, and we saw the change in the minister's terminology to actually verify that they were not in compliance.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I want to offer my support to the minister—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Could I please ask you to please carry on your conversations in the loge. This is a very serious matter, and I have to hear. Take your choice. There are two loges here.

Mr. Tweed: I will just close that I am standing to support the Member for Russell's (Mr. Derkach) resolution, in support, because on this side of the House I believe, outside of this House to the people of Manitoba, that the minister has deliberately misled us. I think it is a serious charge. I think it is one that the minister should be answering to. I respect your decision on this, Mr. Speaker. I think you have a tough decision ahead of you, but I think that the facts that we have presented today in the order that they have been presented will unfortunately leave you with no choice, that the case has been made from this side of the House.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I just want to speak on a few of the more procedural aspects of the matter that has been raised. We are dealing with an alleged matter of privilege. I know that there has been a motion that has been tabled.

The first question is whether the matter was raised at the earliest possible time. Arguments could be rallied, I suppose, that it could have been done earlier today, but that is not where I will rest my submission. On the issue as to whether there is a prima facie case, I just know full well that members opposite know that this does not come anywhere near a matter of privilege. In fact, it is not even, of course, a point of order. Disputes on facts are not points of order. It is certainly not a matter of privilege.

It is just unfortunate. This whole matter is one again where there should be restraint. Surely we must be concerned about the well-being, the safety of the people in this First Nation. I think torquing this kind of a debate in the Legislature can do more harm than good if the exchange is not directed in a measured way.

In this case, there is no matter of privilege. A matter of privilege, in my view, of course, is the most serious allegation that can be made in this House. When one brings forward a matter of privilege there should at least be a semblance of a case.

Now, Mr. Speaker, just in terms of the parliamentary law as to whether there is a prima facie case, *Beauchesne's* 31(1) says: "A dispute arising between two Members, as to allegations of facts, does not fulfill the conditions of

parliamentary privilege." It is mainly on that citation I make my argument.

It has often been used in this House that an allegation of deliberately misleading the House would constitute privilege, but there is a whole series of rulings in this House on that particular point. I will just go back to a ruling of Speaker Dacquay, April 20, 1999. I think it succinctly sets out the precedent and the parliamentary law of Manitoba. The Speaker there said: "With respect to whether the member has made a prima facie case, I would refer members first to Manitoba precedents as established by rulings of Speakers Walding and Phillips. These rulings clearly express that a deliberate misleading of the House requires an intent to mislead and/or knowledge that the statement would mislead. Also, Speakers Walding, Phillips and Rocan have ruled that when one member charges that another member has deliberately misled the House, the member making the charge must furnish proof of intent. In the parliamentary authority, Parliamentary Privilege in Canada, Joseph Maingot sustains this opinion. On page 224 he states that an admission that a member of the House was intentionally misled would be necessary to establish a prima facie case of a matter of privilege."

She goes on to say: "Therefore, short of a member acknowledging to the House that she or he deliberately and with intent set out to mislead, it is virtually impossible to prove that a member deliberately misled the House. Citation 494 of Beauchesne, quoted in rulings of past Manitoba Speakers, states that statements by members respecting themselves and particularly within their own knowledge must be accepted."

So, Mr. Speaker, if indeed this was made at the earliest opportunity, clearly there is no such evidence or facts to back up that this is a matter of privilege. There certainly has been nothing put forward by the member opposite who advanced this matter of privilege to satisfy the threshold test as to whether there is a prima facie case.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a matter of privilege at all, it is simply an unfortunate torquing of an issue that requires a very principled and

measured consideration by members of this House. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: A matter of privilege is a serious concern. I am going to take this matter under advisement to consult the authorities and I will return to the House with a ruling.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)

North American Indigenous Games

Mr. Speaker: As previously agreed, we will now revert back to ministerial statements. Does the honourable minister have the copies?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, we will revert back, as agreed, to ministerial statements. The honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism, on a ministerial statement.

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister responsible for Sport): Mr. Speaker, I have a statement for the House, and now that the photocopier is working.

I want to thank the Opposition for granting leave to revert back. I much appreciate it. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to address the members of this House on an occasion of historic significance to our province. As members are no doubt aware, today marks the opening of the 2002 North American Indigenous Games, the largest sporting event ever held in our province. We are welcoming some 6500 athletes, coaches, team officials representing provinces, territories and states from across North America. For the next 11 days we will be treated to displays of athleticism and artistry celebrating the spirit and vitality of our indigenous peoples.

* (15:10)

Equally important, the games are an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the leadership and dedication of our Manitoba First Nations and Métis communities. These games are more than a sporting and cultural event. They are a declaration of hope and faith in the future of our province. They are a testament to what

can be achieved when Manitoba's Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal citizens work side by side for a common cause.

Through the 2002 games, our Aboriginal youth are demonstrating to all Manitobans that they have the skill and the will to make an essential contribution to the growth and well-being of our province. Like all games, there will be some tangible legacies, assets which will benefit our community for years to come. But it is the intangible legacy that marks the true importance of the next 11 days. A legacy of experience, of new relationships, new opportunities, new confidence and a renewed belief in ourselves. These games are a reminder of what we can accomplish when Manitobans of all ages and backgrounds and from all corners of our province have the opportunity to offer their energies and commitment in a co-operative effort.

On behalf of all members of this House, I would like to offer our congratulations and appreciation to all the organizers and participants in the 2002 North American Indigenous Games. We salute their efforts and achievements and are proud to recognize them here today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, I take great pleasure in responding to the ministerial statement because I am the critic for Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, and I thank the minister for his statement.

My colleagues and I concur and we agree with the ministerial statement that was just read out to the House today. We agree with his sentiments that were contained therein.

We are very proud that Winnipeg and Manitoba are hosting this year's North American Indigenous Games. Approximately 6500 athletes and support personnel across North America are coming to Winnipeg to compete. Thousands of volunteers will be involved, most of whom are from Manitoba. Manitobans are, by far, the best volunteers in the world. I think that was shown time and time again in the world junior hockey championships. We have hosted two Grey Cup games in the past in Winnipeg and, of course, two Pan Am Games, all in a city of only 650 000 people and all in a province of only 1.1 million people.

Volunteers are the lifeblood of any community. They create a community identity. I believe that the identity that is created by the volunteers in Manitoba and in Winnipeg during these games will be one of generosity and compassion. They demonstrate, and I think they will demonstrate, the friendly nature of Manitobans.

The games present an opportunity to showcase to North America and to the world a commitment to athletics and a quest for excellence exhibited by Aboriginal athletes across North America.

It also gives, though, an opportunity to display the unique and rich cultural heritage of Aboriginal people. The games provide, I believe, a unique opportunity for Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals to communicate and to promote a better understanding of Aboriginal culture and heritage.

More than 80 hours, I understand, of free performance will take place during the 11 days of the games—

Mr. Speaker: Order. On Ministerial Statements, the Speaker usually limits the Opposition to equal time as the minister, and the member is now exceeding it, so I would ask the honourable member to please wrap up.

Mr. Hawranik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the thousands of volunteers who have made this sporting event possible. On behalf of my colleagues and myself, good luck to Team Manitoba.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Nor'West Community Health Centre

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Nor'West Co-op Community Health Centre Inc., who celebrated their 30th anniversary at their annual general meeting on June 20, 2002. Nor'West Health and Social Services Co-operative began as the dream of the Co-operative Housing Association of Manitoba, who studied the availability and accessibility of health services in north Winnipeg. Their 1972 study called "Health Through Co-operation" said, and I quote: The mainstay of our philosophy has been a desire to

provide the best possible health care to the community at the most realistic cost.

At the Nor'West centre, preventative care will be a fact, not a concept. The physician will become a member of a health care team, not the leader. Illness and health care will involve the dentist, the nurse, the nutritionist, the social worker, the pharmacist, the community worker and the community working together, not in isolation from each other.

Since 1972, Nor'West has been serving the people of northwest Winnipeg from their current location at Tyndall Avenue adjacent to Willow Park East Housing Co-op. There are ambitious plans to expand to a larger more visible site. The current facility would not hold all the staff, forcing Nor'West to rent suites at Willow Centre apartments. At the annual general meeting, one of the original members, Barry Hammit, [*phonetic*] was present. I would also note that I have been a member of this co-op for 22 years.

Nor'West Co-op Community Health Centre is an excellent example of a nonprofit community health centre, which, it is hoped, will be replicated elsewhere. May Nor'West have many more years of providing a variety of services to the residents of northwest Winnipeg.

North American Indigenous Games

Mr. Frank Pitura (Morris): Mr. Speaker, with the opening ceremonies of the North American Indigenous Games less than a few days away, we can all feel the excitement and anticipation building throughout the province. This event is not only a display of keen athleticism, but also a celebration of Aboriginal history and culture.

To commemorate this, on Saturday, July 20, six Red River ox carts, driven and constructed by members of the Manitoba Métis Federation, left Emerson bound for Winnipeg on the Red River Métis journey. Approximately 100 people are making their way up the Crow Wing Trail, just as their ancestors did some 130 years ago. Along the way, they are stopping at various Manitoba Métis communities, all the while fiddling, jigging and clothed in period costumes as they travel.

Of note is our former Lieutenant-Governor, Yvon Dumont, who is helping to lead the group,

and he is a wonderful addition to this partying event that is making its way along the Crow Wing Trail. The caravan is scheduled to arrive at The Forks in time for the games opening ceremonies this Sunday, July 28.

The Crow Wing Trail, which runs through the St. Pierre-Jolys and St. Malo communities, and the R.M. of De Salaberry is in my constituency of Morris, which was the main path linking Fort Garry to St. Paul, Minnesota, in the 1800s. They traced the path along the eastern side of the Red River, along what is currently Highway 59. Recently, it has become part of the Trans-Canada Trail, between Winnipeg and Emerson.

On Tuesday night, I had the pleasure of attending the Red River Métis Journey at St. Malo where over 600 people gathered to eat, socialize, and dance together. President David Chartrand of the Manitoba Métis Federation gave the opening and welcoming comments. I would like to commend all those participating in this historic journey on their desire to have a greater understanding of the lives of their ancestors and to all the volunteers in each host community for their hard work. I wish them all continued safety and good health as they travel.

I would also like to give my best wishes to all the talented athletes and valuable volunteers and hardworking organizers as the North American Indigenous Games get underway later this week.

Churchill Advisory Committee

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, all of us in this Chamber, and indeed across the province, know that the Port of Churchill plays an important role in the economy of this province.

I am proud to be a member of the Hudson Bay Route Association, which is comprised of a dedicated group of people seeking to expand usage of the Hudson Bay Route and the Port of Churchill. That is why I am delighted that the Minister of Transportation and Government Services (Mr. Ashton) has appointed an advisory board to enhance Churchill's contribution to the regional economy.

The distinguished members of this advisory board are Edward Schreyer, former Manitoba Premier; Lloyd Axworthy, former federal cabinet minister; Dwain Lingenfelter, former Saskatchewan Deputy Premier and Agriculture Minister; John Plohman, former Manitoba Highways Minister. The new advisory board will provide advice to the Manitoba Government, develop policy strategies, and support the port at both the government and industry levels. It will help address complex multijurisdictional issues and develop strategies that will support increased traffic through the Churchill gateway.

Issues to be addressed are grain movement through the port, shipping season extension and related ship insurance costs, port infrastructure requirements and traffic diversification opportunities. The Port of Churchill not only is key to economic and social development in Manitoba, but it also provides resources for northeastern Saskatchewan and the Kivalliq region of Nunavut. The tremendous potential of Churchill has barely been tapped. Much more can be done and will be done in the future.

The new Churchill Advisory Board is an important step forward. I wish the Churchill Advisory Board much success.

Folklorama

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Seine River): Mr. Speaker, Saturday, August 3, marks the opening festivities of the largest and longest running multicultural festival of its kind in the world. On that day, Folklorama Kickoff 2002 will get underway at Assiniboine Park, with activities for the whole family, complete with a fireworks display.

* (15:20)

Each summer, Folklorama, the pride and joy of Winnipeg's diverse multicultural scene, attracts more than 400 000 festival-goers and over 100 bus tours from across North America. This year, from August 4 to 17, 47 cultural pavilions will be opening in various churches, community centres, cultural centres, schools and other venues throughout Winnipeg.

Each pavilion will feature ethnic food and beverages, cultural displays and adult and youth ambassadors. Pavilions will also offer a

minimum of three performances per evening, showcasing traditional dancing, songs, instruments and much more. It is always recommended to plan ahead before setting out for Folklorama, and in order to facilitate this planning, free festival guides are available at Winnipeg liquor marts, IGA and Garden Market IGA. There is also a Folklorama Web site located at www.folklorama.ca.

Mr. Speaker, the Folk Arts Council of Winnipeg has been charged with organizing this event. The continued overwhelming success of Folklorama is a testament to the tremendous job done by the many volunteers and the fine women and gentlemen on the council. For anyone in Winnipeg this summer, an outing to Folklorama is an absolute must. I would encourage all members of this Assembly and all Manitobans to celebrate their heritage and the heritage of others by paying a visit to Folklorama's pavilions, August 14 to 17.

Cultural Vibes

Mr. Cris Aglugub (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to say how honoured I was to bring greetings on behalf of my caucus for the Cultural Vibes 2002 on July 14. This event was put on by the Manitoba Indo-Canadian youth, a non-profit organization that promotes India's diverse culture in Winnipeg.

Cultural Vibes 2002 was held at the Walker Theatre. It was a lively evening that displayed the diversity of Indian culture. The evening was filled with dancers, songs, skits, a fashion show and instrumental pieces. I was happy to learn that the proceeds of the event were donated to the Children's Wish Foundation, as the group wants to focus on aiding youth in the city of Winnipeg.

Mr. Speaker, I am told that the participants in the show take great pride in their roots. They also believe that the key to building a strong Canada is through promoting harmony amongst our diversity and to take pride in the fact that, regardless of our differences, we all stand united as proud Canadians. Cultural Vibes 2002 was an excellent way for the Indo-Canadian youth to display their cultural heritage in Winnipeg for everyone to enjoy. Many of the young participants and organizers live in my constituency of The Maples, and I was happy to see many familiar faces.

I would like to take this moment to thank the organizing committee: Sandeep Gill, Randeep Sidhu, Virpal Gill, Narlove Gill, Ganni Maan, Jasdeep Gill, Anu Singh and Roni Dhaliwal. Thank you to them all for putting on this fantastic event.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the members of the Indo-Canadian youth who put in the hard work to make this wonderful evening come through. I really enjoyed myself, and I wish them much more success in the future.

ORDERS OF THE DAY (Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I would like to announce that the matters that will be considered by the Public Accounts Committee for its July 29 meeting are the provincial auditor's report on the investigation of an adult learning centre, the program, in Morris-Macdonald School Division No. 19, dated September 2001; the provincial auditor's report on An Examination of School Board Governance in Manitoba, dated October 2000; and the provincial auditor's report on A Review of the Policy Development Capacity Within Government Departments, dated November 2001.

Mr. Speaker, would you canvass the House to see if there is unanimous consent to vary the Estimate sequence to set aside the Estimates for the Status of Women and instead consider the Estimates for the Department of Health, with this change to apply for today only?

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced the matters that will be considered by the Public Accounts committee for its July 29 meeting are: the provincial auditor's report on the investigation of an adult learning centre, the program, in Morris-Macdonald School Division No. 19, dated September 2001; the provincial auditor's report on An Examination of School Board Governance in Manitoba, dated October 2000; the provincial auditor's report on A Review of the Policy Development Capacity Within Government Departments, dated November 2001.

Also, to canvass the House to see if there is unanimous consent to vary the Estimates sequence to set aside the Estimates for the Status of Women and instead consider the Estimates for the Department of Health, with this change to apply for today only. Is there unanimous consent? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, would you canvass the House to see if there is unanimous consent to vary the Estimates sequence to set aside the Estimates for the Department of Agriculture and Food and instead to consider the Estimates of the Department of Education, Training and Youth, with this change to apply permanently?

Mr. Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to vary the Estimates sequence to set aside the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture and Food and to instead consider the Estimates of the Department of Education, Training and Youth, with the change to apply permanently. Is there agreement? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, would you determine if there is unanimous consent to change the Estimates sequence so that the Department of Industry, Trade and Mines is placed ahead of the Estimates of Advanced Education, with this change to apply permanently.

Mr. Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to change the Estimates sequence so that the Department of Industry, Trade and Mines is placed ahead of the Estimates of Advanced Education, with this change to apply permanently? Is there agreement? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, would you canvass the House to see if there is agreement to vary the sitting hours of the House on Monday, July 29, such that the House will sit Monday morning from 10 a.m. to 12 noon and from 1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m., with the understanding that if Estimates are called on Monday morning, only two sections, the sections in the Chamber and in Room 254, will sit, and if Estimates are considered in the afternoon, all three sections will sit, and with the understanding that Routine Proceedings will take place at 1:30.

Mr. Speaker: Is there agreement to vary the sitting hours of the House on Monday, July 29, such that the House will sit Monday morning from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. and from 1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m., with the understanding that if Estimates are called on Monday morning, only two sections, the sections in the Chamber and in Room 254, will sit, and if Estimates are considered in the afternoon, all three sections will sit, and with the understanding that Routine Proceedings will take place at 1:30?

Is there agreement? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Mackintosh: Would you canvass the House to see if there is unanimous consent for the Standing Committee on Public Accounts to sit simultaneously with the House on Monday morning?

Mr. Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for the Standing Committee on Public Accounts to sit simultaneously with the House on Monday morning? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Mackintosh: Would you canvass the House to see if there is unanimous consent for only one section of the Committee of Supply to sit in the Chamber on Tuesday, July 30, to consider Estimates of the Department of Health?

Mr. Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for only one section of the Committee of Supply to sit in the Chamber on Tuesday, July 30, to consider the Estimates of the Department of Health? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Mackintosh: Finally, Mr. Speaker, would you canvass the House to see if there is unanimous consent to waive the quorum rule on July 29 and 30 and for no recorded or counted votes to take place on those days.

Mr. Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to waive the quorum rule on July 29 and July 30 for 2002 and for no recorded or counted votes to take place on those days? *[Agreed]*

An Honourable Member: Was that the quorum or forum?

Mr. Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to waive the quorum rule on July 29 and 30 and for no recorded or counted votes to take place on those days? *[Agreed]*

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member from Russell, on a point of order.

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Just a point of clarification, Mr. Speaker, for my own sake, I am asking whether or not, because we are not going to be recognizing quorum, does that mean all members are considered present during that sitting?

Mr. Speaker: For clarification, that is not a House rule. It is a legal requirement under our act, our LAMC. The House cannot even waive that. It is not up to the House to do that.

* * *

Mr. Mackintosh: Would you determine if there is unanimous consent to waive private members' hour on Monday and Tuesday?

Mr. Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to waive private members' hour for Monday and Tuesday? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Mackintosh: I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), that the House resolve into Committee of Supply.

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

HEALTH

* (15:30)

Mr. Chairperson (Harry Schellenberg): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will be considering the Estimates of the Department of Health.

On July 18, 2002, when the committee last met to consider this department, the official opposition critic, the honourable Member for Charleswood, had commenced her opening statement. The honourable Member for Charleswood has 17 minutes remaining. The honourable Member for Charleswood, to continue with her opening statement.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): When we ended the Estimates the other day, I was in the process of identifying some quotes that have come from some health surveys from Manitobans, and I would like to just continue with a few more of those quotes.

One of them, quote: Why did I have to wait three months for a brain tumour scan and five months for the growing tumour to be removed? Are there not enough surgeons, equipment, et cetera? Health Sciences Centre provided excellent care before and after surgery in September 2001. All staff and doctors were great.

Another quote: Waiting lists for specialists are way too long. Referrals are taking much too long.

Another quote: Our system does not work. You should not have to wait so long for tests and treatment. It is a joke.

Another quote: I cannot believe how ridiculously the NDP government has spent health care dollars. I am furious over the Pan Am Clinic purchase and this whole sandwich nonsense.

And another quote: There appears to be a problem with too many generals and not enough soldiers. There is too much paper-pushing and not enough bedside care. From a business point of view, the whole health care system is extremely inefficient.

These comments have all come from over 3200 Manitobans who responded to a survey that a number of my colleagues and I had done. We said right from the beginning that, although our survey was not scientific at all and we have never indicated that it was, it was interesting in that of the questions that were asked—and we tried to be very careful so that we were not going to have any of the questions skewed in any way, so we were careful with how they were asked so that they would be easily interpreted.

But the fact of it was, even though it was not a scientific survey and even though it did only go into ridings of Tory members, I should indicate that although it was only Tory ridings, believe me, I do not for a minute believe that they were only responses from people that might

vote in this direction. I think it attracted a lot of attention from people of all political stripes. I think it is significant that over 3200 Manitobans took the time to be involved in answering the questions.

I would just like to take a few moments to indicate what those questions and what those responses were. The first one: When asked if they are satisfied with the current state of the health care system, the majority of respondents said no. Actually, 82 percent of the respondents said no. The second question: When asked if they believe that the health care system is being managed efficiently, 84 percent said no. The third question was: To avoid being on a waiting list, 59 percent of urban respondents said they would go to a rural hospital for surgery or other kind of treatment. I think that is a fairly significant percentage of people that would be willing to look at some alternative like that.

Another question: When asked how they rate the job the Manitoba government is doing ending hallway medicine, 54 percent of the respondents said poor, while only 7 percent of the respondents said the Government is doing a good job of ending hallway medicine. In another question, respondents were given the choice between adding more money or using existing resources more effectively to address the challenges in health care, 48 percent of the respondents said better management would improve the health care system, while only 2 percent said more money alone would address the challenges in health care. Then another question: When asked if they feel that additional funding over the last two years has improved the health care system, 64 percent of the respondents said no.

* (15:40)

Again, Mr. Chairperson, as we indicated, I think the results show very much that Manitobans are not happy with the current state of the health care system. Again, as I repeated, we do not in any way claim that this particular survey was in any way scientific because we realize that it was not.

But 3200 comments from people with such strong representation, 82 percent of them saying that they are not satisfied with the current health

care system, and 84 percent feeling that it was being mismanaged, I think, are fairly significant. That only 6 percent feeling that the NDP were doing a good job of hallway medicine, I think, is of particular importance.

Some of the other suggestions that did come out of that particular survey were Manitobans recommending, in fact, ways to reduce waiting lists and to improve the health care system. Some of the comments that they had were using rural hospitals for more surgeries, reducing waiting lists by collaborating with publicly funded private clinics, creating screening programs to prioritize patients, and creating an annual report card detailing the successes and challenges facing the health care system and how they will be addressed. I think those are good recommendations coming from Manitobans, and I certainly would encourage the minister to pay some heed to them, to see if there is an opportunity there for looking at ways to improve the health care system. It certainly is encouraging, by the fact that all of these people took time to respond to the survey, and we are certainly hopeful that this Government will take their comments and suggestions to heart.

In comparison, Mr. Chair, we are aware of the consultations that the NDP did with the health care issue. What they did include were four brief, and what I believe are to be poorly thought out and poorly planned and poorly advertised, meetings, which only included six hours of public input from a handful of Manitobans who were not even allowed to make presentations. In fact, this Government gagged one of their own members for speaking up, and had one of the members approach him in his own home to tell him that they were not happy with some of the comments that he made at one of the forums.

It certainly looked like the consultations that were put together by the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) appeared to have been cobbled together on the back of a napkin between Christmas and New Year's. I think it was done just so that the Premier (Mr. Doer) could go to the premiers' conference and not be the only one there to have to say that Manitoba was the only province in the whole country that was not doing anything. I think he may have felt somewhat embarrassed at the time, because, when we look

at what all of the other provinces were doing, every single province did something substantive in terms of looking at consultations. I think the minister was probably asked by his Premier to put something together, and it certainly appeared, when it finally came out, that it was probably something that was cobbled together very, very briefly between Christmas and New Year's of last year.

To only ask two real questions in the whole consultation process, how to pay for rising costs and ideas not to consider—there was a third question: Was this pamphlet useful? Well, I am not sure I would consider that a substantive question to be asked, anyway. But to only ask two questions like that and not allow for open opportunity for people to put forward positive ideas, but only to say what they would not do, has probably not allowed for fully the input and the dialogue and the debate that needs to occur in health care in this province, and I think that has really done a disservice to the people of this province. They were never asked for open-ended ideas, because then, of course, if open-ended ideas were put forward, the Government would then have to act, and they would have to listen. We certainly know that they are ideologically and politically opposed to some of the issues and might have been put into a position of having to deal with some of the suggestions, especially since a considerable number of Manitobans are feeling that we need to be doing something in order to improve our health care system. Probably Manitobans are a little more open-minded in terms of what they see as solutions. I do not think the Minister of Health was prepared to allow that to happen.

I think it is going to be extremely important to look critically at the Estimates in Health to find out where all the spending is occurring, and for the minister to be able to justify these expenditures. We know that CIHI says Manitoba spends the most per capita on health care. The disconcerting part of it all is that it is not making a difference. Patient outcomes are not improving. Patients are still in ER hallways. In fact, a number of times this year, during those periods of time, the numbers were actually higher than they were a year ago, for several weeks running. We know that waiting lists for diagnostic treatments are going up. There are

long waiting lists to see specialists. In fact, there is a certain specialist out there who has 800 patients on his waiting list. I am not sure how he is ever going to get to any of them in a timely fashion. We see that cardiac surgeries are constantly being bumped. In fact, the staff at St. Boniface Hospital have indicated that that is a norm now, for cardiac surgeries to be bumped.

Mr. Chairperson, I think there are a lot of questions that need to be asked throughout these Estimates in terms of the spending in health care and the value we are getting for our dollar. The financial burden of health care is growing beyond our ability to fund it, if the status quo is maintained. However, the current Government appears to see health care as frozen in time, and does not seem to truly understand that the money for it will not be there at the rate they are going. I think the Government needs to wake up and to address this fact before it is too late. The challenges coming down the road are going to be phenomenal, in terms of the increase in cancer rates that are being put forward, in terms of the aging population, and we certainly know that once people reach a certain age, health care costs, in fact, do rise fairly substantially.

We have some extremely serious challenges ahead of us in terms of looking at the development of information technology. We all are very aware that Pharmacare costs are on the rise. None of that is certainly going to be decreasing, but if the Government just continues to pour more money into all of that, eventually the health care system will hit the wall. We will not be able to afford it.

It is disconcerting to see very little signs of this Government strengthening our health care system. The biggest claim to fame, really, seems to be the purchase of the Pan Am Clinic. That, in itself, has a lot of questions still forthcoming in terms of the effectiveness of what has been achieved there.

Certainly, with the amount of extra dollars from last year's Budget, again this year's Budget, the overspending that continues to occur beyond the budgets, the fact that the budget right now for health care is 40 percent of the provincial Budget does not just beg questions about the lack of effectiveness of all this spending in health care, but the impact it is going to have on

other departments within the Government, because, eventually, other departments are going to have to suffer as the money needs to be put into health care, because now the base funding is so significant that it is—you know, we reached some tough years. We do not have the revenue coming in. We are certainly going to find the Government challenged in order to be able to continue to fund the system the way the system is now demanding it be funded.

I think the Government is going to certainly have to roll up its sleeves and get past this status quo, get past this frozen-in-time attitude that our health care system is doing so wonderful. I think the challenges out there are incredible. Patients are suffering on a daily basis as access to timely care is being denied to them.

I believe the minister probably is trying to address that. I believe he probably is working to do what can be done. It is just that there are not a lot of positive initiatives that have actually impacted. Certainly, putting hundreds of millions of more dollars into health care has certainly not taken this health care system and made outcomes better for patients.

I look forward to asking the minister more questions, as we move through this, on the Pan Am Clinic, because certainly he has claimed that this is going to be a model for Canada, and, in fact, there are not any provinces that are using that as a model. In fact, I think the minister has got, maybe, his head in the clouds when he thinks that they are looking here at Manitoba and taking this as a model. We know that British Columbia, Alberta, Québec, Ontario are definitely moving in very much the opposite direction in an attempt to try to deal with access to care problems.

I would certainly encourage the minister to have a better look as to whether or not he would not be willing to find ways in spending public dollars on private clinics so that patients can, in fact, have access to more timely care.

* (15:50)

Certainly, we have seen reports that indicate the only way we are going to have enough beds in the system down the road is if there are more day surgeries. Well, then, the question needs to

be asked: Where should day surgeries be done? Does it make sense to do expensive day surgeries in expensive hospitals? Is there not a way to be more efficient and effective in handling that by taking them out of hospitals and putting them into clinics? It certainly would, I think, save money that could be redirected into some of the challenges. But not only that, it makes access to care more timely for patients. That is what this all needs to be about.

I know that the minister likes to say the Pan Am Clinic has saved them money, but, when asked to provide that proof, the minister has not been able to provide that to anybody.

I think the minister needs to strive for a vision in health care and put a plan in place. I think that as we do not have a plan in place, as long as we do not have an increased focus on strategy and policy and less on firefighting and crisis management, without that we are going to continue to have the challenges in health care. We certainly need to see more visibility, transparency and accountability to the public that key issues are being addressed in a timely, effective manner, and I fully believe that there needs to be a plan for the future in order to accomplish this.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, for the opportunity to put those very few remarks on the record.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the critic from the Official Opposition for those remarks.

Under Manitoba practice, debate on the Minister's Salary is traditionally the last item considered for the Estimates of a department. Accordingly, we shall defer consideration of this item and now proceed with consideration of the next line.

Before we do that, we invite the minister's staff to join us at the table and we ask that the minister introduce his staff present.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): I want to thank the critic for the Official Opposition for being flexible with respect to staff and utilization of staff. I very much appreciate that. I know the staff does.

I would like to just introduce, we have been joined by the deputy minister, Mr. Milton

Sussman, and by our chief financial officer, Heather Reichert, who have joined us at this table.

I should point out to the member when we last met I outlined to the member that, of course, in Manitoba Health we have a significant planning process and significant process and strategy in planning. I am glad the member is agreeing that is what we should do.

I am providing for her scrutiny some information with respect to mental health. The first is a document that outlines mental health renewal vision goals and objectives. It points out that mental health is a broadening of the mandate of the mental health system to include practices that improve mental wellness as well as treat mental illness. It moves the system in a direction towards a primary health care approach that stresses service delivery strategies focussed on promotion, prevention and early intervention.

I note the member has noted that is very important. I am glad she recognizes in fact that is what we are utilizing. This approach reflects population health principles, community-based strategies and co-ordinated integrated approaches with services offered along a continue of care where mental health needs are dealt with in the primary care system.

The paper deals with the fact that we have consulted with consumers, their natural support and service providers. We have identified long-term outcomes for the mental health system in Manitoba that are congruent with the strategic direction of the ministry. These broad outcomes reflect values and beliefs and the direction the mental health system is moving in. They represent an inclusive piece of work compiled through consultation with the groups mentioned above.

The long-term expected outcomes for the mental health renewal system include: (1) Manitobans' requirement of health services, that they receive services which assist in maintaining or increasing their quality of life and respect their personal human rights and cultural values; (2) Manitobans receiving mental health services participate in the planning, decision making and evaluation relating to their care and mental health services provided; (3) Manitobans

requiring mental health services receive those services in the least restrictive environment and as close to home as possible, i.e., where they live, learn, work and play; (4) Manitobans have timely and equitable access to mental health services; (5) Manitobans receive co-ordinated mental health services which are responsive to the individual community population health needs and emerging mental health issues; (6) Manitobans receive mental health services that are appropriate, efficient and effective; (7) Manitobans receive quality mental health services which are evidence based, reflect best practices and are provided by staff qualified and competent to provide the services; (8) Manitobans have the opportunity to learn more about mental health and mental illness, i.e., mental health promotion, illness prevention, early illness detection and intervention; (9) Manitobans will have improved levels of mental health; (10) Manitobans receiving mental health services will have services provided in a safe and, where appropriate, protective environment; (11) the mental health services provided meet or exceed the expectations of consumers with sensitivity to the concerns of the public and health care providers; (12) Manitobans will live in an environment that is free from the discriminating effects of the stigma of mental illness; (13) consumers of Manitoba's mental health services and their families will be empowered; (14) Manitobans will have a healthy environment according to the determinants of health which will assist them in achieving their optimal mental health status.

These are the long-term outcomes of the mental health system. The vision for mental health renewal fits in with the context of these outcomes.

The vision for mental health in Manitoba is:

(1) mental health services are developed, and the vision for mental health renewal is that mental health services develop based on the knowledge that people can recover from mental illness; (2) individuals with mental health problems have the opportunity to live in integrated housing that they have selected in their community; (3) all new initiatives and programs are based on the latest relevant knowledge, reflect best practices and are oriented towards successful coping, empowerment, self-direction and recovery; (4)

individuals have supports and services available to them, that they have had a central role in developing, selecting and evaluating. These services are focussed on successful living in communities. Local community resources have the responsibility to include all citizens who are seen as integral within the framework of support; (5) family members and other natural supports are included in the planning and evaluating of services and initiatives; (6) self-help groups play a significant role in the mental health system and in the lives of consumers, family members and other natural supports; (7) a primary health care approach. Again, that term "primary health care," Mr. Chairperson, which encompasses population health principles, is used to address people's diverse health needs and includes a focus on prevention, health promotion and early intervention. It involves holistic community-based strategies and co-ordinated integrated approaches. Services are offered along the continuum of care. And (8) Manitobans understand and are comfortable with mental health issues and are comfortable exploring and accessing these supports.

Efforts to change negative public attitudes and the resulting behaviour such as discrimination are in place across the province. Mental health renewal must be aligned with a vision statement and goals. The goals and objectives for mental health renewal in Manitoba were drawn from the four things identified at a workshop facilitated by Paul Carling held in Winnipeg, in January 2001. The four themes identified were participation, mental health promotion, illness prevention, early identification intervention and intersectoral issues. The goals are long-term in nature, while the objectives will be tracked and measured over the next few years. Working towards meeting the goals of the mental health renewal contributes to meeting the long-term expected outcomes for the mental health system.

* (16:00)

Goal 1, enhanced meaningful involvement of consumers, family members and other natural supports and individual services, and the health care system planning. Objectives: (1) to engage the RHAs in the identification of strategies for enhancement of meaningful involvement at the

local level; (2) to engage self-help agencies, consumer family members and other natural supports in the identification of strategies for the enhancement of meaningful involvement; (3) to develop a plan to enhance meaningful involvement; (4) to implement the plan for enhanced involvement of consumers, family members and other natural supports.

Goal 2, enhanced role of self-help groups in the mental health system and in the lives of consumers, family members and other natural supports. Objectives: (1) to promote the continuing development of self-help groups; (2) to promote the continuing development of consumer empowerment and education initiatives; (3) to encourage linkages between consumer groups, national, provincial and regional.

Goal 3, improved understanding and knowledge in the community with regard to maintaining good mental health, mental illness and the issues that face individuals living with mental illness and the importance of early identification intervention and where to go for help. Objectives: (1) to facilitate the establishment of a provincial mental health resource centre; (2) to support—

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Chairperson, just an observation. The minister is reading from a document that looks quite lengthy, from my perspective here. I believe we have the general understanding of where the document is going, and, perhaps, in the interest of time, the minister may consider tabling it, or, perhaps, at the very least, could the minister indicate how many pages he intends to read into Hansard?

Mr. Chairperson: On the same point of order, the minister.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I thank the member for that question, and I am glad he asked it. I do not know if he was here for the comments, but there was some confusion that there was a planning process in place. I wanted to put on the record, because, clearly, the

Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) did not know that there is extensive planning and documentation and objectives and outcomes that have been produced by the Department of Health. Clearly, despite our efforts to try to point this out to the member, we have been unable to. So I thought, perhaps, by reading into the record some of those issues, it would help clarify it, because it was very clear from the member's comments that she was unaware of these developments.

Mr. Chairperson: The Member for Portage, on the same point of order.

Mr. Faurshou: Yes. Well, I appreciate the minister's comments and, yes, his observation is correct. I have only been here for the last hour, so I do respect the minister's response. However, I believe he has answered the Member for Charleswood's question, that there does, indeed, exist a document on mental health planning, although I think her comments earlier were in general, and the minister is being very specific to one area of health care. But, basically, if the minister would consider tabling it, I think that would be appreciated.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I want the member to know that I will be tabling that information, but, prior to that, I just wanted to continue just to clarify some of the issues because, while the member suggests this is specific, it is very clear that there is a—you know, I have always felt that Estimates is a two-way street, and it is a question of a chance for dialogue. I am trying to, as I look for education advice from the members of the Opposition—I suggest at some times there might be an occasion where I might be able to clarify or broaden members of the Opposition's understanding of a particular issue.

So, Mr. Chairperson, I will wait for your ruling.

Mr. Chairperson: On the point of order raised, if a document quoted is a private letter, rule 37 states: "When in debate a Member quotes from a private letter, any other Member may require the Member who quoted from the letter to table the letter from which the Member quoted but this rule does not alter any rule or practice of the House relating to the tabling of documents other

than private letters." Therefore, there is no point of order.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: Honourable Minister, continue.

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairperson. I will try to speed up the process because I appreciate the members here and information.

Goal 4 is the improved services and improve the ability of clients to access appropriate services at the right place and right time. The objectives are to work with the Regional Health Authorities to identify and strategize around solutions related to access to care across a continuum of services, particularly related to issues around transition from one continuum to the other; to complete the following reviews of the Selkirk Mental Health Centre, redevelopment of the mental health crisis services, forensic task force, caseload management review, et cetera; and to make recommendations for service improvements based on the review.

Goal 5 is to improve integration and continuity of mental health and health-related services. The objectives are to identify common goals and areas for intersectoral action, that is, housing, employment, education, justice, addiction, family services, et cetera; to make recommendations for proposed improvements in housing options that reflect best practices; to initiate discussions on cross-sectoral data collection on issues for persons living with mental illness, justice, housing, income assistance, women's health, et cetera; and to ensure that mental health representatives are involved in the planning process of primary health care initiatives.

There are several key principles on which the development of mental health renewal is based. They have been identified through consultation with stakeholders and service providers. Men and women with mental health problems will be involved in renewal planning, delivering evaluation. Family members and other natural supports will be supported and have input in the planning evaluation of care delivery. Renewal plan will be affordable and

sustainable, operating within the economic realities of government, RHA and community. The process involves self-help groups, service agencies, RHAs, Manitoba Health, and other government departments. The direction is based on primary care, approaches encompassing population health principles and community-based strategies. Best practices will be reflected. Process will integrate a gender-inclusive approach, acknowledging and considering different mental health needs, and the process plan will be monitored and evaluated.

Manitoba Health is providing leadership for moving the process forward. Renewal process is using a co-ordinated consulting approach to developing strategies for addressing the early and the priority issues.

Now, there is significant work that has been done in this area, and let me table for members opposite. I only have one copy at this point of our Mental Health Renewal Vision Statement that we have published. In addition, I would like to table The Personal Health Information Act that is an information document that is provided to individuals and for persons living with mental illness.

I would also like to table the Mental Health Education Resource Centre of Manitoba, which is a centre established by the provincial government to deal with education issues and to deal with stigma and fighting stigma. It is an initiative that was undertaken that deals with, not only educating and providing a co-ordinating function, but helping co-ordinate our intervention programs through Teen Talk, through mental health workshops of illnesses and issues, and dealing with coping and giving support for mental health issues. It is a resource centre that is available province-wide. I had the honour of opening it on behalf of all Manitobans to provide a co-ordinated educated function, and I will provide copies of that particular document for members opposite so that they can peruse. They may have questions on it. I have another copy for the member, as well, for Portage to provide.

So you can see very clearly that there has been significant advancement in this area, and there has been significant work done with respect to mental health renewal and dealing with all of the issues and wrapping it up in a

timely fashion. The goals, as identified, deal with participation of other consumers and their natural supports, enhancement of self-help, improve the understanding and knowledge in the community, timely and appropriate services, and intersectoral collaboration.

Let me elaborate a little bit on those issues. With respect to participation of the consumers and the natural supports, a new provincial mental health advisory council has been formed with revised terms of reference. The council meets four times a year and provides advice to the Minister of Health and the council of CEOs of the RHAs. The council's current task is to develop strategies for improvement, meaningful participation of consumers and their natural supports and service delivery and system planning.

The reconstituted council is composed primarily of consumers, family members and natural supports, and includes representation from the council of CEOs to the RHAs, as well as Manitoba Health. The recommendation developed will be shared with community agencies, RHAs and Manitoba Health.

* (16:10)

The enhancement of self-help, which is Goal 2. A revised mental health self-help policy has been completed, which identifies a common vision, mission, goals, objectives, deliverables, in areas for collaboration among provincially funded mental health self-help agencies, RHAs. Mental health self-help agencies and Manitoba Health worked together to develop this revised policy. Manitoba Health is facilitating discussions with mental health self-help agencies to plan for a restructuring of mental health self-help to strengthen the profile of mental health self-help and improve access of the public to the resources and supports of these organizations.

Manitoba Health has identified funding in the amount of \$55,000 for board training, strategic planning and other costs that might be associated with this endeavour. The Education and Empowerment Initiative committee has been formed. This is a community committee that oversees and provides broad direction to both the Mental Health Education Resource Centre of Manitoba and the Partnership for Consumer Empowerment programming. I have already

tabled a document with respect to the Mental Health Education Resource Centre. Manitoba Health was a co-sponsor of the collaborative initiatives of the mental health self-help agencies for Mental Health Week this past May.

Goal 3 is improving understanding and knowledge in the community. A provincial mental health resource centre has been established, as I have already indicated. Funding has been provided to the Klinik Community Health Centre to develop and deliver presentations to high schools throughout Manitoba on mental wellness and mental illness. The delivery of these presentations began in September of 2001 through Klinik's Teen Talk program.

An extensive Manitoba Mental Health Web site has been developed. A guide to personal health information has been provided and has already been tabled. A poster of the vision statement has been provided to the member opposite.

Provincial funding has been identified for an early identification intervention initiative, training of physicians in mental illness. It is expected that approximately 120 Manitoba physicians will attend this training. Training will be offered through the University of Manitoba Continuing Medical Education. The Mental Disorders Primary Care package will be used, which was developed by the World Health Organization.

Timing and appropriate services, Goal 4. A planning committee is working on phase 1 of the redevelopment at Selkirk Mental Health, the Extended Treatment Unit, a working group on acquired brain injury is in place to develop a comprehensive profile on the scope of and issues related to acquired brain injury in Manitoba and to recommend strategies of strengthening and improving services. Reviews are underway regarding mental health crisis services, caseload management and departmental review of support employment programs.

The provincial special needs unit, a tri-departmental initiative of the Departments of Health, Justice and Family Services, became operational in the fall of 2001. The two-person team of the unit provides case management, consultation and support services to individuals

who do not meet the eligibility requirements of the community mental health programs of RHAs or the Community Living Program of Family Services and Housing and who pose significant risk to themselves and to the community.

Finally, intersectoral collaboration, which is Goal 5, a strategy in regard to housing is a development that includes funding of \$400,000 for increased numbers of proctors and support to housing staff throughout the province, funding through Neighbourhoods Alive! for a training program for proctors and support to housing staff offered through Red River community college with support offered to students through the Canadian Mental Health Association, Winnipeg Region, ongoing planning with the Department of Family Services and Housing regarding the need for increased housing stock throughout Manitoba.

Manitoba Health has also contributed \$50,000 towards the Co-occurring Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Training Initiative. Manitoba Health will facilitate the development of a provincial strategy for this training. Work is underway between the Family Violence Prevention Program of Family Services and Mental Health to discuss potential cross-training in the development of protocol around working with women with mental illness who are concurrently experiencing domestic violence.

Mental health continues to be, obviously, a priority. It is very clear from these initiatives that there has been some extensive work. I thank, as I did in my opening comments, those members of the department, those people in the community, the self-help organizations and those people who are both in the system in a variety of forms and fashion for their help and advice. I hope this information has been found useful by the members.

Mr. Chairperson: Prior to recognizing the Member for Charleswood, I would just like to confirm on the record the procedure that will be followed in considering these Estimates. Did the committee wish to consider the department in a global manner or in a line-by-line fashion?

Mrs. Driedger: As the minister and I had briefly discussed prior to the official start of committee,

we have agreed we will spend a number of days on global issues. After that we will go line-by-line through the process.

I would ask the minister though if there is an opportunity as fellow colleagues of mine come in as to whether or not occasionally we could revert back to global, as a number of my colleagues will be going from committee to committee. I know a lot of them have local health care concerns. I am wondering if, as in the past couple of years, the minister would be as amenable as he has been in the last couple of years that throughout Estimates, as my colleagues come in, we could occasionally revert back to global questioning to accommodate them going from committee to committee.

I appreciate, as I have indicated earlier, that it may not always be possible because of staff not being here. We will work very hard to be as accommodating to the staff as we can. If those parameters are suitable to the minister, then it would certainly work well.

Mr. Chomiak: Certainly, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Chairperson: There is agreement to first have a global discussion, and later on we will go line by line. If there are times when the Opposition wants to revert back to global, it is agreed upon. Agreed and so ordered.

Mrs. Driedger: I would like to welcome the staff to the table and hope that Estimates proves to be as interesting for them as it will be for all of us and particularly to welcome the new chief financial officer who has quite a challenge ahead of her, I think, with a budget that is as large as health care is and with all of the challenges that are there in health care.

I appreciate the minister's comments on mental health and the efforts that have been put forward in that. It certainly is interesting to see all of the effort and the work that the people involved in mental health have done in terms of looking at those issues and to have a focus on this and to have a plan for that.

So I do feel some degree of reassurance that there is a plan in mental health. I certainly, I guess, do not have those same comfort levels in knowing that there is an overall plan for health care that actually puts forward the vision of the Government and the plan that the Government might have overall in health care.

However, I certainly do give due credit to the fact that there seems to be a strategic plan in place for moving forward on mental health. I think that if something like that was put in place in a lot more areas but also globally so that people know where their Government is moving and where the Government's priorities are, then I think I might have more of a comfort level.

I do not know if the minister is wishing to make any more comment. Other than that, I would go into some of my questions.

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, just briefly, Mr. Chairperson, I am sure the member will find during the course of these Estimates, that there will certainly be adequate assurance provided and adequate evidence of it that will be put on the record to outline the specific plans and goals of the Department of Health that will convey, I think, the message that the majority of Manitobans have indicated to us that they feel the Department of Health is moving in the right direction.

Mrs. Driedger: I would like to spend a little bit of time discussing with the minister the promise made during the election to end hallway medicine in six months with \$15 million. When we go back to that particular election promise, it was certainly a campaign of quick-fix solutions.

At that time, there were no ifs, ands or buts about it. During that particular campaign, the promise was as black and white as anything there ever could have been and that was to end hallway medicine in six months with \$15 million. In fact, hallway medicine continues to exist and, at times, is worse now than it was one year ago, and sometimes it is worse than it was two years ago and has absolutely never been eliminated.

The promise during the election was to eliminate it. The minister and the Premier (Mr. Doer) at the time promised perfection. There were no caveats attached to it. It was very, very black and white. As I indicated there were no ifs, ands or buts. The promise was vote for us and we are going to end hallway medicine in six months with \$15 million.

In fact, on November 23, 1999, the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) said, and I quote, there

will be no more patients in the hallways. That is what we were elected on.

An Honourable Member: November 22.

* (16:20)

Mrs. Driedger: Well, thank you. The minister—

An Honourable Member: It was quoted on the 22nd.

Mrs. Driedger: Well, thank you. I appreciate the minister correcting me, that he quoted it on the 22nd. It was in the *Winnipeg Free Press* on November 23, but it is good that the minister has a remembrance of his promise, and his promise was there will be no more patients in the hallways; that is what we were elected on.

The Finance Minister (Mr. Selinger) on *Insights* Videon on September 22, 2000, admitted that the promise to end hallway medicine was, and I quote, irresponsible.

The Premier, in trying to, I think, start to scramble a little bit about why he was not ending hallway medicine, said, and I quote: There is no question that we feel that the lack of nurses has been a major impediment in fully implementing all of the commitments we have made. We cannot just add water and mix to get a trained nurse. That was published in *The Winnipeg Sun*, September 21, 2000. An interesting comment for the Premier to be making at that time because the Premier and the Health Minister were fully aware of the nursing shortage at the time they made the promise.

The Minister of Health and the Premier on a number of occasions indicated that there were nurses lacking for a number of years. So when they made that particular promise to Manitobans, they knew what the challenges were out there, which really begs the question then: Why did they make the promise knowing that they perhaps could not keep that promise?

The Minister of Health, quoted in *The Winnipeg Sun* on Saturday, March 7, 2001, said that his party has done a significant amount to eliminate what he called, and I quote: The persistent everyday someone in the hallway getting medical treatment on a regular basis all year round.

Now, that sounds like pretzelizing, Mr. Chairperson, and it is interesting, the kind of spinning that has been going on by the Premier, by the Minister of Health, in trying to, I think, squirm their way out of a promise that they made, a promise that now must have turned into somewhat of a PR nightmare for them. A promise that was made prior to an election, commented on several times during an election. People voted for them during the election because of this particular promise, and, instead, they have failed miserably in keeping this one promise. It certainly appears to be a promise that was made when people were feeling particularly vulnerable about their health care system.

I would like to read into the record an excerpt from the *Winnipeg Free Press* on January 23 of this year, 2002, and the headline is: ER patient waits 13 hours for doctor. The subheading is: Grace executive says no excuse for delay. The excerpt is: The daughter of an elderly man in Winnipeg is outraged. Her father had to wait more than 13 hours to be seen by a doctor in an emergency ward. Hallway medicine is a fact of life in Canada, but Manitoba seems worse than other provinces, Deborah Czaplynsky-Sampson said from Oakville, Ontario, where she lives. I have never run into problems like this. Your health care system is in real crisis, Sampson said.

Her father, Nicholas, 81, and her mother waited from 11 a.m. a week ago Monday until sometime after midnight the following day at Grace General Hospital. In the 13-hour wait, the man, a cancer survivor with a serious heart condition, was given little attention, apart from a glass of apple juice. In the time they sat there, I could have flown them here and got them in the Oakville-Trafalgar Memorial Hospital with no problem, said Sampson, who spent a frantic night on the phone tracking her father.

Executives at Grace Hospital agree. We can make all the excuses we want, but there is no reason for a person to wait that long, said Grace Executive Director, Major John MacFarlane. That is the longest wait I have ever heard of. Hospital executives admit long ER waits are more common at Grace, as well as Victoria, Seven Oaks and Concordia Hospitals.

Mr. Chairperson, this was an excerpt from a newspaper article written in 2002. This was

written over two years past the election where the promise was made to end hallway medicine in six months, with \$15 million, and it definitely is well past the six-month mark.

I would like to ask the Minister of Health if he is willing to admit failure on ending hallway medicine, failure to keep his promise to Manitobans. He certainly has not kept that particular promise. Day in and day out we see the statistics. The WRHA posts them on their site on a weekly basis. We have been monitoring them the whole time and never have there been situations where there are no patients in the hallways. There are always patients in the hallways during a period of a 24-hour time frame. Is the minister willing to admit failure on ending hallway medicine in this province, despite that election promise?

Mr. Chomiak: Well, I think that the member's attempt at a question is very useful, because I think there are several admissions in that question that I think are useful.

First off, it is the first time I have ever heard a Conservative member talk about a nursing shortage prior to the election campaign. So that is useful to know. Secondly, it is also useful to know that the member acknowledged something that never was acknowledged leading up to the campaign, that people were waiting days and weeks in the hallways of Manitoba, and the Conservative government looked the other way, pretended it was not there, said it did not exist.

Mr. Chairperson, I have numerous articles: Patients Line Your Hallways, September 30, '98; 33 patients in one hospital, 33 patients at Concordia Hospital. That was a regular occurrence. I am very proud of the fact that an independent third body, not an individual—yes, an individual from Oakville, Ontario, had a comment, and I know the member has a few people that have comments, but let us talk about an independent third-party analysis of the hallway situation. The Canadian Institute of Health Information reviewed Manitoba's hallway plan and said that we had done the best job in the country of dealing with hallway medicine.

Let me take it further. The government of Ontario, not an NDP government, not a Liberal government, but a Conservative government, took Manitoba's plan and implemented it in that

very same province of Ontario, Conservative Ontario, where they were having a horrific time with people in the hallways. They had the courage to admit they had a hallway problem, and they had the courage to deal with it. We were elected on a promise to recognize the problem and to deal with the problem, and that is what we have done from the day we took office.

So, on November 22, we announced our hallway initiative. And what has that meant? Well, I know, over the past two and a half, three years, since we had the courage to put the numbers up on the Web site—think about it, Mr. Chairperson. We just did not say, no, there is no such thing. We said, we will put our money where our mouth is. We will put the statistics on a weekly basis on the Web for all Manitobans to look at. We will let Manitobans decide. Now, I know, periodically, there have been weeks where there had been difficulties, and the member is very quick to compare a problem this year to last year. Who was in office last year? Interesting.

* (16:30)

An Honourable Member: You were.

Mr. Chomiak: Or the year before, but very rarely will the member—that is right. On occasion there have been difficulties, and on occasion there have been some problems on some days, on some weeks, compared to last year, but compared to 1999 or 1998, it is negligible.

So, Mr. Chairperson, that is why we put it up on the Web site, and if the member was prepared to—I think those weeks when she stands up and asks the question in the House, because she looks at the Web site and determines, oh, there is a problem this week, and she stands up and asks her question. If she would compare to '99, or compare it over the whole year, I think there would be a truer picture of a reality about the significant progress that has been made with respect to the hallways where people are not spending days and weeks in the hallway.

Yes, there are problems. Yes, we have said that we are not perfect. Yes, we have reduced it by only 80 percent, Mr. Chairperson, only 80 percent, but, you know, if you walk around the hallways in the hospitals today, the difference is substantial and significant, and in those places

where there is difficulty, like Victoria Hospital, if members opposite had only moved on the original plan to expand and enhance Victoria Hospital, we would be much further ahead on Victoria Hospital. But, no, it took an NDP government to put in place the resources to improve the situation at Victoria Hospital, and that is what we did.

So there are periodic problems with the institutionalized nature of hallway medicine, but more important, Mr. Chairperson, the fact that we are prepared to put the numbers up on the Web site and point out what the numbers were and compare—we are willing to do that and we will do that on a regular basis. Yes, there have been days and there have been some weeks where we have had some difficulty, but we have been assessed by an independent third party to have done the best job in the country.

Further, there are specific measures we put in place that have been duplicated in other areas in order to deal with their hallway problems. And what have we done? Well, before we came to office, we recognized that we needed a comprehensive approach. So we put in place a comprehensive approach that addressed all of the significant issues. So what does that mean? It meant more day services. It meant enhanced psychiatric coverage to deal with mental health patients that attend at ERs. It meant psycho-geriatric teams at five locations, if my memory serves me correctly. It meant an expanded IV program, a home IV program, so that people would not have to attend at a hospital to get their IVs.

Now I know the member in her opening statement, I think, did not realize how much had been done. That is why it is so important that we point out for her the things that have been done in terms of the hallway medicine program.

The expanded home IV program has been significant to allow individuals to stay at home and receive their IVs rather than to go to acute care facilities.

Fast tracking, triaging, additional triaging, just to name a few of the initiatives. In addition, the most extensive vaccination prevention campaign in the history of the province. Prevention vaccination. Most extensive. Broadest across the country.

The member opposite has a case in a newspaper article where she suggests there is a problem. There was a problem that day, and we admitted there was a problem. We have taken steps to deal with it.

The Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation did a review of what could be done with the hallway situation and the crowding and they came up with a list of 10 issues. Do you know, Mr. Chairperson, we had done 9 out of those 10 issues? The tenth issue we did, that was pneumococcal vaccination—to provide a vaccination for pneumonia. Never done in the province of Manitoba.

When the member says nothing has been done, I find it extraordinary. In fact, it must be an oversight, because the member clearly is not aware of enhanced home IV programs, enhanced day surgery for cancer care, psycho-geriatric teams, rehab teams put in place, pneumococcal vaccination, the most expanded vaccination program for flu in the history of Manitoba, just to name a few initiatives that were part of the hallway plan initiative, were part of the overall plan to deal with the hallway situation.

In addition, we put the numbers up on the Web site. We are prepared to have our numbers compared. I know it gives the member, every few months, an issue or two to raise in the House, but we never promised perfection. What we promised was to end the culture of hallway medicine. I think nothing speaks better than the picture of the Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) and Premier Filmon walking by the patient in the hallway at St. Boniface Hospital that appeared in the *Winnipeg Free Press* when the patients were demanding that the premier of the day come down and see what the situation was. Nothing speaks better than that particular picture and that story.

I am not being critical. What I am saying is that we identified a problem. We worked on that problem, and we put in place measures that have been recognized by independent third parties. Not by Conservative candidates or NDP candidates or Conservative candidates that work on issues on a full-time basis. France-watchers, I call them. By independent third parties that have reviewed the hallway situation and said, 80% improvement.

I know the member wants to revisit and refight the 1999 election, but I tell the member, let us not look back. Let us look forward. Let us look forward. We do not have to refight the 1999 election. The election was decided by the voters. Since then, we have been developing and evolving the system in Manitoba to improve the system. I tell the member, we do not have to look back. Let us look forward. Let us see if we can continue to improve upon the record that we have provided with respect to the hallway situation.

I do not know what the member is getting at. I do not want to turn this into a political debate. I just want to deal with the facts. The facts were that we announced a plan. Third-party review of the plan indicates we have done better than anyone in the country, 80% improvement. We continue to work on it on a daily basis. I do not know what the member opposite wants. I am proud of the work that has been done by our team and that continues to work on it on a regular basis.

It is not perfect, but I note that not only are we dealing with one particular hospital in Winnipeg where there is a major problem, which is Victoria, by virtue of doing a capital redevelopment to deal with their hallway situation. We are very frank and admitted that. One or two other institutional problems that we recognize. We are not putting our head in the sand and saying, nirvana is here. In fact, we are continuing to work on it on a regular basis.

I do not know how much more informative I can be to the member opposite or how long the member wants to pursue this line of questioning. I am quite prepared to go the whole, entire Estimates on this particular line of questioning, because I think there is useful information that can be garnered and can be provided in regard to this area. There is a myriad of measures that we have undertaken with respect to the hallways that I have not even mentioned during the course of this discussion, but I am prepared to provide more specifics to the member to outline some of the initiatives we have undertaken to deal with the situation.

* (16:40)

Let me give one example. As memory serves me, just before we came to office, there

were about 200 people waiting in acute care beds for personal care homes when we came to office, about an average of 200 people. That is down to, the last count I looked, 30, 35, Mr. Chairperson.

Well, the member might say, oh, you have not done perfection. You know what, Mr. Chairperson, that is right. We are working on it, but we are not denying that it is there.

An Honourable Member: Not far enough.

Mr. Chomiak: The Member for Charleswood says we have not gone far enough. I tell you, Mr. Chairperson, that is why we are still working on it. We are still identifying those initiatives.

What I find very perplexing is when we ask something like the WHRA to go out and do a study on how we can deal with long-patient stays, the member stands up in the House and criticizes the initiative. She criticizes a study that was undertaken—

Point of Order

Mr. Chairperson: A point of order, the Member for Charleswood.

Mrs. Driedger: Actually, just to clarify, because I am sure the minister does not want to put misinformation on the record. When I stood in the House the other day to ask questions, it was for confirmation of numbers.

Those were the only comments that were made in the House. Those were the questions that were made in the House. There were no other comments made in the House other than asking the minister for confirmation.

So I would ask him to please make sure that when he is putting forward comments, that they, in fact, are accurate.

Mr. Chairperson: On the same point of order, the honourable Minister.

Mr. Chomiak: On the same point of order, Mr. Chair, first of all, the member does not have a point of order. Not only is it a dispute over the facts, but I might suggest the member forgot to mention that she conveniently leaked some pages from her leaked document, some pages to members of the press but not all of the pages.

She leaked some pages, and I think there was a press release accompanying it. There may have been. *[interjection]* The member says there was not?

An Honourable Member: There was not.

Mr. Chomiak: Oh, the member says there was not. There was just some pages leaked specifically from the document, not the whole document. So I think the member should be totally candid in terms of her statements regarding that particular issue.

Mr. Chairperson: On the point of order, there is no point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable minister had the floor.

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, I was just ready to wrap up, Mr. Chairperson, but the member prompted me, reminded me of several other issues that we wish to discuss.

So, just to summarize, we are working on the issues everyday, and there has been identification of the need to deal with the long stays in Winnipeg hospitals, and I hope the member is more supportive in that regard than she appears to have been with respect to initiatives that are being studied, not implemented, being reviewed and being discussed with people across the system to see how we can improve the system.

I thought, in the course of the member's statements, that that was what she wanted us to do, because if I recall from her opening statements, she seemed to suggest that we should not spend more money but we should spend it in a more efficient fashion. I only suggest, Mr. Chairperson, that spending money in an efficient fashion is something that we all want to do. So I hope that she is supportive in terms of any initiatives that might be discussed in order to deal with things like efficiencies, long-term stays and other matters that will help improve the quality of care and the resources going into the system.

Mr. Faurchou: Mr. Chairman, I want to ask a question of you, Sir. Having attended other

committees and just in observation, the latitude shown the minister in this committee of Estimates is extraordinarily broad. I am wondering: Is this indicative of this committee, and how you, Sir, conduct the evaluation of the department when one asks a very specific question to a challenge within the health care system, that we have dialogue on vaccinations that, obviously, even to a layperson like myself, are not conducted in the hallways of the hospital in ER, as was the specific question of the Member for Charleswood?

If I am in error, and the emergency rooms of the province are now charged with vaccinations, I stand to be corrected. But the latitude, and that was not the only example within this that I do not believe had pertinent information towards the hallway ER situation that the Member for Charleswood was very specific to address her questioning to.

Mr. Chairperson: It was agreed upon at the beginning of the discussion here to have a global discussion. Each member here can speak 30 minutes. The speaking times of 30 minutes are applicable to our rules. The only time it is over 30 minutes is when the minister makes the opening address, which is 60 minutes. Otherwise, all committee members can speak 30 minutes.

Point of Order

Mr. Chomiak: Point of order, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Chairperson: Point of order.

Mr. Chomiak: Point of order, perhaps clarification, Mr. Chairperson. The question of the member was dealing with the hallway situation. I was pointing out the programs put in place to ease pressure in the hallway. Vaccination, in fact, is one of the key components, both recommended by the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation and by the Canadian Institute of Health Information as one of the key ways to reduce pressure on the hallways. It is a preventative measure to keep people out from getting not just flu-related symptoms but pneumococcal pneumonias that chronically cause problems.

That is why in September 30, 1998, it said, patients line ER hallways and flu bug has not

even hit yet. Concordia Hospital had 33 patients waiting for beds, including a woman who was waiting for treatment since 4 p.m. on Monday, when that was Wednesday. Just for clarification just to help the member.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you for concluding your comments. There is no point of order. It is a dispute of the facts.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: The floor goes to the Member for Portage la Prairie.

Mr. Faurshou: Mr. Chairperson, I believe you misunderstood. I was asking a question of you, Sir, in regard to the latitude shown as it related to specific questions. In observation of other committees, one sees responses directed very much to the point raised by the questions by individual members.

I recognize whole-heartedly that health is a very broad issue, but if one is going to get into every aspect of health on that related point for every question, I wonder how we are ever to manage our way through Estimates and the questions that are very important to the people of Manitoba.

Mr. Chairperson: It was at the beginning, here, agreed to have a global discussion.

Mrs. Driedger: Just to comment on some of the statements made by the minister in his response, when he indicated this was the first time he has ever heard of a Tory talk about the nursing shortage that was occurring while we were in government, I think he responded the same way to that question last year too. So this in fact is not the first time that—

An Honourable Member: Can I correctly say second time?

Mrs. Driedger: Okay. He wants now to change his mind to say it is the second time. Certainly, we put in place the Provincial Nursing Resource Task Force. That particular group, which I was a member of, was put in place by our Minister of Health at the time. If that is not an acknowledgment of trying to address a nursing shortage, I am not exactly sure what is.

Perhaps the minister was not aware of that particular Provincial Nursing Resource Task

Force. He may not have been aware that group was in place. It certainly was in place for quite a long time. It was then that our Minister of Health at the time was looking at the nursing numbers across the province.

That was the time when the initiatives were started to gather as much data on what was happening and to also compare to what was happening in the country and to try to address what was becoming more evident as a nursing shortage across this country.

Perhaps the minister is not even aware that in 1997 it was not until then that the Canadian Nurses Association even acknowledged there was a problem. So right across this country, until the late nineties, because nobody has any good projection models, because we do not even have computerized systems to identify human resources is why it probably snuck up on us and snuck up on everybody before people really realized what was going on.

* (16:50)

For the minister to say the Progressive Conservatives never acknowledged it, perhaps I could refer him to perhaps talk to some of the department staff who might have been on this particular provincial nursing resource group who actually worked very hard, which was made up not only of people within Manitoba Health but various unions were represented on it, nursing associations were all represented on it and it was certainly a group that was well-represented by nursing factions from right across the province.

For the minister to say the Tories were never acknowledging the fact that there were some problems I find a little bit odd, but, perhaps, I could recommend that he do speak to some of his staff, because this subject was being addressed at the time.

Certainly, the minister, by that response, also confirmed his awareness of the nursing shortage back when he was in opposition. So it certainly does make me wonder why he would make a promise to end hallway medicine in six months when he knew that the challenges in terms of a nursing shortage were definitely out there.

It is also interesting to note in the minister's response that, when he is asked to be accountable for his own election promises, when he is asked to comment on his record, his first preference is to revert back to the past, to blame the past government for the woes that he is living in now, to try to deflect from his record, because he has such difficulty defending his own record. That actually seems to be a trend that we are seeing throughout this whole Cabinet of the Doer government, that, whenever they cannot defend their own record, their first course of action is to turn around and blame the previous government and try to deflect from their own record.

It is interesting that, almost three years into their mandate, they are continuing to behave like that. I think more and more people in the public are starting to say: What is going on here? Why do you have a government that cannot stand to account for its own record? Why do they always revert back and try to discredit somebody else? I think people are tiring of that. I think Manitobans are tiring of that. They want a government, especially one that has been in place for almost three years, to certainly stand up and be accountable, rather than the first comments out of their mouths is to attack either the person that asks the question, to try to discredit the person that asks the question, and then try to deflect from having to defend their own record.

I think that is a pretty sorry state when, almost three years into a government, that we still have a government that basically is almost reliving its days of opposition instead of trying to behave like a government that is in power, that has great opportunity before it to address the challenges and look for the opportunities out there to make things better for people in this province. It is a behaviour that is certainly becoming more known and more obvious to people, especially people that are watching Question Period.

It is interesting the number of people that are starting to call in, and I am sure his office is getting a number of the comments, too, where people are saying, why do they not answer the questions? When one looks at the role of government and the incredible opportunities they

have and the responsibilities they have, it is a serious question. I certainly appreciate that people are wanting answers, and when an opposition member stands in the House and asks a question, it is on behalf of Manitobans. Then to have Manitobans insulted by lack of answers, I think, is offensive to people, and people are starting to state their displeasure with that and saying it is time for a government to behave like a government when they have been in power for almost three years.

Then, to hear the minister just now indicate that he has ended the culture of hallway medicine, I would like to remind the minister that that was not his promise in the election. He seems to forget that, in the election, he promised to end hallway medicine. It was as simple as that. The promise during the election was to end hallway medicine, and, as I have just indicated, in the *Winnipeg Free Press*, November 23, 1999, the Minister of Health said, there will be no more patients in the hallways. That is what we were elected on.

I am not sure what the minister does not understand about that: There will be no more patients in the hallways. That is what we were elected on.

Now, he says, well, what we promised was to end the culture of hallway medicine. Well, that is not what his promise was. If you go back to look at the promises that were made during the election, if you go back to the comments made shortly after the election, the promise was very, very obvious. It was to end hallway medicine in six months with \$15 million. It was not to end the culture of hallway medicine; or, as the minister said on March 17 in *The Winnipeg Sun*, it was not a promise to eliminate the persistent every day someone in the hallway getting medical treatment on a regular basis all year round. That pretzelization, I am not sure where it came from, but, certainly, that was not the promise that was made during the election. The election was to end hallway medicine in six months with \$15 million.

It also was said during that particular campaign by the Premier (Mr. Doer) of the province, and I quote: This is a moral commitment that we fulfil. So what the Premier at that time did was make not only a promise to

Manitobans to end hallway medicine, he said this is a moral commitment that we are making to Manitobans. So not only did they break an election promise, a very significant election promise, they have compounded it by also breaking what the Premier has called a moral commitment. He said he was going to fulfil it, and obviously that is not what is being fulfilled by this particular Government.

I guess I am waiting for the day that this Government turns around and apologizes to Manitobans for misleading them in the last election because they certainly did bamboozle Manitobans in the last election. I think they took very vulnerable people, people who were concerned about their health care system, people who were feeling very vulnerable at the time because they were sick, people who wanted a health care system that is there to meet their needs, and the Government took advantage of the public's vulnerability at the time. They bamboozled them with an election promise that they were going to fix it all, that they had all the answers, just give us \$15 million.

In fact, the Minister of Health, on a morning talk show on CJOB, was asked by the talk show host: How much money do you need to keep your commitments to Manitobans? The Minister of Health actually said, oh, I do not think we are going to need very much. I will try to find the quote to remind the minister of what he said, because now what are we, \$650 million more into health care.

Mr. Chairperson: Order. The hour being 5 p.m., committee rise.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING AND YOUTH

* (15:40)

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order? This section of the Committee of Supply, meeting in Room 255, will now resume consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Education, Training and Youth. We are currently considering item 16.1. Administration and Finance (b) Executive Support. The floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Harold Gillehammer (Minnedosa): Mr. Chairman, when we last met, we were dealing

with the modernization of the school division of Turtle River, and the minister indicated on page 3807, and I quote: In Turtle River's case, when they were engaged in the discussion in 2000, they said, very clearly, please, leave us alone. That was the advice from Turtle River, and that was advice from other school divisions, as well, I might add. Can the minister indicate what other school divisions gave him similar advice?

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Education, Training and Youth): Mr. Chair, over the course of this Government's tenure on this file, the school division modernization file or the school division amalgamation file, as it may variously be known, during our time on this file, which dates from September 1999, and, I suppose, during the previous government's time on this file, which dates from the beginning of the Norrie report in 1993-94, there were numerous discussions, consultations with school divisions around the province.

In the period after the formation of the new government in 1999, in the fall of 1999, I engaged school divisions throughout the province in a very active way on this issue, asking for their views and perspectives on opportunities for providing improved educational programming, opportunities for the better use of tax bases in the regions of the province that school divisions exist in, as well as a number of other questions; engaged them very actively and very formally with requests that they discuss opportunities around educational issues to take advantage of opportunities to merge together with neighbouring divisions to better redirect resources from administrative functions to classroom functions.

We asked all school divisions in the province to report to us on amalgamation options in the spring of 2001. Most divisions indicated that they did not wish to be amalgamated, and a significant number, I cannot recall exactly the proportion, did not even take our request seriously, much to my chagrin, because this obviously was a serious issue of public interest in the province. It has been since 1993-94, as I said, in a more focussed way since the fall of 1999 and the change in government. But it certainly has been an issue of significant interest around the province since the early 1990s. Indeed, I believe the previous government was serious and sincere in its efforts to move forward

on this file; otherwise, they would not have undertaken the Norrie Commission. Certainly, our Government was very serious on this file, and that is reflected in the legislation that we dealt with this session, Bill 14, The Public Schools Modernization Act.

Again, to respond to, I guess, the question around Turtle River. They were one of many divisions that indicated they were not interested in merging with neighbouring divisions. They were one of a number of divisions that responded that way. As I said, there were a number of divisions who, in the early days at least, did not take our request seriously at all.

Having said that, the evolution of this issue from the time of the change in government in the fall of 1999 was one that involved the utmost seriousness on behalf of government and the utmost sincerity on behalf of government, and yet most determination to act in the public interest in redirecting resources from administrative functions to classroom functions. We as a government are very serious about taking a proactive approach to developing educational excellence in the province, a proactive approach to ensuring student success for young people in the classrooms of the province of Manitoba. Our proactive approach not only involves the philosophic understanding that education and promoting educational excellence and supporting educational excellence is at the very basis of creating economic development opportunities in communities around the province, individual human development opportunities for children in the classrooms of the province, involves the facilitation of healthy communities and healthy citizenship in Manitoba.

We as a government believe very strongly in supporting our public education system as well as our post-secondary education system or college system or university system, our adult learning centres throughout the province, adult literacy centres throughout the province, and, as I mentioned yesterday, extends really to preschoolers, as well, with the Healthy Child Initiative. So we are very serious in supporting, philosophically and proactively, initiatives that enhance educational excellence right across the board in Manitoba.

More than this, Mr. Acting Chair, we are also putting our money where our mouth is as a

government in supporting unprecedented levels of operating support for our public education system, unprecedented levels of capital support to address the infrastructure deficit left as a legacy to the public school system by the previous administration. Over \$200 million in new dollars has been invested in the public school system since September 1999. This year, for the first time in Manitoba's history, the provincial level of support to the public school system was in excess of \$1 billion. So we are very determined to act in a manner that supports public schools excellence and public schools investment in word and in deed.

In reference to the member's question about other divisions again, I should add on that score that in early September, late September 2000, I did write to all school board chairs encouraging boards to look seriously at possibilities for amalgamation or other recombination as may be determined at the local level by locally elected trustees. Look seriously at these possibilities for amalgamation or recombination where such moves would result in gains in efficiency, or quality of education for students in the regions of the province. To assist school divisions in pursuing an amalgamation partner during this phase, the department offered financial assistance of \$50 per pupil, which was in accord with the precedent set by the previous administration during their regime in Manitoba. There was some consistency in that \$50 which dated from the Norrie era, one of many things in this discussion that date from the Norrie era.

* (15:50)

The \$50 per pupil assistance was also supplemented by support in the amount of up to \$10,000 for each group of amalgamating divisions to help facilitate their efforts to undertake a preliminary review and analysis, on a regional level, of opportunities for efficiency of delivery, and expanding educational opportunities through amalgamation or recombination.

School divisions were also provided with suggested reporting templates upon request, as a guide to meaningful analysis of possible amalgamation scenarios of regions throughout the province. Areas identified for consideration and analysis through that template included the geographic and demographic compositions of

divisions; the nature of the economic activity undertaken by school divisions in those regions, as well as the number of schools and school programs offered; school enrolment trends and staffing levels; the school community profile; existing non-educational community support services that existed in the divisions; governing structures and the assessment of financial positions in terms of revenues in divisions; expenditures and surplus deficit realities experienced by divisions; and a number of other areas that were to help provide clarity in undertaking meaningful discussions and meaningful analysis at the regional level.

Within the subsequent twelve months from September 2000, only one voluntary amalgamation was pursued in the field, despite these levels of support, and despite the fact that this has been, as I said, an active issue in the province for nearly a decade. As I also suggested earlier—Manitoba being amongst the last with Saskatchewan to undertake this exercise—I referred to the Government of Alberta yesterday when we were in Estimates, moving in 1994 from some 1200 trustees to a number less than 500—460, I believe, notionally, as I recall; and the imposition in 1994, nearly a decade ago in Alberta, of administrative costs caps to also provide public assurances that education dollars—public education dollars—would be used for the purposes in which they were raised and allocated. Specifically, that is for educational purposes as opposed to administrative purposes.

As I said, in Manitoba within the twelve months following September 2000, only one voluntary amalgamation was pursued. In October 2002, a month after my letter of September, an application to amalgamate the School District of Churchill with the Frontier School Division was received and approved and this voluntary amalgamation will come into effect—well, has, for all intents and purposes, come into the effect with the passage of Bill 14.

On November 8, 2001, a full year and two months from my September entreaty to school board chairs encouraging boards to look seriously at amalgamation and recombination where such moves would result in gains in efficiency or quality of education, I subsequently announced the reduction in the number of school divisions in Manitoba from 54 to 37. Related

policy decisions to support amalgamations and direct more resources to classrooms were communicated as part of the November 2001 amalgamation announcement, and included a number of points, one being a moratorium on boundary change or transfer applications from the board to the Board of Reference from residents until September 2004; a moratorium on school closures in affected divisions prior to September 1, 2005; mandating the administrative cost limits for all divisions, which we went over yesterday—4 percent for urban divisions, 4.5 percent for rural, and 5 percent in the North effective 2003-2004; and the capping of trustees in any school division at nine.

Prior to the November 2001 announcement, 32 of Manitoba's school divisions had an enrolment of 2000 or fewer students. A minimum threshold of 2000 students had been suggested as a reasonable critical mass for programming and administrative purposes. That is a notional idea. It has never been carved in stone, but certainly 2000, notionally, is a reasonable critical mass. There are some divisions that continue to exist with fewer than 2000 students today, Turtle River being one of them. I expect that, as history has demonstrated for the last 100 years in this province, the school districts and divisions in the province of Manitoba will continue to evolve, as they have over the history of this province, to better serve students and better provide educational programming for students in the classrooms of the province of Manitoba. I understand that a number of divisions are already talking to each other in this light for future considerations, which, I think, is a positive development.

To go back again to the member's initial question, there were a number of divisions that expressed a desire not to amalgamate. Some of those divisions got their wish in terms of original statement to my office. Some of those divisions did not get that wish as a consequence of the passage of Bill 14, but, as I again said earlier in our Estimates process yesterday, the decision on the boundaries that are in place as a consequence of Bill 14 was one that was taken with the big picture in mind; one that was respectful in a fundamental way of existing boundaries around school divisions in the province.

There were very few new lines drawn on the map. What the process encouraged or facilitated

in broad strokes is a merging of existing boundaries, so that there were not undue stresses put upon school division administrators and trustees throughout the province around issues like collective bargaining, disposition of assets, harmonization of contracts, harmonization of programs, and so forth. We were very, very sensitive to the existing boundaries and the existing traditions of school divisions around the province. Some divisions merged that, initially, were not interested in merging. Other divisions did not merge, which was in conformance with their initial wishes. But this exercise, from the beginning, and I place the beginning in 1993-94 with the previous government's undertaking of Norrie, to the conclusion last week with Bill 14, this process has been fundamentally respectful of divisions and of communities, fundamentally engaged with divisions and communities and other educational partners in terms of the discussion.

Sometimes, divisions got what they wanted. Other times, divisions did not. But the open-door policy in my own office and the department's office, the facilitation exercise that the department undertook from the beginning of this process, and continues to undertake today in assisting divisions in the challenges they face not only in amalgamation but in recovering from the infrastructure deficit that they were placed in over the last decade and in receiving increased support from the Province in terms of operating dollars year in and year out to address the provincial cuts of the nineties.

* (16:00)

We continue as a government to be interested in working with divisions, interested in having a dialogue with educators and with trustees that is fundamentally informed by our shared desire to provide the best-quality education possible for young Manitobans today and into the future.

I could go on about the OECD, the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development's assessment of education in Manitoba and the record that Manitoba has as a leader in the world in terms of public education. I may take that opportunity during a future question under Estimates, because I think it is noteworthy that the OECD recognizes Canada

and Manitoba as being one of the leaders in the world in terms of quality of education delivered in the classrooms of our schools.

Manitoba ranks significantly ahead of the United States of America, significantly ahead of the United Kingdom. Manitoba ranks significantly ahead of France and other European nations in its quality of education. This is, in no small part, due to the excellent quality of our educators, the excellent quality of our trustees and their commitment to ensuring that young Manitobans get the best-quality education available not only today, but also building a better system for the future, and certainly the school divisions of the province that have been impacted by The Public Schools Modernization Act are well placed to take advantage of the opportunities presented to them in terms of broader tax bases, the broadening of educational programming through the sharing of the expertise of two and three former divisions into a new division.

I have every confidence in the trustees who will be elected in October 2003, and the trustees who are currently serving on the interim boards to manage this time of change for the benefit of students in the same way that their predecessors in the 1950s and 1960s and earlier in the 1920s with the public schools consolidation process that took place during that time, when Manitoba moved from some 2000 divisions and districts to notionally 200 divisions and districts, that the same motivations that their predecessors had—and that is building an educational system of excellence in Manitoba—will continue to be central, as I said, to the interim trustees who are acting today and the trustees who will be elected on October 23.

Certainly, that has been the commitment of the Department of Education, Training and Youth in my experience, both in serving this Government and serving the previous administration. I think that Manitoba is extraordinarily well served by a dedicated and professional civil service and the Department of Education and Training whose paramount belief is in their role as proponents of educational excellence for the province and proponents of professionalism and partnership in the development of that educational excellence with all interested parties and interested Manitobans.

Mr. Chair, if I might, yesterday the member requested some information on the FRAME report and limiting the limits around school caps. I would like to table for the member, I guess, two copies, a letter from Doctor Levin to all secretary treasurers, superintendents of school divisions in districts around the administrative cost caps and definitions in terms of FRAME definitions on the cost caps. Doctor Levin's letter to the field indicated the Government's intention of limiting the proportion of budgets that school divisions can spend on administration. The intent of the provision, as Doctor Levin notes, is to ensure that as many resources as possible are devoted to the direct support of students learning.

The letter goes on to indicate that the FRAME committee has reviewed the definitions related to administrative expenditures and other related matters and made a number of recommendations that the minister has improved. Included is a change to the reporting of curriculum consulting and development expenditures whereby the administration limit will apply only to the administration component of this program. A new FRAME program will be established for those administration costs. Other curriculum consulting and development costs will not fall within the administration limits.

I should note that change was a direct consequence of ongoing consultations with the Manitoba Association of School Trustees, in particular, and our desire to work with MAST and trustees in providing an approach that made the best sense for the public school system and provided the best educational results for the public school system.

Doctor Levin goes on in his letter to state that the minister has also approved a recommendation that costs of liability insurance, which is primarily related to school liability, will be regarded as outside of the limits. In addition, the calculation of administration costs related to self-funded expenditures will be adjusted to allocate associated revenues up to the incremental divisional administrative cost to the program. These—and other approved changes—are to clarify FRAME definitions and are included in this attachment.

Mr. Chair, the paper that I just tabled discusses the revised FRAME definitions

subsequent to April 2002 and, as I said yesterday, I believe, were developed in full consultation with the FRAME advisory committee; were developed as a consequence of a dialogue in consultation with the Manitoba Association of School Trustees to reflect the interests of the student in the classroom and to ensure that educational priorities were not going to be impacted by caps that are properly directed at administrative costs.

We will continue, as a department, to consult in a very thorough way, and on a daily basis, with all of our educational partners on these and other issues. Education is a very dynamic portfolio, as most are. The realities in the public education in the province of Manitoba in 1900 were very different from the realities in 1920. The realities in 1920 were very different from the realities in 1950. The realities today are very different from the realities a half century ago. So I expect that the evolution of public education and public education policy in the province of Manitoba will continue to evolve and, during the tenure of this Government, at least, will continue to evolve in an environment that is supportive of teachers, supportive of school communities, supportive of educational excellence and program excellence for students, supportive of increased fiscal support for capital infrastructure in the schools around the province and supportive of increased operating funds in accord with the province's capacity to provide those increases and operating funds. And that is aligned with economic growth in the province.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I thank the minister for his rambling discourse. I wonder if he would be interested in answering the question. Can he identify those divisions who, like Turtle River, indicated that they did not want to be part of amalgamation?

Mr. Caldwell: Mr. Chair, as I said at the outset, in the case of this exercise, since the fall of 1999, the Doer government has been very serious about pursuing in a proactive way this open file that began in '93-94 in Manitoba, and was completed in most other provinces last decade, and has only been recently completed in the province with the passage of Bill 14.

In terms of Turtle River, as the member noted, they were one of a number of divisions

that were not interested in merging or amalgamating with neighbouring divisions. They told us that. A number of divisions told us that.

The member may know, or he may appreciate, or I may direct him to his caucus to get details on this, because all reports of school divisions in the spring of 2001 were made available to members of the Opposition in the opposition caucus some time ago as a result of a FIPPA request. So that information will be in the member's caucus office.

I do not recall the exact number of divisions saying that they did not want to be amalgamated here today, but as I expressed in my first answer, it was certainly most of them. We had only a few divisions that expressed a real interest. In some of these cases, they could not find a willing partner. I reflect on the Midland-White Horse Plain amalgamation that subsequently took place.

One division was interested in merging for the benefit of students in their division. The other division was more reticent. So there were divisions that were interested but could not find a willing partner in the province. Subsequently, a marriage has been facilitated in all of those cases, in fact, by The Public Schools Modernization Act.

During the process that was undertaken since the fall of 1999, there were certainly other school divisions who gradually came to view the positive benefits of an amalgamation, and came to view the fact that amalgamation would be a desirable course of action to support enhanced educational programming and to access a broader and wider tax base moving forward into the future.

I can, off the top of my head, reflect on the voluntary amalgamation between Boundary and Rhineland school divisions, which is now the Border Land School Division. The Red River School Division, the Morris-Macdonald School Division merger process, which began, indeed, before the fall of 1999, when the Doer government took office, and, again, has been concluded with Bill 14 and will be in effect post October 23.

The Prairie Spirit-Mountain school division amalgamation that builds on the extraordinary

success of the previous merger between Tiger Hills and Pembina Valley, which took place some years ago to form the original Prairie Spirit School Division.

There are other communities in Duck Mountain with Frontier, or Churchill with Frontier, where partners came together. But certainly the information around the specifics is available to the member in his caucus office, and has been for some time.

Mr. Gilleshammer: So we have a situation where numerous school divisions indicated that they did not want to be part of amalgamation. Yet some of them are forced to amalgamate, and some of them are not. My question yesterday was: Why was Turtle River not included in this amalgamation? The only reason given was because they did not want to be. It appears, by the minister's comments today and yesterday, there were other school divisions that did not want to be. Why were they forced to amalgamate, a decision made by the minister, and Turtle River, with 700, 800 students, an ability to raise funds possibly more limited than other parts of the province, why were they left out of the modernization, given that some of the school divisions that indicated they did not want to be, were, in fact, forced into amalgamation and Turtle River was not?

* (16:10)

Mr. Caldwell: The member is not entirely correct that the sole reason for Turtle River not being part of the new constellation of school boundaries in the province of Manitoba is because they did not want to be. We went through that yesterday for at least a half an hour, discussing other factors that were integral to the decision-making process around The Public Schools Modernization Act.

As I said yesterday, we need to see Turtle River, as well as all individual school divisions in the province, as part of the change in that region. Changing Duck Mountain was clearly the highest priority, given their size and financial situation. I reviewed some of the changes in western Manitoba yesterday, with the merger of Antler River and Souris Valley, the merger of Pelly Trail and Birdtail school divisions, the amalgamation of Dauphin-Ochre River, portions

of Duck Mountain and Mountain School Division, as well as the amalgamations that were taking place in Frontier, with Duck Mountain. Once Duck Mountain was moved in with Dauphin-Ochre River, it made it quite difficult, in fact, to do something about Turtle River. We were also reluctant to split too many of the existing school divisions in the province.

As I said yesterday, in order to minimize disruption, we tried to amalgamate whole units wherever possible. Adding Turtle River to Duck Mountain and Dauphin-Ochre River would have been quite difficult, especially once Inter-mountain expressed a wish to enter into the merger with Duck Mountain and Dauphin in a voluntary and enthusiastic way. This was a case where change in Turtle River might well have been desirable, but it was very difficult to do in the context of the number of changes that were taking place in western Manitoba in a practical way, without having an impact on students and classrooms.

Fundamentally, we were interested, as a government, on not destabilizing, or not having an undue impact on children in classrooms, as this very important and very widespread school division modernization process occurred. That is not in anyone's interest. It is always possible, Mr. Chair, to point to one or two cases and make an argument for them. We are not saying that the current map is perfect, as a government. But it is, we believe, a reasonable way to proceed. It is a balanced and moderate approach to a very important public policy question that has remained unanswered in this province for over a decade, a question that other provinces answered a decade ago.

To a degree, I am a little curious that the member seems to be advocating for the amalgamation of Turtle River now, in his question. At least, implicitly, he is arguing that we should have merged that school division, and I find that curious given the tremendous opposition that the member and his colleagues put up to The Public Schools Modernization Act over the past two and a half or three months in the House. But, if he is, indeed, seeing the light, then I am sure that he could, and have his colleagues, as well, encourage Turtle River to discuss opportunities with the school divisions

that are in their region. Certainly, as a department, we would do everything we could to help facilitate the best wishes of Turtle River today, as we did in the past.

Mr. Gilleshammer: The majority of the criticism that I have had of the minister has been on process and product, and that I think that your process was very faulty. I think you ended up with a product, as a result of that, that creates a lot of questions in the minds of people.

You had sent a letter out to secretary-treasurers, school divisions, superintendents, boards, et cetera, where you indicated that rural school divisions should have a base number of 2000 students. I think that school divisions, the trustees and the media picked that up and used that as a base, and one in which they were considering how they wanted to realign themselves. Yet the product that you came up with shows a number of school divisions with less than 2000 students that remained untouched in this process.

I would ask the minister if that goal of his to achieve 2000 students per school division was a major part of the decision-making process.

Mr. Caldwell: We did suggest that enrolment was one factor of many that should be looked at, and we used a notional figure of 2000 as a kind of exemplar in this. Enrolment was certainly not the only fact—or the driving factor—in terms of our consideration on this issue. I think, in all likelihood, there are a number of issues that are more important and were more important, certainly in my thinking, than enrolment. So we did not ever commit to 2000 as a firm minimum figure. Certainly, as I said, we suggested that a notional figure of 2000 could work as an exemplar, but by no means was this the only or the most significant factor that should have been looked at in terms of the deliberations of school divisions. Indeed, it certainly was not the only figure or only factor that we looked at in terms of our own assessment and analysis of the situation in the province of Manitoba.

So much depends on context in these matters, as I am sure the member can understand. In some cases, 2000 is a reasonable target, given geography. In other cases, it is

simply not, because the population is too sparse in the region being considered. We always put forward other factors in undertaking this analysis and had some suggestions, even given back from us from the field as to factors that were seen as important in the field. But factors such as geography, program synergies, the culture of the region under assessment, the natural trading patterns, the transportation opportunities are also relevant in the decision in how to reconfigure boundaries. From my own thinking, the tax base and the level of wealth in the communities impact in the regions impacted, and the regions not impacted for that matter. But the tax base and the wealth in regions is pretty darn important in this issue as well as any property taxpayer will tell you.

So the process of changing boundaries is an inexact one; Norrie put forward the plan that had nice numbers for each division, but it would have changed every single boundary in the province with much greater dislocation than we have seen here with Bill 14. So we were balancing what we might want in an ideal world with what we felt was practical and would have the greatest benefit with the least possible disruption to the public school system. I think that, in the main, that has certainly been achieved. Certainly, this process in Manitoba has been far smoother than processes that took place in other jurisdictions across Canada. I think that is a credit to the professionalism and integrity of trustees throughout the province, and to their commitment to providing the best educational opportunities and the best program opportunities for the students that are in their school divisions.

* (16:20)

I am certainly prepared to admit that this map, or any conceivable map, could have been drawn somewhat differently. But what I will say is that I think that our new map is a distinct improvement over the previous existing constellation of school divisions in the province, and is a very reasonable way to proceed, again as shown by the smooth way it has generally moved forward. I will put on the record again that I am tremendously privileged to work with trustees of integrity and commitment to education throughout the province, because, as we all know, when there is a substantial change

that is implemented in any area of our lives, there are challenges to be overcome when that change is being addressed.

The mutual challenges that have been part and parcel of this process, not only since the fall of 1999 when I made the commitment to dust off the Norrie report but also since the early 1990s when the Norrie report was first undertaken, there have been many challenges that have been faced by trustees and many challenges that have been shared with trustees by staff in the Department of Education and Training, and, indeed, by educators in the various teacher associations across the province and by communities, when they have discussed the issue of school division modernization in the province.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I thank the minister for his answer and the other criteria that he used in terms of the amalgamation.

I am wanting to look at some of the urban divisions. In the city of Winnipeg where Assiniboine South and Fort Garry are being forced to amalgamate, St. Boniface and St. Vital are being forced to amalgamate, Transcona and River East, I am wondering why St. James Assiniboia and Seven Oaks were not part of this amalgamation in some fashion.

Mr. Caldwell: Well, I can repeat what I have put on record over the past couple of days in regard to the inexact nature of this science of amalgamating school divisions or merging school divisions. There are factors around the province that mitigate in support of or in caution of mergers. Certainly, in the urban context with Seven Oaks and St. James that the member refers to, there were no obvious partners for either of those two school divisions.

St. Vital and St. Boniface had an obvious logic. St. Boniface having come off a successful merger with the Norwood School Division in the recent past, St. Boniface and St. Vital, obviously, are next to each other. They share, with the new Riel School Division, the existing boundaries of the previous two divisions. There also are some cultural affinities. Certainly, the map of Winnipeg school divisions previous to Bill 14 and the map of Winnipeg school

divisions post-Bill 14 are very consistent, contiguous in terms of Fort Garry and Assiniboine South and in terms of St. Vital and St. Boniface. There is a subtle difference, obviously, with the urban Transcona-River East merger and the Springfield-Sunrise school division merger in terms of the division of the former rural urban division of Transcona-Springfield. But in terms of Fort Garry-Assiniboine South, the member may recall that they were at a point before the announcement arguing over who would own the new school in Whyte Ridge and who would own up to a million dollars in tax base in new residential subdivision development. So it seems sensible to put them together and share those resources and share those responsibilities rather than having a situation where two divisions were bickering over tax base. Our objective here, as I have said before, was to create better opportunities for school divisions and for programs within the school divisions.

So St. James School Division is next to Winnipeg 1 and to rural areas, and Seven Oaks is in the same position, abutting Winnipeg School Division and some rural areas. Amalgamating an urban and rural division, as the member may appreciate, given the debate over the last couple of months on this issue, is a much more difficult undertaking than having a merger of like divisions. We do not think it is, and I still do not think it is, in the interest to split up the Winnipeg School Division, which would have involved a very substantial dislocation for a large number of students and staff, indeed, the largest school division in the province of Manitoba.

Having said that, I am also fully aware that moving from nine school divisions to six divisions in the city of Winnipeg, I have yet to have a person say that was too few. In fact, my experiences as minister and as an MLA, wandering around Manitoba in my travels, is that most Manitobans feel very strongly that, like other jurisdictions in Canada, urban jurisdictions, Calgary, Toronto, urban jurisdictions in Canada, we should probably have one public school division in the city of Winnipeg. So the criticism that I am receiving in the House, which is from members opposite, saying, do not merge, do not amalgamate, this is bad for the

system, is at odds with, certainly, the public commentary I am getting, which is why nine to six. It should be nine to one or two. One is the predominant number because it corresponds with the reality in most other urban areas in Canada.

Now, having said that and having laid out those two poles, the Opposition, on one hand, saying do not merge at all and the public, on the other hand, saying go further, I guess, places me in a position and our Government in a position of being balanced and moderate in our approach, which, I think, is a reasonable place to be. I think that most Manitobans, indeed most Canadians, are not at one extreme or another, whether it is the extreme of the Opposition: Do not merge at all; this is not in the public interest; 54 school divisions is the correct number of school divisions for the province versus, in my anecdotal experience, being approached by Manitobans saying, you know, 54 is far too many and 38 is still too many. Your Government should have gone further. I think that sets up at least the two poles of this debate, and I think coming in the middle, as it were, with an approach that is respectful of existing boundaries, respectful of existing traditions, respectful of existing school divisions, respectful of existing collective agreement protocol, staffing protocols, program protocols but still seeking to provide administrative efficiencies and redirect administrative dollars to educational uses. I think that middle approach is likely the best course, and I certainly feel very comfortable with an approach that is respectful of the demands from both polls on this issue: do not take any action; take extreme action or harder action, as it were, or more extensive action.

I am quite comfortable being in a position that is balanced, moderate and fundamentally respectful, yet at the same time make substantive change that will redirect significant millions of dollars from administrative uses to educational uses.

* (16:30)

Mr. Gilleshammer: I would just put on the record that the minister is factually incorrect. I have never said that there should not be amalgamation. My criticisms are with your process and with your product. I do not believe

any of my colleagues have stated that the status quo should have remained in place.

I want to talk about the costs that we are hearing about. River East, I think, indicated a cost of \$1.2 million for amalgamation. St. Boniface and St. Vital have used a figure in excess of a million dollars. Fort Garry and Assiniboine South have put out some numbers on the costs of amalgamation.

The minister has talked about the redirection of \$6 million in terms of the administrative cap of having 134 less trustees. It just seems to me that, if trustees in these school divisions were talking about the increased costs of amalgamation, that is going to more than eat up the administrative savings and the savings as far as a fewer trustees is concerned.

Could the minister comment on these costs that have been identified with amalgamation?

Mr. Caldwell: I apologize to the member if I misunderstood his views on amalgamation. I must have misunderstood some of the debate over the past three months in the House and over the past two and a half years in the public domain around this issue. Certainly, the members opposite voted against The Public Schools Modernization Act and its subsequent reduction in the school divisions in the province, but I take his point around the nuance of that opposition.

I believe that the cost estimates that have been advanced in the press and in the media by individual school divisions are highly speculative and, frankly, do not help move the process along. The cost figures assume, as far as I know, because my information on these matters is about as in-depth, I believe, as the members opposite, but the cost figures assume that all existing staff will continue and that all salaries will be harmonized upwards, but, in fact, this is not known, and, in fact, a number of school divisions, a matter of school board decision making. They are, in fact, a matter of school division decision making or collective bargaining, as the case may be.

So I do not expect that all existing staff will continue over the run of this two- to five-year period, which as I said yesterday is the notional amount of time required for the positive impacts,

fiscal impacts, the efficiency that deliver resources to the classroom. That three- to five-year period or two- to five-year period has been experienced by the jurisdictions. It is, at that point in time, when we will have a clear picture of the changes that have been made by school divisions in the course of their decision-making. I do not assume, at all, that all existing staff will continue, and I certainly do not assume, at all, that all salaries will be harmonized upwards. As I said, this is a matter of school board decision making, decision making by individual trustees, and is part of the collective bargaining process or the school board decision-making processes as the case may be.

I expect that there will be, and will continue to be, more public scrutiny and greater public scrutiny of how educational dollars are expended and how property taxation is impacted by these decisions at the school board level and at the provincial level.

I am absolutely thrilled that this year our Government announced for the first time in the history of the education support levy—the provincial property tax associated with the public school sector—that we reduced the provincial property taxes for public school support by 10 percent, and committed to eliminate that property tax over the course of successive budgets in the next five years. That will return notionally \$100 million to property taxpayers in the province of Manitoba.

I am also very proud to be part of a government that, for two successive budgets, increased the educational property tax credit available to all Manitobans. That tax credit currently puts over \$170 million back into the pockets of taxpayers over the course of the 1990s, and that trend has continued in spite of increased operating support from the province, have experienced a huge shift in taxation due to increased demand for dollars from the public school sector.

During the 1990s, of course, that demand was fed by a provincial retreat from supporting public education. Over the course of the last two and a half years, as we have discussed earlier, there have been historic levels of operating support and capital support to the public school system provided by the province of Manitoba.

Having said that, 10 years of cuts are not made up in two years of increased support, even at historic and unprecedented levels. But we as a government are committed to continuing our support for the public education system in terms of operating at the rate of economic growth or greater. In two of the last three years it has been greater. We are also committed to support for the capital side of the equation, the infrastructure support for our public school system.

But to take figures that are in the press and are in the media as expressed by individual trustees, sometimes with a political view in mind, sometimes with other views in mind, is, I think, not a wise way to proceed or a prudent way to proceed. I think those numbers are highly speculative. For example, one cannot just raise all salaries to the highest level, since staffing ratios may be different in different divisions as part of this evolution over the next two to five years. One division may pay more, but might have, on average, larger classes.

When harmonization occurs, both aspects of this equation need to be considered. Divisions will be able to make decisions about how many staff to employ and what roles, new collective agreements will have to be bargained and I do not think it is a good starting point to assume that everything will be harmonized upwards. I think, in fact, that is a false logic. There could also be trade-offs in the collective bargaining process. There are always trade-offs, as the member may know. For example, somewhat lower salaries could be offered, but with better working conditions.

This is all yet to be determined through the collective bargaining processes, so all estimates in this regard are highly speculative. As I stated, some of these estimates and some of the individuals making these suggestions in the press or these statements in the press do so from a political perspective and sometimes a party political perspective.

I accept that, being in a political realm in this Legislature, but good public policy is not made on those sorts of statements. All numbers are yet to be determined and all numbers are thus highly speculative. I will underscore again that all numbers will be arrived at over the course of

successive collective bargaining sessions at tables over the next number of years. It is always possible to put forward estimates of a scary nature stating that huge amounts of money are going to be used for various purposes. This happens and occurs all the time.

* (16:40)

I realize that this is one of the strategies that opposition to this initiative has taken on. It is one of the strategies that is being used to create public dissent on this issue and for political purposes. I just think that we want to distinguish clearly between people's speculations and people's statements made for a variety of purposes and the reality that will actually take place. The reality that will actually take place in the province will be borne out over a number of years, as has been shown by other provinces and the experience of other provinces. The reality of this in terms of the immediate impacts of Bill 14 is administrative cost caps that will redirect resources from administrative functions to classroom functions. We reviewed a lot of those percentages yesterday. Those administrative cost caps will redirect resources.

The reality is that there will be greater scrutiny of public schools' expenditures, which is in the public interest, I believe, particularly given the explosion in property taxation over the last decade. The reality is that we will be moving from nearly 500 trustees in the province to somewhat over 300 trustees in the province, a reduction of 134 trustees, if my memory serves. The reality is that we will be moving from 54 school divisions with their administrative hierarchies and operational supports, assets and liabilities to 38 school divisions in the province. So those are the clear realities from Bill 14.

All of those clear realities point at significant redirection of significant amounts of money from administrative and trustee supports to educational uses. Anything else at this stage in the game is highly speculative in my observation and geared towards the highest numbers possible with no recognition of decisions that will be made in the years to come around rationalizing school divisions, management structures and administrative structures and not in a small way predicated on political purposes and not educational purposes.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I think one perhaps should have more respect for the trustees and administrators who are working with these actual figures. I think in many cases they have given a range of the increased costs as they see them. I expect that, given the fact that they are working with these numbers on a daily basis, have first-hand knowledge of their school divisions, the minister might be surprised that they are more accurate than he believes they are at this time.

On the question of harmonization, it would seem apparent that when two divisions amalgamate, such as Souris Valley and Antler River, or Fort Garry and Assiniboine South, that, within a year or so, they will have a common salary grid for their employees. Does the minister believe that any of those staff working within any of the amalgamated divisions will have a salary decrease because of amalgamation?

Mr. Caldwell: Well, harmonization, of course, will occur through the normal collective bargaining processes. I touched upon this in my last answer, in terms of collective bargaining being a process that involves positions being put forth by both labour and management, and trade-offs being made throughout that process. I also suggested that working conditions are a central part of collective bargaining, as are salaries, as are benefits, as are a number of other areas.

I know that, in my home community in Brandon, recently, there have been a number of negotiations that have seen salaries decline. I could think of, off the top of my head, more than one in the last few years where other benefits or other issues were put on the table that were deemed to be more important. So we cannot preclude, and I do not think it does any service to preclude, what will occur in the collective bargaining process between divisions and teachers in the future.

The bargaining, I assume, will be beginning this fall. There are 38 school divisions in the province as of October 23, and there will be lively bargaining around the tables throughout the province, as there is every time there is a round of collective bargaining. But I do not see decreases in salaries, and I do not believe that

teachers are overpaid. I do believe, however, that, during the bargaining process, many things are on the table, not only harmonization, but also wage increases, benefits, conditions of employment, and so forth. The job of school boards—I am sure that they will do their best as they always do. You know, I am privileged to work with such quality trustees around the province, trustees of integrity and commitment to educational excellence.

The job of boards will be to get the best deal they can, but we certainly have experiences in Canada where teachers have traded off wage increases for other issues of interest to them. That is not unknown in this country. Moreover, as I said, it is not just the salaries, but the number of staff that are critical, and boards will have to consider how many people they employ and what roles they employ them in, as well as what they pay those people.

So all I am saying in this is that we should not presume a highest-cost case as being necessarily true. We should presume that boards will continue to act in the way that boards have historically acted in our province, and that is with the best interest of students central and with respect to the capacity of the board to manage the school division under their jurisdiction within the resources available to that board.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I would just like to confirm that I heard the minister correctly. He has indicated, in Brandon School Division, people took a decrease in their salary, I believe he said, because they received other benefits. Is that correct?

Mr. Caldwell: No, that is not correct. In Brandon, I am aware of other collective bargaining exercises, or collective bargaining processes, that have been undertaken whereby employer groups have traded off wages for other benefits.

Mr. Gilleshammer: So his case was not Brandon School Division. It was other employer-employee groups within Brandon where they took a wage decrease because they received additional benefits.

Mr. Caldwell: That is correct. As I said, and I know the member knows this and other members

around the table know this, the nature of collective bargaining is that two positions are put forth, one by labour and one by management. Those positions generally involve a wide range of issues, wages only being one. As that process continues, there are trade-offs made. But it is not just the wages that are at question here. It is also the number of employees, the roles that those employees are serving in. It is not only teachers that are impacted by this, but administrative support staff and staff generally.

* (16:50)

So I expect the collective bargaining process may be more interesting this year, in the three or four years coming up, than it was in the past. But it certainly will be no more interesting than it was in the 1950s and 1960s when we undertook a similar recombination of school boards in this province, nor do I expect it will be any more unusual than in decades previous, when this exercise was undertaken. But the nature of collective bargaining is about more than wages, and the nature of the management of school divisions is about more than wages. In fact, it is about providing the best quality of education for young Manitobans in the classrooms of the province. I expect that school boards will continue to act in the ways that they have acted in the past with those principles being paramount, and foremost amongst those principles are the children, and providing for the education of children.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Can he indicate what example he is referring to when he indicates that salary was rolled back because other benefits were put in place?

Mr. Caldwell: Well, I think anecdotally we can all reflect on various collective bargaining regimes in our communities. I know that when I was a city councillor in Brandon, a number of years ago, when Maple Leaf Foods was coming to Brandon and setting up the huge processing plant that exists in Brandon. There were pretty hard negotiations between the United Food and Commercial Workers and Maple Leaf around wages and job security and benefits and so forth.

So the nature of collective bargaining is more complex than a single issue. The nature of the management of school divisions is more

complex than a single issue. My expectation, as I said in an earlier remark is significant redirection of educational dollars from administrative functions to educational functions.

As I mentioned earlier, in terms of the realities of Bill 14, I will go over them again.

The realities of Bill 14 are administrative cost caps of 4 percent, 4.5 percent and 5 percent for school divisions around the province. The realities of Bill 14 are a reduction in the number of school trustees, a reduction of notionally 150; I think 134 is the precise number, but that again, as I said yesterday, will alter as other divisions join with 38 divisions we have in Manitoba, post-Bill 14 and post-October 23 elections.

The realities of Bill 14 are 54 school divisions being reduced to 38, and the subsequent merging of administrative functions, of operations, fiscal operations, transit operations; any number of operations that divisions will harmonize and reduce from two or three or four, as the case may be, to a single administrative function, with the consequent reduction of administrative budgets when you move from two and three superintendents to one superintendent, and two and three or four and five or six assistant superintendents to one or two assistant superintendents; or two or three or four secretary-treasurers to one secretary-treasurer, two or three transit managers or transportation managers to a single transit manager, and their associated administrative office components. There will be a significant redirection as a consequence of those reductions, and those flowcharts will look substantially different when you have a situation where two or three divisions become one.

So the realities around Bill 14 are apparent for all to see. They certainly have been reflected in commentary, public commentary by editorial writers around the province. I made reference to my home community yesterday, the *Portage Daily Graphic*, the *Winnipeg Free Press*, and other media around the province as this exercise has evolved again since 1993 but more dramatically and, I guess, with more purpose since the fall of 1999.

In terms of the realities versus the speculations, we know what the realities are. We have been alerted to some of the speculative ideas floated in the media with large numbers being floated about, but these numbers, as near as I can tell, are predicated upon no changes being made with components of the management of school divisions. We all know very well that this Public Schools Modernization Act sets the context for pretty significant changes in the public school system, in the governance of public schools, and in the number of school divisions in the province. Those significant changes involve, again, significant reductions in the number of trustees, significant reductions in the numbers of school divisions, and in their associated administrative costs, independently borne by the school divisions now, that in the future will be independently borne by fewer school divisions.

So I do understand that there is a political purpose to paint the bleakest picture possible with this exercise, but I prefer to depend upon facts. I prefer to depend upon the experience of the other provinces in Canada, which undertook this exercise a decade ago. Their experience, in the main, is one of positive outcomes for the classrooms, in particular, and that is certainly what has motivated this exercise not only this session, but it is what motivated the exercise in the late 1950s and early 1960s, as well as in the earlier decades with the consolidation of school districts and divisions in the province.

I should, while we are on this subject and with a couple of minutes remaining, reflect on again an article in the *Winnipeg Free Press* headed: Alberta boards say standards raised by forced amalgamations. It is from 2001.

The article begins: Alberta forced amalgamation on its school districts and took away trustees' right to raise taxes, but its school boards reluctantly admit that the financial headaches foisted upon them have led to an improved public education system. Quote: It has resulted in a higher standard of education, end quote, said Lois Byers, the head of the Alberta School Boards Association. It has put trustees in a stronger governance situation to offer a wider range of programs concentrated in particular schools in the enlarged divisions.

So, again, I prefer to base my views on fact, as opposed to speculation, and I prefer to work with trustees as we move through this process over the next three- to five-year period, to work with trustees to make the sort of changes that will provide Manitoba with increased assurances that education dollars are being used to support educational purposes and to provide a context for the development of better educational programming in the province.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff): The hour being 5 p.m., it is time for Private Members' Business. Committee rise.

CULTURE, HERITAGE AND TOURISM

* (15:30)

Mr. Chairperson (Conrad Santos): Would the Committee of Supply come to order, please.

This section of the Committee of Supply has been dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Culture, Heritage and Tourism. Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber now.

We are on page 61 of the Estimates book, Resolution 14.4. Tourism.

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Seine River): I am deferring to my colleague the honourable Member for Russell to ask some Tourism questions at this time.

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): I welcome this opportunity to ask just a few questions of the Minister of Tourism. The Minister of Tourism is very familiar with my side of the province. It is his former home and one that, I think, he still visits from time to time, because it is a very beautiful part of the province.

Last Saturday, I had the distinct opportunity of being involved in the opening of the Silver Bend Trail at Miniota, where the community has come together to open up a hiking and walking and biking trail. It is a four-kilometre trail which goes through a very picturesque and historical part of the Birdtail Valley. Actually, the trail follows the old Indian trails that used to lead from Miniota to Birdtail. It also goes by some

grave sites where immigrants to this country, whose children and whose spouses had died, were actually buried in sites along that trail.

The reason that some of them brought their loved ones to be buried in that area was because of its picturesque beauty and because of its serenity. I would welcome the minister or any of his staff who might be hiking or biking enthusiasts to come to that area, because, as I stood at the top of the valley and looked over the Birdtail Valley in the Miniota area, I would have to say that I have never witnessed a more beautiful sight at this time of the year with the greenery, the trees, the rolling fields, the flat fields along the river. It certainly brought back to mind how beautiful our part of this world is.

One of the deficiencies, though, in all of this is the lack of advertising of that part of the province that we see in *Travel Manitoba* or even in any of our *Destination* brochures that we have in this province. Despite that, we still see a number of tourists who do frequently visit the area and partake of the beauty.

When I spoke with the organizers of the event and the people who had worked very hard to clear the trail, I have to say it was unfortunate that there was not anybody from the department represented at the opening of this trail. I know, in the realm of significance, this may not, to the department, seem to be a significant place, but, indeed, to the people in that part of the world, it is. Having said that, the trail organizers and the people who have brought their scarce resources to the table made me aware of the fact that they have encountered a real stumbling block with the Department of Conservation, who have a piece of Crown land along the trail. The trail actually passes through a corner of the Crown land.

Now I would say, in total, that piece of Crown land that the trail passes through is not much larger than this Chamber. But the Department of Conservation, for one reason or another, requested that a permit, which costs in excess of \$100, I believe, needed to be obtained for them to, first of all, do any work on the trail, and that, in the future, there would be an assessment of a minimum of \$100-a-year of rent that would have to be paid to the Department of Conservation for use of this trail through their property.

Now, Mr. Chair, I know the minister may not be aware of this, and I do not expect him to be. But I think it is an attitude that we want to see changed, because I know that, in other areas where there is Crown land, we try to encourage people to use walking paths, or biking paths. I know that, in other areas where there are biking and walking paths that go through Crown land, there is no requirement of any annual fee that needs to be paid because a particular path or trail goes through that property. This trail is not owned by any individual. It is open to any resident of Manitoba, any resident of any part of this country or in North America, or this world for that matter. There is no charge levied for people to walk this trail, hike this trail, bike this trail. They are free to use it at will.

* (15:40)

The other thing, Mr. Chair, is that people who are using this trail are also encouraged to visit other parts of that area through brochures and through advertising, which is all paid for by the scarce resources of the people in that area, who sometimes access money, whether it is from Tourism or from community places or whatever it might be, to try and put these packages together for the benefit of people who travel through there.

So all I am asking the minister to do in this instance is to examine, and I do not want a yes or no answer, or an explanation at this point in time—that could be provided to me in writing—but I just want him to undertake, to see what he could do, as Minister of Tourism, to alleviate this kind of situation. You know, it was only given to me verbally. So I may have some of my facts incorrect here, but it was only given to me verbally, and that is what I am relating here. To be honest, I have not done my homework in terms of research, as to how much it costs and that sort of thing. So I would simply ask the minister to undertake to examine this situation and see whether or not, for the benefit of the people who have worked very hard to put this trail together, there is a possibility of having this fee, this licence, or whatever it is called, waived, so that they do not have to undertake the fundraising for this, and so that people can continue to enjoy that wonderful trail that has been established by the community.

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism): Well, I thank the Member for Russell for the question. It is a very important one.

Prior to answering his question, I would like to just put on the record that, in conversation with my critic, the member from Seine River, I had made an offer yesterday—we were discussing computers and discussing the Web site, our Tourism Web site, Travel Manitoba Web site—that I would really appreciate her assistance if she were able to sit down with the co-ordinator that we have. We are trying to improve that Web site, and she made a lot of good suggestions. I would appreciate if she would not mind taking time out of her busy day to sit down with that person. She had a lot of good suggestions and that might be able to improve the site. I just wanted to mention that and that I spoke to people.

With regard to the trail, this trail I am not familiar with, but there are many trails in Manitoba and the one that this particular trail is being referred to near Miniota, I believe it was, and between Birtle and Miniota, there is so much traffic now that is going, taking the Yellowhead route and especially going past Russell and Birtle. There are many people who are going off that 16 and taking an adventure and going through many of those communities that branch off of that No. 16, the Yellowhead Route.

To me, there are two things that the member from Russell raised that is a little bit of a concern to me. I know that the facts may not be correct, but even the idea of a tax and those kinds of things on a trail like this on land that is bordering on a trail, I do not know all of the specifics, but we are trying to encourage trail development in the province. We are trying to say to the volunteers, yes, we appreciate all the hard work you do and everything you are doing to make a trail and to improve tourism. I know we work closely with the Manitoba Recreation Trails Association and we also have a trails co-ordinator with the Trans Canada Trail.

So why I say this is that trails are important to tourism, and that is the bottom line. So I appreciate the comments by the member. I will undertake to look into this because we are trying

to improve trails throughout this province. I do not know if there is anything that I can do, but I will make the commitment that I will also speak to my colleague, the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin), with regard to this matter, and I will talk to our trails co-ordinator to find out what is going on. We do not want any impediments or any roadblocks or barriers in the road of volunteers who are trying to make trails important to their region.

I know of the region that this member speaks of. It is absolutely beautiful. It is gorgeous, and you would want to encourage Trails to have an undertaking, to make more trails in the province. I think it is really quite important, also for the region, that there are many people who immigrated to this country, many people who are of Ukrainian or Polish ancestry. That region, often you think of people of British ancestry in Birtle, but there are many of Ukrainian ancestry. Because the Birdtail First Nation Reserve is close by, there are many people who think there are just a lot of Aboriginal people there. But there are a lot of Polish and Ukrainian ancestors that are there. So it is really important to have a multicultural trail there, especially with the cemetery that was pointed out and the burial site there of many different immigrants.

I am sorry I was so long-winded, but I will undertake to make sure I look into this. I think it is an absolutely valid point that we should be looking into finding out if there are barriers and impediments placed in the way of volunteers trying to put a trail together.

Mr. Derkach: I appreciate the response from the minister. I have another question with regard to the trail. At the end of the trail, there is an old homestead site. I do not even know if you can call it a homestead site. It is a dwelling that was occupied by the original settlers who came up by steamboat. When they came up, they constructed a very crude kind of home hewn out of the materials in the area. The house is still standing today. I think the family name, if I can remember it correctly, is Babuik.

The community would like to see this home preserved, because now that the trail is open, they are afraid that it will deteriorate, and you

know what happens in some instances, they just disappear.

I was wondering whether the minister, through the Historic Resources Branch, has any means in which, perhaps, individuals from that branch, or the tourism branch, could work with the community in an attempt to preserve this landmark.

I could tell him that when I was in the United States, and, many times, just recently—last winter I was in Phoenix and went on a bit of a tour of the Arizona area by car to visit some of their tourism and historic sites. You would be absolutely amazed at the kinds of buildings that they preserve for tourism and historic purposes.

When I looked at the richness of our country and the resources that we have that seem to—the landmarks that we have—disappear because we do not protect them, it makes one sad that we miss the opportunity.

I am wondering whether the minister may, through either the historic division or through tourism, work with the Miniota group to see whether or not this facility is worth preserving for future generations.

* (15:50)

Mr. Lemieux: I thank the member for the question. I do not profess to be and I do not pretend to be, certainly, one that would know a site that would be of heritage or an historic site. I know that Donna Dul—and there are people within our department that are very, very good at that. It is something that I know that they are always looking for suggestions from the public as to if they think there is a site that would be important to look at and to actually do some research on. They are very good at this. In fact, this particular home, the Babuik home, might be already on record and maybe they have done some looking at it. So I would certainly want to take a look at that.

I just want to further my comments by saying I am very, very familiar with the Phoenix and Tucson area. A good friend of mine lives in Mesa. I visited him there, just outside of Phoenix. Also, I have relatives that live in Tucson.

So, just to follow up what the member from Russell said, that it is amazing the sites—they have these, a small mission, they will turn it into such a beautiful, not only historic site, but they have arts and crafts displayed at these places. It really has become a tourist attraction unto itself. It is amazing. It is unbelievable. Then they have repaired it and they have been able to raise money and do all kinds of things.

In many ways, it is regrettable, but we have let a lot of places really fall by the wayside. This has nothing to do with politics at all. It is just that, I think, because we look at ourselves as being such a young country and young province. There are many places now that not only are approaching 100 years of age, but are older than 100, and are really in quite decrepit shape. It would not take a lot to really bring them up to a state of repair where they could become an attraction.

There are many people, whether it is the Babuik relatives and family, and many others, who would not mind taking that trip if they were aware it existed, would not mind going there and just exploring it. It has a rich past, as was mentioned by the member from Russell. The old steamboat—they used to go up either the Assiniboine, and many other travellers up the rivers, that really broke open the West and really made this province what it is. So I do have an appreciation of what the member says. I have had personal experiences with travelling throughout the southwest, so I would say I appreciate his comments. I, of course, would want some time to be able to talk to people within my department about whether or not it is on file, whether they are aware of the site. If they are not, I will certainly make them aware of the site. I cannot make any commitments as to what we are going to do because, maybe, they have made a judgment already. But I certainly want to look into it and find out more about it.

Mr. Derkach: I appreciate the response from the minister. Moving to another area that the minister will know, it is dear and near to my heart, and that is the Russell ski hill area, the Shellmouth Dam, Lake of the Prairies, that general region. I guess I am going to start with a department that is not even related to this minister, but it is the department of highways. I

know the minister is aware of how busy Highway 16 is, because the Yellowhead and Route 83 converge and it becomes an extremely busy stretch of road.

In 1998, we rebuilt the section between Russell and Binscarth, and paving was supposed to take place the following year. It is now four years and we do not see any pavement in sight. If you go along that stretch of road and even on in to 83, the road is beginning to deteriorate very quickly. Anybody I talk to who comes from outside the area and uses that road wonders why the Province has stopped any activity in terms of bringing those roads up to standard. I would ask him to simply talk to his colleague the Minister of highways and Transportation and see whether there is an opportunity in the near future to address that area of 16 and of 83, because no matter if you talk to people who travel from British Columbia, people from Alberta or people from Ontario who take that stretch, they will tell you that that is probably the worst stretch of road on the entire No. 16 highway.

The other area that has been on the books for a long time, and I know the minister, if he wants to, can say, well, when you guys were in government, you did not do anything about it either, and I know that his staff will tell him that that is true because they were there when we were in government. It is an issue that I have fought for even when we were in government, and that is signage. You know how strict and how impractical the department of highways seems to be when it comes to signage. I mean we are not living on Portage Avenue out there where traffic is as heavy as it is on Portage Avenue and where buildings are as close to the road as they are on Portage Avenue. As a matter of fact, you can drive for miles and see nothing but some cows on the fields. But it is an area that has some *Destination* places—Lake of the Prairies, the ski hill, the cross-country skiing, the Inglis elevators—and yet we have no signage.

Now I have travelled to eastern Manitoba and I know the signage that exists in that area, whether it is Falcon Lake or West Hawk Lake. But, when you travel to the western side of the province, it almost seems that we live under a different government over there. The signage there is just deplorable. I want you to imagine—

we have the best ski hill that you can find in Saskatchewan and Manitoba right on the western side of this province. It generates a fair bit of revenue for the Province of Manitoba as well, and the best that we could do as a government was to allow—we did not even provide—we allowed for a sign to be placed about 200 yards from the turnoff to the ski hill that is the size of the top of this desk, if not smaller. That is the size of the sign we have. You cannot read the sign unless you are less than 200 feet away from it. Then we have a little postcard sign with the image of a skier not far from that.

The Russell Inn, Asessippi Ski Hill made a sign. They had it made exactly like a highway sign. Same material, same colours and they placed it next to the highway sign which pointed to Inglis and something else, and they were ordered to remove that sign. Now it was not blocking anybody's view. All it was doing was pointing to Asessippi Ski Hill.

Now they have their signs that are 125 feet off the road that advertised the ski hill. They paid for it themselves. But, even before you hit Russell, one of the complaints that skiers who are coming there for the first time will tell you is: We do not know whether we are in the vicinity; we do not know whether we are coming close to it. Until you see those billboard signs that are put there by the ski hill itself, you really do not know whether you are even coming close to the ski hill area.

I think that says something about how we advertise our tourism destinations in this province. I would encourage the minister, and I had encouraged the Minister of Tourism when we were in government, to work with the department of highways and transportation, to develop appropriate signage. Now we have that little sign with the star on it; destination signs, I think, that were good. I will not knock them. It took a while to develop those, and it seemed like we had to go through inordinate steps to be able to get those approved. I remember that.

But I think there has to be a simpler way to be able to advertise those attractions that we have in this province that are worthy of advertising. I am not saying that we should advertise every single little spot, but I think

when it comes to major tourism destination points, whether it is the Inglis elevators, or whether it is a walking trail of significance, or whatever it might be, or whether it is a good fishing lake, that we should take pride in that. I guess we should advertise that pride through proper signage so that we could attract tourism into those areas.

Standards are important. I understand that. We want some standards so that there is some consistency in how we advertise, but I think that we could do a lot for this province if we embarked on a program where signage could be developed. I know it is going to cost money, but maybe there is a partnership that can be arranged with the private sector, with those who operate these destination points, to develop, in co-operation with them, an appropriate signage program that could really benefit and beautify, at least the highways that we have in this province of Manitoba.

* (16:00)

Mr. Lemieux: I thank the Member for Russell for the comments and, no, I am not going to be political and just throw it back and say, well, why did you not do it when you were in government. As an MLA, I have worked on projects or issues in my own constituency, and I will continue to do so in the future. Many of them are rejected for whatever reason from other ministers. So I am not going to go there, because everyone tries to do what they can for their area. They try the best they can.

The point that is raised, though, is extremely important, because if we are trying to do something in tourism, especially those key destination points, Asessippi Valley and the ski hill have really blossomed into a really great project. This is something where I do not mind telling you, I had my doubts about the hill, especially when it was competing with the hill near McCreary, and I wondered what would happen there if you had two. But it seems to me that Asessippi has become a real jewel. That ski hill is tremendous and, not only that, there are the elevators that have been pointed out, and so on.

This is a real challenge. There is a tourism advisory council that we put together made up of

business leaders in the tourism industry. This is something that I would really like to refer to them. I would like to put this issue on their plate and say, what kinds of suggestions or recommendations can you make. Here you have one department that is tourism promoting the province, promoting these different destination points and, yet, we are not responsible for signs. Signage, it is the Department of Transportation and Government Services that is responsible for the signs, the quality, and I know I have gone through this with some of their departmental people. It drives me crazy. I do not mind telling you this because you are trying to say ow is someone from the United States who is driving up Highway 83 is supposed to know that you have a beautiful ski hill and a great opportunity there if there is not something highlighting it and pointing it out.

Just to go back to the southwest United States, I think there is a little bit of overkill there. They point out any little groundhog burrow that might be there; they have a huge sign saying, turn left and go three miles, and it is there. There were some other places that were mentioned by my colleagues here, but I am not going to repeat them. But the point is well taken. The Member for Russell absolutely has an excellent point.

I do not know how this can be addressed. It is a benefit for all of us in Manitoba because, as was pointed out, the east side of the province has many, many great tourist attractions, too. I am more familiar, or just as familiar, with the east side, now, of Manitoba as I am with the west, that being my own constituency, in the east side of the province.

But there is a lot of signage missing in the province. Sooner or later, this is going to have to be addressed. I believe there are many opportunities being missed because people are driving by and—maybe the most important point is the number one way people visit sites in Manitoba and come here as tourists; it is rubber wheel, on our highways. They are driving on the highways.

If they are driving on a highway and going at 90 kilometres or 100 kilometres an hour, if you do not have a visible sign in place to point

something out, and there are many people who, when they spot a sign, will enquire into finding out what is there. They will actually make their way there as a result of a sign, not because they have read a brochure. That helps, but just because they spot a sign they say, here is an historic site, the kind of site that says, George Washington slept here. They see that and they just turn off the road and they are there. That happens in the U.S.

So there are many opportunities here, I think, that are missed because of the lack of signage. This is something I would like to really refer to the tourism advisory council and really put this issue on their plate and see what kind of recommendations they come up with, because I think your point is well taken. When government alone is asked to foot the bill, I think there is a real problem, but I think if there can be a partnership as was mentioned—and there are a lot of businesses, and whether it is chambers of commerce or municipalities are willing to partner, but I think right now that even that partnership option is not there. It is just not there, and I think we have to pursue it.

I know that that stretch of highway is extremely busy, and just to make reference, I really cannot, I feel somewhat—what is the word? Oh, I cannot comment on the highway and the structure of the highway. I know the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) commented on that stretch of highway specially. It is another minister's responsibility, but I know how busy that stretch of highway is. I know and I understand rubber-wheel traffic is our No. 1 way of tourists to get around in Manitoba, and from the United States and from Saskatchewan and Ontario. So it is really important as a tourism issue. I must, though, give credit to the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Ashton).

An Honourable Member: Oh, you must.

Mr. Lemieux: Well, I have to because he has done a tremendous job in putting together a package, a five-year highways plan, and maybe there are opportunities to fit in there for other highways that should be included down the road. So he is very much aware of the need for improving highways.

I do not know how we, as the House, as all political parties in this province, approach the federal government on their contribution towards highways. I just cannot see it. Personally, I cannot see us doing a heck of a lot more than what we are already doing without the federal government giving us some of that gas tax back. We just cannot pursue it. I do not know how we do this as an all-party. I guess it has been attempted many times, but the federal government is just not getting the message that they take a lot of dollars out in gas tax, and our highways are falling apart and they have a responsibility too.

I raised this with the previous Minister of Tourism. When I talked to Brian Tobin, that was one of the top issues I raised with Brian Tobin: highways. Our highways are falling apart. I mean, especially when we have a lot of vehicle traffic in this province, we are dependent on our highways, and not only for business and truckers and so on, but for tourism, and that was my area so I brought that to his attention, and he was listening. Regrettably, he has retired and he is no longer around. I personally would like to see Brian Tobin come back someday. I think he is a valuable contributor to our system and to the political process and system in the country. He is very conscious of the west, and I would say more sympathetic to the west than many, many others. Regrettably, he is not there, but he was listening to that, and he, I think, had a great appreciation for that.

Anyway, I hope the Member for Russell accepts my answer in reply with what I plan on doing with regard to the signage. I think it is a good place, because the tourism advisory council has possibly just as many or more opportunities than I, because it is the private sector. They make their bread and butter from tourism, and they have a lot of connections within the different chambers, the municipalities, as well as the tourism industry through the province. I think it gives them sort of ample opportunity to test this out and find out whether or not there is a real need. I feel there is a need, but whether they are able to put something together that government, as well as the private sector, or as well as municipalities, can live with.

Mr. Derkach: I will not keep the minister very long. I just want to give one more example of a situation which I think is absolutely bizarre.

* (16:10)

I want the minister, the next time he comes up to my area, to take Highway 45, and, as he approaches Rossburn, he will see a sign that advertises the federal park, Riding Mountain National Park, and the amenities that are in the park, which are Deep Lake—there are others in that area. There is a camping sign; you know, those little signs that they have, and whatever else is on there. The community of Rossburn asked the Province to put on an addition to that sign that shows Rossman Lake. Now, Rossman Lake is just north of Rossburn, and is a provincial lake.

The department of highways disallowed any signage on that existing sign because they said it would create a distraction for drivers, and I just cannot understand why. The highway sign is a provincial sign. It allows for a federal sign to be placed on there, advertising a federal destination, but would not allow a provincial lake, which is just outside of Rossburn, and from which Rossburn derives some of its community income.

I want the minister to pay attention to that the next time he makes that trip, and to understand what kind of a bizarre situation we have. The little community of Rossburn was forced to have a sign made. They put it in the farmer's field, because they had to be X number of feet away from the middle of the highway, whereas the highway sign and the federal sign advertising the park are right along the highway. That kind of approach does not make any sense to people in a community.

I just want to make one more comment to the minister. I want to tell the minister up front that his party and my views will never see eye to eye on philosophy, but I want to express my appreciation to the minister's attention to some of the tourism issues that we have in the province. I think the minister is genuine in his approach and his duties as Tourism Minister, and, in the areas that I represent, the minister has made himself visible not only because he is familiar with the area, but as part of his responsibility. It is always good to have a minister of the Crown in a community, because it does show to the community that they are

respected and that it is an important part of the makeup of our province. I do want to express to the minister my appreciation for that.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will conclude my remarks on these Estimates with that.

Mr. Lemieux: I appreciate the kind remarks. I really do. It is an adversarial system. I realize that. I do appreciate the comment from the member from Russell. With regard to Highway 45, I am quite familiar with it. I have had this raised to me before, this particular issue. It is quite bizarre that we are promoting the federal park and federal lake and the amenities there. I was not aware that for Rossman Lake that they had to put up their own sign there. It is something definitely we will look into to find out for sure—to find out what is going on there, because I have had this pointed out before by mutual friends of ours and how bizarre it is. Regrettably, I have not looked into it before this. I have heard about it, and it is something that we have to look into and do something about.

I would like to say, in conclusion, that with regard to the Russell area, this is an area that there is a tremendous amount of potential, even more potential than what has been reached so far. If anyone has an opportunity to speak to—and I know the member from Russell does on an ongoing basis—to the different chambers and rural municipalities as well as towns in that area. The reeves as well as mayors will tell—and have told—me about many different other opportunities that they are looking forward to doing. It does seem like that side of the province has been, for a long time, and maybe what it is, is a confidence thing. Once people saw that Asessippi is really a growing—and maybe it takes a Nicholas Hirst article in the *Free Press* to get people's attention, but now they understand that there are a lot of things out on that side of the province; whether it be the Dauphin area or Russell area, that there are a lot of great things happening out there.

Maybe because the distance away from our capital has a lot to do with it, but I know, from our part and the department's part, we are really trying. The department is encouraging me to get out to different events that are there. I did receive an invitation to attend the trail.

Regrettably, I could not. I was not sure whether or not I received an invitation, but I double-checked. We did get an invitation to see that trail opening. Regrettably, I was not able to make it, or staff were not able to make it. I will certainly follow it up, and I thank the member for the questions.

Mrs. Dacquay: I thank the minister for his offer to meet with specific staff related to some of the suggestions I made yesterday regarding the Web site, so I will not continue to point out some further suggestions I have relative to the document I tabled yesterday. I did not get quite that far.

I have just a very few more sort of general questions, not specific suggestions necessarily, more questions on the Web site. So I want to continue with those before we proceed to pass the Tourism section and move back to the Culture, Heritage and Recreation Programs.

On the section under Interlake beaches, I wonder if the minister is aware, or can tell me, why the Ukrainian Homestead Museum is listed under the beaches section.

Mr. Lemieux: With regard to that specific issue, I cannot. I just asked staff about it. I am not familiar with that particular area. I mean, the area of the province I am familiar with, but that on our Web site, I am not familiar with at all, and staff are not that familiar with that particular point. I would ask that I be allowed to find an answer for the member from Seine River and then I will be pleased to provide a written response or a written reply as to why that is and what is listed. We do not have the Web site in front of us, or here, but I would be pleased to get back in writing and just let the member know why that is, once we have a chance to look at it.

Mrs. Dacquay: And then on the beaches under the Parkland Region, I feel there are two rather good beaches, large beaches, well-known beaches that are not listed, and I am wondering why. One is the Dauphin Lake provincial park and the Manipogo Provincial Park.

* (16:20)

Mr. Lemieux: Thank you for the question, for the member from Seine River. Just asking staff and having discussion with regard to the

Parkland area and the beaches, I am very familiar with the Dauphin Lake provincial park and Rainbow Beach in that area. Again, we are not sure why it is not there, or, you know, the member saying it is not there. We are going to check into, certainly Dauphin Lake provincial park as well as Manipogo.

Again, there are limitations on sometimes what you can put in, and how much you put in. Just going back to the member from Russell's comment about attractions, and please do not take this wrong, it is not that Dauphin Lake provincial park is just another area; it is a provincial park. I mean, even if you looked at any kind of criteria, provincial park should take some priority over some other area. But you do not want to get to the point that you are listing—we cannot possibly list everything, but maybe someday we will be able to. I just ask that we be allowed to look into this, and find out why it is missing under beaches, and to pursue it further and get the department to look more closely at the beaches section and look at the Parkland area when we are doing it. Thank you.

Mrs. Dacquay: And I recognize that you do not have the copy in front of you and it is difficult to give me an immediate response, but I appreciate the minister's response. I have a question now and the minister has alluded to it on a couple of occasions, on the on-line travel counselling service. I recognize it is new, but I just want to ask the minister: Am I correct in stating that the operating hours are Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., which, one would assume, are pretty much regular government hours or business hours?

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Chairperson, the member from Seine River is correct in the part of her comment, prior to the question, that the government hours are approximately the 9-to-5 hours that it is opened. This is, even though it is the first in the country, the first of its kind. Right now it is a pilot project, but what we are getting are about 100 inquiries per day right now.

As people become more familiar with it, they will be able to use it, because it is a dialogue that takes place, back and forth. You are having a conversation with the person, but using your computer. So no matter—a person will

ask a question, a reply will come, another question may result as the first question, and it is a dialogue that is happening. So it is an interesting pilot to see how many actual requests you can get in a day, and how much you can handle. If it gets to be so burdensome for the people that are staffing it, then we would have to look at other staff, and so on, depending on how popular it becomes.

Right now it is a pilot project, so that is the reason why the hours are as is, and everyone knows that if you are going to be using equipment like this and you were expecting to have some dialogue, sorry, but not all people live their lives around nine to five. There are people who want to, maybe, up at six in the morning; other people may be at home at seven at night after supper—would like to tap in and find out what kind of tourist plans they would like to make. So I would ask that—we are waiting to see how the pilot works out. It is a first in Canada. There are going to be a few glitches, and we are trying to work them out as they happen, but just like the Web site, you hope that in a year's time, it is better than it is now and every day you try to improve it. So the hours, obviously, maybe have to be changed, depending on the requests.

But the 1-800 number, the 24-hour line, is still functional. It is open, it is working, so people are still able to use that aspect of inquiries to Manitoba, and it probably still takes the majority of calls, or the majority of requests. But eventually, you can see that computers, the way that computers are used nowadays—that those 100 inquiries a day, or approximately 100 inquiries a day, are going to increase. We are going to have to address it, but right now it is a pilot running during regular working hours, and, hopefully it will be successful, and we will have to adjust our staffing and time allocations accordingly.

Mrs. Dacquay: Just one further comment on that. I am wondering if the department, once they are doing their review, will also take a look at the different time zones. If we are trying to encourage traffic from other provinces and from the immediate states of Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota, I would think that should be a consideration as well.

Mr. Lemieux: That is absolutely valid, because then you also have international callers from other countries in Europe and Japan. Again, the 9-to-5 may just not work for them, so I thank the Member for Seine River for the comment.

Mrs. Dacquay: I am prepared to pass the Tourism section.

Mr. Chairperson: Item 14.4. Tourism (a) Tourism Marketing and Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,612,600–pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$4,889,200–pass; (3) Grant Assistance \$10,000–pass.

4.(b) Tourism Development (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$475,000–pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$605,500–pass; (3) Grant Assistance \$380,000–pass.

Resolution 14.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$7,972,300 for Culture, Heritage and Tourism, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2003.

Resolution agreed to.

Mrs. Dacquay: Yes, I am just asking for clarification. Is it the minister and department's wish for me to revert back to Culture, Heritage and Recreation, or move to Capital Grants? I am not sure which staff is directly involved.

Mr. Lemieux: I thought we would do the Programs and then the Grants. I guess that is 2 and then 5.

Mrs. Dacquay: I thank the minister for that clarification and that is perfectly fine with me.

Mr. Chair, I am going to move directly, because time is of the essence, to 2.(b) Grants to Cultural Organizations, so we can pass the Executive Administration section.

* (16:30)

Mr. Chairperson: We will pass Executive Administration. Item 14.2. Culture, Heritage and Recreation Programs (a) Executive Administration (1) Salaries and Employee

Benefits \$295,800–pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$70,200–pass.

2.(b) Grants to Cultural Organizations \$8,083,100.

Mrs. Dacquay: I have a few questions under this section. Can the minister identify approximately how many organizations are receiving capital funding, and why there has been a decrease in the funding?

Mr. Chair, perhaps if the minister so desires, I would accept, if he has a list that he wants to table in the very near future, I would accept that or, it does not matter, whatever his preference might be, he could read them out.

Mr. Lemieux: Just on a point of clarification, the 14.2. (b), page 27 in the Supplementary Information for Leg Review, those are operating grants, to—[interjection] No. 14.5. is the Capital. These are the operating grants. Page 60 is the cultural Capital Grants.

So I am not sure. If the member from Seine River has questions related to the Capital Grants, either way, we can deal with the operating grants or the cultural grants. Which would be the preference of the member from Seine River?

Mrs. Dacquay: I apologize. I will defer that question until we get to the appropriate section. My question then, under the Cultural Organizations, is pretty much the same. Can the minister provide a list of the cultural organizations that have received the grants, and why is there a slight decrease year over year?

An Honourable Member: Running out of money.

An Honourable Member: Yes, health care.

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Chairperson, there are a number of comments that are being made and correctly so that it is deficit reduction, and there was a reduction because of government trying to look at priorities. Regrettably, you have a federal government who has reduced its monies to the Province from 50% funding down to 15%

funding, and this falls on the burden of the province of Manitoba as well as other provinces.

Regrettably, what starts to happen is that you start to look at programs like Grants to Cultural Organizations that need operating monies, and even though it is a very slight decrease, nevertheless it is a slight decrease. Regrettably, in a perfect world, if Mr. Martin had stayed in, and if Mr. Chrétien would see fit to correct his error, or the error that was made, hopefully, in years to come we will be able to adjust this particular line. I mean, it is regrettable. It is regrettable. I have had many meetings with many cultural organizations. I do sympathize with them, and I understand. But they also understand the dilemma the Province is in, and there is balanced budget legislation and we respect it and we are going to make sure our Budget is balanced.

Mrs. Dacquay: Could the minister please provide me with a list of which cultural organizations received their grants?

Mr. Lemieux: I thank the Member for Seine River for the question. I am pleased to state that— you have major agencies that include the Centre Culturel Franco-Manitobain at \$306.1 thousand; Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation at \$2,691,000; Manitoba Museum at \$2,615,900; Western Manitoba Centennial Auditorium at \$99.1 thousand; Winnipeg Art Gallery at \$2,043,000.

Those are the organizations that operating grants remain the same. So I am pleased that they were able to remain the same, yet, as I previously mentioned, there were some difficulties with regard to the economy, and so on, and those were the adjustments that had to be made regrettably.

Mrs. Dacquay: I assume the western centre that the minister mentioned is the aviation.

Mr. Lemieux: On a point of clarification, it is not the western aviation museum; it is the Western Manitoba Centennial Auditorium in Brandon.

Mrs. Dacquay: I think the minister indicated that each of those had received identically the

same amounts as previous year's funding. Can the minister indicate which ones, then, he was unable to fund this year that were normally funded, based on the decrease in the line item?

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Chairperson, the amount that we budgeted allows us to fulfil our commitments. It is just that it slows down the deficit reduction slightly. That is what we are trying to do. Essentially, they are given enough money to, because it is—*[interjection]* Yes. It is not hurting them in a sense, but it is backing off slightly on the deficit reduction side. That is really where the savings are. For every Manitoban in a household in Manitoba, \$60,000 is a lot of money. Do not get me wrong, and I do not mean to come across like it is not. But in a budget of \$8 million, \$60,000 just directed with regard to the reduction on deficit reduction is really a small amount, but it is not affecting their operating in any way.

* (16:40)

Mrs. Dacquay: Could I please ask the Chair for clarification? Are we adjourning at five today?

Mr. Chairperson: I heard that—

Mrs. Dacquay: Because the Minister of Industry, Trade and Mines (Ms. Mihychuk) just asked me if I was continuing past five.

An Honourable Member: Private members' hour is at five.

Mrs. Dacquay: Was private members' not waived? *[interjection]*

Mr. Chairperson: The way I heard in the House, private members' hour is waived for Monday and Tuesday. I have no information whether it is waived today. I do not think so. But they have some information also that we are supposed to be calling six even if it is only quarter to five, or five. *[interjection]* I will correct myself. Whatever information, rumours going on, it is not in the public record.

Mrs. Dacquay: Well, Mr. Chair, then, because I was of the understanding that I could, if I was finished, legally quit at five, and if there was an agreement that another department could then

move in. I also said that I could go beyond five if I needed the time, so based on that premise--

An Honourable Member: I will go and check.

Mrs. Dacquay: Okay. Thank you. Because I have nobody here to run and try to find my House Leader for clarification. I was hoping to be able to finish this section today. *[interjection]*

I will move forward until I get clarification, to see if they can find the House leaders. I was hoping to be able to finish this section today to both accommodate the staff and the minister and other departments.

Mr. Chairman, I am prepared to pass that line and move now to the Arts Council.

Mr. Chairperson: Item 14.2 Culture, Heritage and Recreation Programs (b) Grants to Cultural Organizations \$8,083,100--pass.

(c) Manitoba Arts Council (1) Grant Assistance.

Mrs. Dacquay: I have a few questions under this section. Could the minister please tell me how many council meetings were held this year?

Mr. Lemieux: This is a number that, I am sorry, we do not have at our fingertips. I believe they met once a month at least, and I know that they have other working groups that they have working on other items.

So, Mr. Chairperson, I do not have that, but I would be pleased to provide, as soon as we get the accurate number, I do not want to guess, but I could provide that number to the member from Seine River. I was just saying that we do not have the exact, correct number. But I will be able to provide that once we have had an opportunity to look at it.

Mrs. Dacquay: I thank the honourable minister for that response. The other question I have under this section is: Can the minister please tell me what the current administrative expenditure for the Manitoba Arts Council is?

Mr. Lemieux: It is approximately, for regular admin is around, certainly under 9 percent. It is \$615,000.

Mrs. Dacquay: Yes, and is it customary for the members of the council to travel to different regions to find out about local concerns?

Mr. Lemieux: The short answer is, yes, they do travel outside the Perimeter. I have encouraged them to do so, and I am sure, and I would hope that the members opposite would also support me when I want the Manitoba Arts Council and executive and board to travel outside the Perimeter, to be able to hold their meetings in Brandon and hold them outside of Winnipeg.

I know they held 40-plus meetings throughout the province, inquiring into the different needs that are outside of Winnipeg and throughout Manitoba. So I know it has received a lot of support from people outside of Winnipeg, as well as inside Winnipeg. People want to make sure that Manitoba Arts Council is the Manitoba Arts Council. It is not the Winnipeg Arts Council. I know members opposite would really be supportive of making sure that not only do they hold meetings outside of Winnipeg, but travel around and find out what is going on around the province. I have tried to encourage them as much as I can to ensure that they do that.

* (16:50)

Mrs. Dacquay: I thank the minister, because that was my concern that perhaps maybe they did not do that enough, because I had someone suggest that perhaps their area has not seen them. So, that is why I raised the question.

Can the minister please tell me approximately how many groups are funded under this line?

Mr. Lemieux: Just in discussion with staff, we will have to get back to my critic, the member from Seine River, on the exact number of clients that received monies from the Manitoba Arts Council. We do not have this at our fingertips, but that will be another item that can be added to the list of things that we have to get back to the member on the specifics. I do not want to guess at it; I want to be accurate.

Mrs. Dacquay: I would like to ask two additional questions so that the minister and his

staff could provide all the information simultaneously. I understand that some groups receive ongoing annual funding, and other groups get a one-time-only grant periodically. I wonder if he could give me that breakdown, as well as the total number in the same report that he is going to provide me with? How many groups got a one-time-only grant for this particular past year, and approximately how many get ongoing annual funding?

Mr. Lemieux: What I would like to do—the Manitoba Arts Council report, we were just looking through at 2000-2001. Is it possible if I could just refer to the numbers of the pages? It has been very handy. They have been able to list them all on pages 30, 31 and it deals with one-time as well as ongoing grants. It starts at page 30, and continues on. There are 50 pages in their report and obviously they provide a lot of grants. There are a tremendous amount of grants, so it goes right up until page 46. So, from page 30 to page 46, it lists the one-time as well as the ones that are continual, so it is in there: *New Directions: Manitoba Arts Council Annual Report of 2000-2001*.

Mrs. Dacquay: I am prepared to pass those two lines, Mr. Chair. My question to the minister is: How many organizations are receiving capital funding under the Heritage Grants line?

Mr. Lemieux: Last year, Heritage Grants Advisory Council were able to provide 99 grants in total. Some were operating and some were capital. The breakdown we do not have with us, again. Is that something we can put on the list? We do not have the exact breakdown of those 99 grants, which were operating and which were capital. I would be pleased to provide that again. I know we are adding it to our list here of things we have to provide my critic and the Member for Seine River with in the near future.

Mrs. Dacquay: I would like to thank the minister. Yes, that is fine. I am prepared to pass this line.

Mr. Chairperson: Item 14.2. Culture, Heritage and Recreation Programs (d) Heritage Grants Advisory Council \$465,300—pass;

2.(e) Arts Branch.

Mrs. Dacquay: My question under line 1, the Salaries and Employee Benefits: Can the minister indicate why there is a reduction year over year, and what the total staff complement is?

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Chairperson, this is a result of, the staff have left and, as we are going to be faced with in the future, there are going to be many more people, of course, leaving the civil service. But what has happened in this case is that the people that have been replaced with, they have started off at a much lower salary. That is the difference that is shown. New people coming in and filling those positions have come in at a much lower salary.

Mrs. Dacquay: Can the minister please identify whether there are currently any vacant positions?

Mr. Lemieux: Yes, currently the director is a vacant position there. That is the only vacancy in this area.

Mr. Chairperson: Time being 5 p.m., time for private members' hour. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Speaker: Order. The time being 5 p.m., it is time to move to Private Members' Business.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS— PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 200—The Elections Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: Are we resuming debate on second reading, public Bill 200, The Elections Amendment Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale)?

Some Honourable Members: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand? Agreement to stand? Stand.

Bill 202—The Electoral Divisions Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On Bill 202, The Electoral Divisions Amendment Act, standing in the name

of the honourable Attorney General (Mr. Mackintosh)?

Some Honourable Members: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand? Okay.

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 203—The Labour Relations Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: Will we be doing second reading, public Bill 203, The Labour Relations Amendment Act, of the honourable Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Fauschou)? Stand? [*interjection*] Stand.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS—PRIVATE BILLS

Bill 301—The Assiniboine Memorial Curling Club Holding Company Ltd. Additional Powers Act

Mr. Speaker: Will we be resuming debate at second reading, private Bill 301, The Assiniboine Memorial Curling Club Holding Company Ltd. Additional Powers Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck)?

Some Honourable Members: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House for it to remain standing? Agreed? [*Agreed*]

SECOND READINGS—PRIVATE BILLS

Bill 302—The Congregation Etz Chayim Almagamation Act

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh), that Bill 302, The Congregation Etz Chayim Amalgamation Act; Loi sur la fusion de la Congrégation Etz Chayim, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale), seconded by the honourable

Attorney General (Mr. Mackintosh), that Bill 302, The Congregation Etz Chayim Amalgamation Act, be now read a second time and be referred to committee of this House.

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to speak at second reading of Bill 302, The Congregation Etz Chayim Amalgamation Act.

The synagogue is the centre of the Jewish religious community, a place of prayer, study and education, social and charitable work as well as a social centre. At a minimum, a synagogue is a *beit tefilah*, a house of prayer. It is the place where Jews come together for community prayer services. Jews can satisfy the obligations of daily prayer by praying anywhere; however, there are certain prayers that can only be said in the presence of a *minyan*, a quorum of 10 adult men, and tradition teaches that there is more merit to praying with a group than there is in praying alone. The sanctity of the synagogue for this purpose is second only to the temple.

In fact, in rabbinical literature, the synagogue is sometimes referred to as the little temple. It is a sad occasion when a synagogue closes. In this case the amalgamation of three synagogues, Beth Israel, Bnay Abraham and Rosh Pina is a repetition of the earlier history of the Jewish community in the North End, where some synagogues closed and others were built further north in West Kildonan. I am sure it must have been difficult for some people to see the doors of their synagogue close, but where there is death, there is new life, and this is reflected in the new name for the amalgamated synagogues, Etz Chayim, which means "tree of life."

Beth Israel congregation began as the Hebrew Sick Benefit Association in 1906. The association was formed so that its members could look after each other in an era long before medicare. Through the payment of dues, a wide range of services were provided, including medical and dental care, loans, religious services on the High Holidays and burials in its own cemetery.

The Hebrew Sick Cemetery opened in 1911 making it the oldest active Jewish cemetery in the city. In 1970, the association built the

Hebrew Sick Benefits Gardens, the first Winnipeg apartment complex for Jewish seniors. Beth Israel congregation was formed through a merger of the Hebrew Sick Benefit Association and the Tiferes Israel Synagogue. Their synagogue was opened in 1976, in what had originally been a Jewish community centre at 1007 Sinclair Street.

Bnay Abraham Synagogue started in 1916 as a free loan and sick benefit society with a medical plan and death benefits for its members. Several years later a cemetery was established on the northern outskirts of Winnipeg. In 1958, the present building at 235 Enniskillen Avenue was erected, and it was enlarged and renovated in 1970. In June 1973, there was a formal merger with the Ateres Israel Synagogue.

Its members are particularly proud of the Beit Am Bnay Abraham seniors residence erected next door to their synagogue, of which they were the sponsors. This congregation was formed largely by Holocaust survivors, so it is fitting that there is a Holocaust memorial incorporated in the north wall. At the top in English and Yiddish it says these do I remember and my heart is grieved. It continues in English in these moving words: These six lamps burn perpetually as a memorial to our six million Jewish brethren, innocent victims of the unspeakable Nazi brutality whose sacred memory is enshrined in our hearts. May their tragic fate be a grim reminder of the havoc wrought by blind men, by blind hatred. A stern warning to all men against silence in the face of tyranny and the solemn admonition that we must never forget them.

Underneath are plaques bearing the names of some of the concentration camps: Belzetz, Treblinka, Maydanek, Auschwitz, Bergen-Belsen, Chelmno and Dachau. In front of each name is a perpetually lit lamp. The entire memorial will be moved to 123 Matheson Avenue East, the soon-to-be-renamed home of Congregation Etz Chayim, where the Holocaust Memorial will be given a place of prominence.

Rosh Pina means the head of the corner, or cornerstone. It is also a place in Israel, the most northerly settlement. The first Rosh Pina synagogue at Henry and Martha Street was

opened in 1893. As the members poured through the doors, they jubilantly proclaimed with the psalmist, the stone that the builders rejected is become the *rosh pina*.

This congregation also had a sick benefit plan with premiums of 10 cents a month. Members were offered the benefits of having a member of the Bikur Cholim committee stay over with an ill person for nursing attention and also a provision of partial defrayal of medical and medicinal costs. Lest anyone thinks they were only taking care of their own, it should be noted that in the same year the synagogue was built, 1893, a society was established to look after the needs of the poor in the city, as well as to send funds to the Holy Land.

As members of the congregation moved further north, the need was felt for a new and much larger edifice. In 1952, the new Rosh Pina was dedicated on a large site at 123 Matheson Avenue East in West Kildonan. In this new facility, a large number of programs and services were offered to its members, including elementary courses in Hebrew and Jewish customs and traditions, a gift shop, a congregational Seder, father and son and mother and daughter banquets, family dinners, a field day for sports, Cubs and Brownies, an Israel folk dance group, lecture series, adult education, teas, rummage sales, a sisterhood and brotherhood, a Hebrew school, Israel bond drive dinners and Jewish music concerts.

Many distinguished personalities and groups from Israel and the United States who visited Winnipeg under the hospices of a variety of organizations chose Rosh Pina Congregation and its auditorium as their setting, including The Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. These activities are from the history of the first 10 years, but I know that this is still a very active congregation.

* (17:10)

I was once invited by the sisterhood to speak on a panel on the topic of the Holocaust, and my wife and I have attended an interfaith Seder meal there.

Rosh Pina also sponsored a non-profit housing complex known as Rosh Pina Housing

Cooperative. There is a tree of life on the exterior wall of Rosh Pina and underneath are the words *etz chayim*, which, by coincidence, is the name of the amalgamated congregations, and this will be their new home.

Bill 302, The Congregation Etz Chayim Amalgamation Act, draws together the congregations and assets of Beth Israel congregation, Bnay Abraham Synagogue, Rosh Pina Congregation, the Hebrew Sick Benefit Association, the HSBA Synagogue incorporated and the property of the West Kildonan synagogue society, including the three cemeteries.

This merger was approved at meeting of the congregations on April 15, 2002, as was the new name Etz Chayim. The purpose of the new congregation is to carry on the practice of the Jewish faith, committed to Torah, learning and tradition, *avodah*, prayer and spirituality, and *gemilut hasadim*, acts of loving kindness; and to foster participation and the strong identification with the Jewish practice, tradition and the State of Israel.

This act names the first directors, spells out their powers and authorized activities. It comes into force on the day it receives Royal Assent. It is an honor for me to have been asked by the Attorney General to sponsor Bill 302.

I want to thank Mr. Sid Ritter, the Executive Director of Bnay Abraham Synagogue, for providing me with considerable historical material on the three congregations, and for giving me a tour of Bnay Abraham Synagogue.

I also want to thank Don Bowes of Fillmore Riley for acting as solicitor for the three congregations, and to acknowledge and thank all of the people who worked to bring about the amalgamation, including all the executive directors and presidents of all three congregations.

I look forward to watching history repeat itself, and history being made, as the Torah scrolls are removed from the Ark at Beth Israel and Bnay Abraham synagogues and walked to their new resting place, the Aron Kodesh, or Ark, in Etz Chayim synagogue.

Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria said, without Torah, there is no social order. Without the social order, there is no Torah. Without wisdom, there is no conscience. Without conscience, there is no wisdom. Without knowledge, there is no understanding. Without understanding, there is no knowledge. Without sustenance there is no Torah. Without Torah, there is no sustenance.

May God abundantly bless the new congregation, Etz Chayim, and especially their study of the Torah.

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to put a few words on the record today on Bill 302, The Congregation Etz Chayim Amalgamation Act.

Mr. Speaker, the congregations known as Beth Israel congregation, Bnay Abraham Synagogue and Rosh Pina Congregation have all carried on to date the conduct and practice of the Jewish faith, a separate conduct of congregations in the north end of Winnipeg.

Mr. Speaker, this bill brings about the amalgamation of these three Jewish congregations located in north Winnipeg, and provides for their continuation under the new name Congregation Etz Chayim.

Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House are very pleased to be in support of this bill, and look forward to passing it on, actually, to committee at this time.

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

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of private Bill 302, The Congregation Etz Chayim Amalgamation Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it six o'clock. *[Agreed]*

The hour being 6 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. Monday.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, July 25, 2002

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