

First Session - Thirty-Ninth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
Official Report
(Hansard)

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable George Hickes
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Ninth Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, October 24, 2007

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYER

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PETITIONS

Public Meeting—Premier's Attendance

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

The Premier (Mr. Doer) has been silent on the issue related to serious allegations with respect to his office.

The Premier is not answering questions related to the said issue inside the Legislature.

There is no indication that the Premier is enforcing Manitoba's code of ethics for political parties.

Based on the 1999 Monnin report inquiry, leaders of political parties are obligated to enforce the code of ethics.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Premier to consider attending the November 5 public meeting at the Munroe public library, which is located in his constituency.

This is signed by Marieta Sarinas, Pablito Sarinas, Mariano Garcia and many, many other fine Manitobans.

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Standing Committee on Justice

First Report

Ms. Marilyn Brick (Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the First Report of the Standing Committee on Justice.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee on Justice presents the following as its First Report.

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

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

Meetings

Your committee met on Tuesday, October 23, 2007, at 6 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

Bill No. 6 – The Adult Literacy Act/Loi sur l'alphabétisation des adultes

Bill No. 8 – The Public Schools Amendment Act (Regional Vocational Schools)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (écoles professionnelles régionales)

Bill No. 14 – The Government Purchases Amendment Act (Responsible Manufacturing)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les achats du gouvernement (pratiques équitables des fabricants)

Committee Membership

Committee Membership for the meeting:

Hon. Mr. Bjornson

Ms. Brick

Mr. Dewar

Hon. Mr. Lemieux

Ms. Marcelino

Hon. Ms. McGifford

Mr. Saran

Mrs. Driedger

Mr. Dyck

Mr. Maguire

Mrs. Stefanson

Your committee elected Ms. Brick as the Chairperson.

Your committee elected Ms. Marcelino as the Vice-Chairperson.

Public Presentations

Your committee heard two presentations on Bill No. 6 – The Adult Literacy Act/Loi sur l'alphabétisation des adultes, from:

Lorri Apps, Literacy Partners of Manitoba

Evelyn Peterson, Elmwood Community Resource Centre

Bills Considered and Reported

Bill No. 6 – The Adult Literacy Act/Loi sur l'alphabétisation des adultes

Your committee agreed to report this bill, without amendment.

Bill No. 8 – The Public Schools Amendment Act (Regional Vocational Schools)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (écoles professionnelles régionales)

Your committee agreed to report this bill, without amendment.

Bill No. 14 – The Government Purchases Amendment Act (Responsible Manufacturing)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les achats du gouvernement (pratiques équitables des fabricants)

Your committee agreed to report this bill, without amendment.

Ms. Brick: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Wellington (Ms. Marcelino), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Mr. Speaker: I am pleased to table, in accordance with section 28 of The Auditor General Act, the Auditor's Special Audit: Image Campaign for the Province of Manitoba.

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

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

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): No, Mr. Speaker, on a matter of privilege.

Mr. Speaker: On a matter of privilege. Okay.

Mr. Derkach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today on a matter of privilege because I think this is perhaps the first time that we have had a situation where a committee of the Legislature, specifically the Public Accounts Committee, has requested an audit to be done on a specific initiative by government.

Mr. Speaker, I know, under the rules of a matter of privilege, that I must bring this to the attention of the House at the first opportunity, and I'm hoping that I have fulfilled that part of the motion. Secondly, that I have to make a prima facie case in terms of the issue.

Mr. Speaker, we are just in the process of trying to modernize rules for the Public Accounts Committee, so that we can not only move Public Accounts ahead, but indeed become more current as it relates to holding government and agencies of government accountable, and also being more open to the public of Manitoba. I certainly applaud the government in showing its willingness to move in this direction, and I think it will be a giant step forward. But the Public Accounts Committee undertook, under the rules that were established some time ago, an unusual step for a Public Accounts Committee, in Manitoba for that matter, and asked the Auditor General through a motion in the Public Accounts Committee to examine the whole initiative of Spirited Energy which the Auditor undertook.

Mr. Speaker, although the *Hansard* will not show that there was a request that the report be made available to the Public Accounts Committee before it was tabled in the House, I think there was a general assumption that all reports that come out of the Public Accounts Committee are tabled in this House by the Public Accounts Chair. When a Public Accounts Committee meeting is held, the report of that meeting is tabled through this process in this House as well. So there is good reason to believe that this is the process that should be followed.

Secondly, if one examines The Auditor General Act, which the Auditor General is governed by, section 16(2) of the Special Audit section in The Auditor General Act states very clearly: "The Auditor General must report the findings of an audit under this section to the person or body that requested the audit and to the minister responsible for any government organization concerned."

So, Mr. Speaker, I would gather from that that the first order of tabling a report, or making a report public, would be to share that report with that individual who had requested the report, or that body that had requested the report, as well as the minister responsible. In this case, I would think that the Auditor General would have tabled the report with the Public Accounts Committee at the first meeting of the Public Accounts Committee and would have made the report available to the minister who is responsible for Spirited Energy. That would be acceptable, and that then would follow the process that is outlined in The Auditor General Act.

* (13:40)

Mr. Speaker, I think we have strayed from that process, and although this was the first report that was done under the Public Accounts Committee, I think that we should all be cognizant of what the rules and the act state and that, in fact, we should follow a procedure that would at least make available to the body that requested the audit to have access to that report prior to it being tabled here in the Legislature because that is the body that requested the audit. I would further state that, even if an individual requests an audit of a specific issue, that individual has a right under the act and under our rules to have access to that copy of that Auditor General's report.

Now I know that an argument can be made that in fact the Auditor still can share this report with the Public Accounts Committee when it meets, but there were no time lines established, Mr. Speaker, for which this report had to be tabled, either with the Public Accounts Committee or with the House.

So I submit to the House that this report should have been tabled with the Public Accounts Committee, who could have then looked at the report and made further recommendations to the Auditor General, or then that report, after it had been scrutinized by the Public Accounts Committee, would have been tabled appropriately in this Chamber.

So, Mr. Speaker, because I feel quite strongly that we must follow procedure in accordance to the act, in accordance to our rules, and that we should correct this in the future and certainly now that the report is tabled we can't do much about it at this point in time, but I do believe that there is a body in this Legislature that has a responsibility to look at these kinds of procedures and to see whether or not

we are in fact following the intent of an act or the intent of a rule.

So, therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Hawranik), that this matter be referred to the Legislative Affairs Committee of this Legislature.

Mr. Speaker: Before recognizing any other members to speak, I would remind the House that contributions at this time by the 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 and whether a prima facie case has been established.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I'll be very brief because it's very clear to me that the purpose of the privilege is to allow time for members of the opposition to read a report in order that they can ask questions in Question Period. That's obvious to anyone who looks at this Chamber.

The act, the Auditor's act, in fact says that the report must be provided through the Speaker. The rules of *Beauchesne* indicate that orders and matters of these kinds are determined by the Speaker. The practice prior to that would be the Auditor hold a press conference, provide reports to MLAs, then table it in the Legislature. The act was changed specifically to provide fairness to all members of the Legislature to provide the reports to the members of the Legislature. Had we done otherwise, the member would have been up on a privilege saying his rights had been—and he has done that. He stood up on a privilege saying his rights had been biased by virtue of the fact that a report went to someone else. The absurdity of the argument is that members opposite ask for a report at a committee, therefore is it incumbent upon the Auditor to provide the report to that member, or that committee before it comes to the House? In fact, the committee is a creature of this House.

I'm limiting my remarks, Mr. Speaker, to a very few comments because it's a frivolous matter of privilege. It doesn't accord with the orders and it's done in a deliberate attempt to allow the Leader of the Opposition more time to read the report to prepare his questions for Question Period. That is evident, that is obvious and that is the fact.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I did want to add comment to it.

The Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) made fairly clear indication in terms of what the legislation says with respect to the Auditor's office. If you go to page 1, because it's the request of the information that I think that you need to be most concerned about, Mr. Speaker, it states, and this comes from the Auditor: "On February 22, 2007, by resolution of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, the Office of the Auditor General was requested to consider an examination and audit of the Spirited Energy campaign." The next paragraph: "On February 28, 2007, I advised the Public Accounts Committee that the Office would undertake the requested work as a special audit pursuant to subsection 16(1) of The Auditor General Act."

Mr. Speaker, I think that there is a valid argument to be made that there was expectation that the report would come back to the Public Accounts Committee.

The dilemma that we're in, Mr. Speaker, is that we have to recognize that for all intents and purposes our Public Accounts Committee doesn't have the ability or the credibility to be able to meet on that regular basis to give assurances that there is true accountability. There is a serious need for changes and reform, something which members of the opposition have been arguing for, and I think that would have, in part, been able to deal with the issue that we have today.

So, Mr. Speaker, I can appreciate why the privilege is raised. I would suggest that we need to take into consideration where the request came from and what the legislation that governs the Auditor actually states. I think that would help in terms of assisting in resolving the matter. Thank you.

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, on the same matter of privilege, the Attorney General has put some comments, the Government House Leader (Mr. Chomiak) has put some comments on the record that the purpose of the matter of privilege is to provide time to prepare questions for Question Period. As will soon become apparent, that is not the intent of the matter of privilege.

The Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach), as Chair of Public Accounts Committee, has quite correctly pointed to subsection 16(2) of The Auditor General Act which is very clear: "The Auditor General must report the findings of an audit under this section to the person or body that requested the audit and to the minister responsible"

In this case the request for the audit came from Public Accounts, Mr. Speaker. That is the body to whom the Auditor General ought to have reported along with the minister responsible. So I would simply reject the premature allegations being made by the Government House Leader as to the motive for the matter of privilege, as will become apparent in Question Period.

We certainly will have lots of time to ask questions about the \$5,000 untendered contract to Rosemary Chambers and other issues, but I do want to just say, Mr. Speaker, that, as a matter of motive, the Government House Leader is completely wrong. That will be established in Question Period.

The legislation is absolutely clear about the reporting requirements. I would just add to it, and I hope the government will take the opportunity to clarify this issue, that earlier this morning there was an indication provided by one or more members of the media that something was to be released at 10 o'clock this morning. The understanding, and this is coming to us second-hand, so I'm simply asking the government to address the issue, but the understanding was that some information was going to be released at 10 o'clock this morning through Mr. Fawcett's office who is an employee of the government with respect to this audit.

We'd ask the government just to clarify whether that is, in fact, the case. If so, what information was going to be provided, and beyond that, Mr. Speaker, I would simply support the submission of the Chair of Public Accounts, the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach), and ask that the motion of the member be adopted and accepted by the House. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable member—[interjection] On the matter of privilege raised by the honourable Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach), I would like to inform the House that a matter concerning the methods by which the House proceeds in conduct of business is a matter of order and not privilege.

Joseph Maingot in the second edition of *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada* states on page 14, that allegations of breach of privilege by a member in the House that amount to complaints about procedures and practices in the House are by their very nature matters of order.

He also states that on page 223 of the same edition: "A breach of the Standing Orders or a failure to follow an established practice would invoke a

point of order rather than a question of privilege." Also, a matter of privilege arising out of a committee ought to be referred to the House by the committee and not raised directly in the House.

I would therefore rule that the honourable Member for Russell does not have a matter of privilege.

* (13:50)

Point of Order

Mr. Derkach: Well, Mr. Speaker, I will raise this under a point of order, a matter of order because this, I feel, is an important issue if we are going to get on with the business of trying to modernize our process in terms of dealing with administrative accountability, in terms of dealing with Public Accounts and modernizing that process as well.

This is not a criticism of the government of the day, Mr. Speaker. This is a matter of process, a matter of protocol, a matter of dealing with a report when in fact a body has requested that report. I believe it's incumbent upon those who work for the Legislature, whether they are the Auditor, the Ombudsman, or whoever, to follow the intent of the law as it is written within their act, and to follow the spirit of it. It's for that reason I think it's important that we examine this matter, and for future cases.

Now, we can't do that for this case anymore, because you have already tabled the report, and that is fine. But I think for future procedures that this either be clarified within the act of the Auditor General or within the agreements that are arrived at between parties in terms of our rules, or that there be a clarification of the process that should be followed.

It seems to me that we have an issue here that does warrant some attention, and, Mr. Speaker, I am simply asking and I thought that that's why it would be appropriate for the committee responsible for matters of this kind, namely the Legislative Affairs Committee, to examine this and to recommend changes because that is how we modernize the process in this House is through recommendations made by committees of the Legislature that look at this.

It's not merely to sanction or to criticize a process, Mr. Speaker, but it's sometimes important to clarify procedures so that all of us in this Legislature would have an understanding of the rules that we are operating under. In this case, I contend and maintain that there is confusion in terms of how the process

should be followed. It was the Public Accounts Committee that requested the audit. As Chair of that Public Accounts Committee, I would have thought that the report should have been tabled with the Public Accounts Committee because that is the body that requested it.

When I look at section 16(2) under Special Audits of the Act, it states that the Auditor must—it doesn't say the Auditor may, but the Auditor must report these findings to the body or the person who requested the audit. So, to my way of thinking, it's very clear.

Mr. Speaker, for that reason, I think that I have a legitimate point of order. I do it in the spirit of trying to ensure that in the future we have a more defined and a clearer process by which to deal with these matters and so that it doesn't become an issue for this House down the road when other reports are requested by a committee, and in this case, namely, the Public Accounts Committee.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Member for Russell, I am going to take this under advisement so I can have a further look at this and I'll study the issue, and then when I have it completed, I'll bring back a ruling.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Eric Robinson (Minister of Culture, Heritage, Tourism and Sport): Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table the 2006-2007 Annual Report for the Franco-Manitoban Cultural Centre, also the Annual Report for the Manitoba Arts Council, 2006-2007 Annual Report for the Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation, 2006-2007 Annual Report for the Manitoba Film & Sound.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us Chief Harvey Nepinak and other members of his council. Chief Nepinak and members of his council are from Skownan First Nation.

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Manitoba Hydro Power Line Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): After more than 20 years in politics

and as an NDP minister in the previous Pawley government who threw the coal into the coal plants as they were stoking up and emitting greenhouse gas emissions through the 1980s, and after eight years of growing greenhouse gas emissions under his watch as Premier, Mr. Speaker, the Premier announced yesterday that he had had some kind of an epiphany and was going to, over the next four years, reduce CO₂ emissions by some 17 percent over four years.

I want to ask the Premier if in the calculation under the legislation he proposes to bring forward will he be including within that the 245,280 tonnes of CO₂ that are going to be emitted as a result of his decision to run the power line the long way through the western route in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, if his crack research team had done any work, he would have noted that we made this announcement at the announcement we had with the federal Minister of the Environment, the Honourable John Baird. We made that announcement in April.

We further made the announcement in May during the election campaign. He may recall the election campaign; he may not. It might be just a blur in his life, but we made those announcements. If he wasn't paying attention, I'll send a copy of those announcements to him. I would also point out, Mr. Speaker, that those announcements, as I say, have been made before, and the member should pay attention.

Mr. McFadyen: I take note of the government news release issued yesterday and the fact that the media reported today a new commitment. I think it's unfair of the Premier to attack the people who issued that news release yesterday and the media who are reporting on this announcement today, who are reporting on it as a new commitment by the Premier to establish legislated requirements to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Apart from the fact that the Premier is acknowledging that he's recycling announcements and that he's gotten three separate media hits off of the same announcement, and I commend him and his communications team for that; I do want to ask the Premier, though, in terms of the serious issue of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, how it is that he proposes to reduce emissions by 3.4 megatonnes at a time when he's adding 245,280 tonnes of CO₂ through his decision to waste precious, clean hydro-electricity with his detour power line.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, right now, the status quo, which is the existing power lines, is not as efficient in terms of the transmission as the new, proposed power line will be. So, in terms of the existing power lines and the go-forward basis, there will be a reduction of megawatts lost on the basis of energy efficiency.

Secondly, the member opposite talked about coal plants. He talked about coal plants, I believe, within the first two years when we were in office and the member opposite was chief of staff for the former government. The first two years that we were in office, when we looked at the Selkirk coal plant which was spewing emissions into Lac du Bonnet, Beausejour, East St. Paul, North Kildonan, East Selkirk, spewing all in eastern parts of Manitoba, with the sounds of silence from former ministers and the former chief of staff, I'm proud of the fact that we took 124 megawatts of coal power out and replaced it with renewable energy, with wind, geothermal, and Power Smart, with 300 megawatts, Mr. Speaker.

* (14:00)

Mr. McFadyen: The Selkirk coal plant, which was built in 1960, was spewing coal through his entire term as a minister so if he's going to ask ministers of past governments to apologize, why doesn't he apologize for his years as minister of everything in the Pawley government when they were spewing coal out of the Selkirk plant?

But let's move to today and where he's going for the next four years because he's had now eight years to deal with the problem. He has announced that he wants to bring greenhouse gas emissions down. Under his watch, they've gone up to date, Mr. Speaker.

So I want to ask the Premier: Given that he has presided, both as a minister in dramatic increases in greenhouse gas emissions, as a Premier in admittedly more modest increases in greenhouse gas emissions, how is it that he proposes to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 3.4 megatonnes in four years when, for eight years, they've been going up? He hasn't achieved the result.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask him: He came to office on a phony promise to end hallway medicine in six months. Is he planning to leave office on another phony promise to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 17 percent in four years, or what is his plan to get it done?

Mr. Doer: The member opposite talks about and acknowledges the coal plant was spewing emissions since 1960. *[interjection]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: The member opposite comments about the history of the coal plant. I'm proud of the fact that we took action on that coal plant, Mr. Speaker.

I would point out I wasn't in Rio, as the former Premier was. I wasn't part of those commitments that were made in Rio and in Kyoto. I think it's good to have an international world treaty. Again, I didn't attend that meeting in Rio when those commitments were made, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps, from 1990 on, those commitments could have been implemented with the Rio round by the members opposite when the member opposite was chief of staff.

We came into office recognizing the new risks of climate change in 1999. We acted upon areas that were very, very important for our environment with the closure of the most polluting coal plant. The Brandon coal plant wasn't and isn't as polluting as the one in East Selkirk. It did cost money; 124 megawatts is a lot of power. It had to be made up by renewable energy: wind. There were no wind-power policies under the former government. There are wind policies now. There was no Power Smart program. The 300 megawatts that have been saved in power have been announced by us.

And I want to say, with the proper transition for employees in Brandon that are working now at the coal plant, we will be coal free with our plan, Mr. Speaker, in Manitoba.

Agriculture Industry Labour Standards

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, we understand that the Department of Labour is considering introducing changes to the Employment Standards Code to integrate agricultural producers. This would involve higher standards for hog and poultry farms. We support Employment Standards, however, the hog producers are facing extremely difficult times due to the hog moratorium and income challenges. Any new labour requirements must reflect realities of the agricultural industry.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Labour (Ms. Allan) clarify what changes under the Employment Standards Code are being proposed to the agricultural industry?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): Mr. Speaker, the standards that the agricultural industry is operating now were put in place in 1957, 50 years ago. That's when the standards were put in place. Agriculture has changed dramatically. That is why the Minister of Labour has started a process whereby the standards are reviewed. The industry is involved and will continue to be involved to see how these standards should be changed to meet the needs of the industry but also to meet the needs of the workers in that industry.

Mr. Eichler: The proposed changes are creating a great deal of fear and uncertainty in the farm community. The Minister of Labour claimed her department worked with professional bodies to develop The Fair Registration Practices in Regulated Professions Act. This was inaccurate. Professional bodies did not have an opportunity to provide input on the consequences of the bill until after it was introduced Mr. Speaker. As it stands now, the bill includes erroneous, costly and needless reporting requirements.

Will the Minister of Labour, Mr. Speaker, commit to meaningful consultation with agricultural stakeholders before introducing new legislation so that she can make avoiding the same mistakes again?

Ms. Wowchuk: If the member opposite was indeed talking to people in the industry, he would know that there has been extensive consultation with the industry on how these regulations should be changed. As well, Mr. Speaker, there has been information provided to the agriculture community, to KAP and to different commodity groups and they have been asked to comment. There is every opportunity to have input into this process. I would encourage the member opposite, instead of fighting changes that will improve the working conditions for people that he does indeed look at these and see how we can help people.

Hog Industry Labour Standards

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, Manitoba's pork industry is facing many challenges. Falling incomes are taking their toll forcing some producers to close their barns. So severe is the situation, the Minister of Agriculture has asked the federal government to implement the 2007 CAIS advance for hog farmers. Pork producers are facing continuing stress and certainly due to moratorium and the wait for the CEC report to be released.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Labour assure Manitoba pork producers that any changes to the Employment Standards Code will not legislate this industry out of business? Many fear that's exactly where this is headed.

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): Mr. Speaker, and it would be the member opposite who would be one of the first ones to fearmonger on an issue like this. We do not need fearmongering. We have talked to the industry. In fact, I am meeting with the pork industry this afternoon. So we have certainly had discussion, and the Minister of Labour has been doing consultation for a very long period of time. She has put questions to the industry and asked them on how these issues can be addressed and how improvements can be made to labour standards for people who work on farms. The industry has changed in the 50 years since the last code was put in place, and it is time to review. We are the only province that has not reviewed.

Manitoba Housing Authority KPMG Review

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Mr. Speaker, in seven months from last December until June of this year, the KPMG operational review for phases 1 and 2 for the Department of Housing, Manitoba Housing, has cost taxpayers \$336,000. We're now into phase 3, which has been ongoing for four months.

What are the additional costs to date over and above the \$336,000 for phases 1 and 2, and when can we expect the final report?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Housing): Mr. Speaker, the work of KPMG has been very important to our review of the operations of Manitoba Housing, how we can improve services, how we can improve governance and management. So we look forward to releasing, of course, the information not only on the investments and the costs, including the KPMG work, but the results of those investments and other investments to strengthen Manitoba Housing this fall. We've committed that in Estimates, and we certainly will be doing that. It's very important for the public to not only see then the cost but also the benefit of the changes that are coming in Manitoba Housing.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, the minister's indicated that the cost of phase 1 and phase 2 was

\$336,000. Can he assure this House that there were no additional costs, such as travel and other expenses, that weren't included in the \$336,000 for phase 1 and phase 2?

Mr. Mackintosh: I can certainly assure the member that the investment in the work at MHA has been very important, and there's been a good collegial effort. I can also assure the member that, unlike the Connie Curran report, Mr. Speaker, we're not going to throw \$4.8 million at making a mess. We're fixing up the challenges, the shortcomings that have been identified in Manitoba Housing.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Obviously, in that answer to the question there was no answer to the question. He didn't make a commitment or assure this House of anything.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

* (14:10)

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister inform the House whether any of the three individuals suspended without pay from the Manitoba Housing Authority were involved with the KPMG review?

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding those three individuals do not work with KPMG. KPMG was partnering with senior officials working with MHA to make sure that we had outside eyes on making improvements.

Again, to reiterate, not only all the costs, but the benefits, the report, the recommendations, all that will be made available publicly this fall. It's fall now.

Tire Recycling Industry Status of Industry in Manitoba

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Winkler Tire Recycling has closed its doors, thanks to this government's mismanagement of tire recycling in Manitoba. Tire recyclers lay this problem and this failure of this program squarely on the shoulders of this government. The minister has dropped the ball and must now account for his neglect.

I want to ask the Minister of Conservation if he will commit to work with the tire recyclers and the Recycling Corporation to quickly restore a viable tire recycling program and industry in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Conservation): My friend from Russell is just a little bit late on this. That has been happening already. Of course, we will work with people in those communities to make sure that that kind of employment is maintained and that we will have a program in place.

I want to make it very clear for the Member for Russell that it's the Tire Stewardship Board that deals directly with the tire recycling companies in terms of the credits that they are paid. The interim board that was in place made some very good recommendations to this government to move this whole file along. So we will continue to work to make sure there's recycling in this province and jobs here in Manitoba.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of Conservation would sometimes read the newspaper, he would read why the tire recyclers in this province have closed their doors. It clearly lays the blame for this program at the feet of this government and, indeed, at this minister's feet.

Mr. Speaker, he has neglected this issue, he has dropped the ball, and today we have a tire recycling program in this province that is in chaos and an industry that has closed its doors.

I want to ask the Minister of Conservation whether he will commit today to work with Winkler Tire Recycling and with Reliable Tire Recycling to ensure that these industries in this province can continue under a viable program that, indeed, recycles tires in this province.

Mr. Struthers: Clearly, the Member for Russell has to dig a little bit deeper when he does his homework, if he did any homework at all on this.

Mr. Speaker, in my first question I made it very clear that we're going to work with people to make sure that tire recycling in this province continues. We will work to make sure, in the city of Winkler, that that happens. There is already—*[interjection]* The member is a little bit late coming on this, but there are already discussions taking place, planning that's happening to make sure that those positions that were there remain there and that that job continues in Winkler and that we do a good job in this province of recycling tires.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, a week ago when we raised this matter with the minister he blamed everybody else in the world, but would not take any responsibility on his own.

Mr. Paul Courteau is in the gallery today, Mr. Speaker, and I'm wondering whether this minister will take the time to ensure that Winkler Tire Recycling and the president and the owner of the company are given the assurance that they will continue to offer those positions to their employees under Winkler Tire Recycling and that the recycling program will be restored in Winkler.

Mr. Struthers: I want to assure the Member for Russell and everybody here, and the people in Winkler, that every effort is being made to make sure that those workers who have developed a level of expertise, who have been working and have experience in this field, are continued in those positions. We're making every effort to make that happen.

I want to remind the Member for Russell that it's the responsibility of the Tire Stewardship Board to make sure that those credits are appropriate to those individual recyclers, and they make their decisions based on the best data available, not clippings from the local media like the Member for Russell wants to make his case on.

Letellier Bridge Replacement Status of Project

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, patience is in short supply as people wait for the replacement of the Letellier Bridge. The bridge has weight restrictions forcing heavy vehicles to detour to the bridge at St. Jean. It is also showing signs of wear and has been restricted to 10 tonnes. Frankly, if many more bridges over rivers fail in this disrepair in southeast Manitoba, we may have to bring in a ferry service.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Infrastructure advise whether his department has finally advertised for the replacement of the Letellier Bridge and when this project will be completed?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): I'd like to certainly help the member with his casework, and I'd be pleased to answer the question as I've repeatedly done to the member privately. It's that we've put approximately \$83 million to Highway 75.

The Letellier Bridge has always been a project we've looked at. Indeed, it's been restricted, Mr. Speaker, but we're looking at projects all across the province, and safety is paramount for us not only in the southeast part of the province, in northern Manitoba, the western part of the province. All over

the province, we have projects on the go. Again, I just want to repeat to the member that the department, the engineers, are looking closely at this particular project.

Mr. Graydon: Mr. Speaker, in a recent media interview, the minister considered that his government was hoping to get at the Letellier Bridge project this summer, but they weren't able to do so.

Moreover, the bridge on Highway 201 near Roseau River First Nation has been under weight restrictions for two years, and there are fears that it could close at any time. Fixing this bridge could involve expropriating land currently occupied by farmers and by the First Nation.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister provide an update on the land purchase negotiations with the affected producer and whether there is an agreement in place with the Roseau River First Nation?

Mr. Lemieux: I'm always pleased to stand and talk about our \$4-billion, 10-year plan that we put in place which never existed before.

We work closely with the Heavy Construction Association, many others in the province, to, indeed, put together a \$2-billion, five-year plan, Mr. Speaker, and we put out a brochure with regard to hundreds and hundreds of projects we're currently working on. There are many projects that we need to take a closer look at. We depend on our engineers to give us that advice, and we adhere to the advice that they give us.

Part of any kind of a project, we always look at issues related to the environment, engineering, land purchases, utility movements. There are many, many issues related to projects, Mr. Speaker, which, indeed, is currently happening now.

Highway Upgrades Status of Projects

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, the question has been specific to the Letellier Bridge, and it seems that the minister is not familiar with that.

Mr. Speaker, the bridge closures and restrictions in southeastern Manitoba are extremely worrisome. Five loaded school buses cross over that particular bridge every day, twice a day. The bridge problems have an adverse effect on local business, producers and the average motorist. The reliability of our roads and bridges is very important to the rural community,

to the economics of these communities and the safety of those who must use them.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister confirm whether provincial 201 will be upgraded east from Highway 75 to Highway 59?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): What I can confirm is we just added \$125 million to the bridges inspections and improvement budget. That's what I can certainly let the member opposite know.

Mr. Speaker, for the first time in our history, we're having more inspections, fixing more bridges, putting more asphalt down on the ground than they ever, ever thought about.

I want to tell the member opposite we work diligently every day not only in southern Manitoba but northern Manitoba, as the Leader of the Opposition, of course, wanted to yank all the highways money out of the north and put it into the south. We'll never do that. We care about all of Manitoba, not just sections of Manitoba.

Provincial Roads Government's Plans for Improvements

Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose): Mr. Speaker, there are a number of provincial roads and market roads in the R.M. of Alonsa that the government failed to adequately maintain. These roads present a safety risk and severe hardship to the residents of this area.

When is the minister of highways going to develop an action plan to improve these provincial roads?

* (14:20)

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): We do take these questions seriously. There needs to be a lot of work done on our highways, and with a \$4-billion commitment and a 10-year plan we plan on addressing a lot of these situations that we were left with from previous years. But I have to tell you if the member opposite has any specific issues relating to any highways or roads, I'd be pleased to talk to him as opposed to a politicization of any kind of roads. Indeed, there is a huge need across the province.

Mr. Briese: Mr. Speaker, the roads in question are the Birdinia Road, Provincial Road 481 and the Market Road, between Rorketon and Provincial Road 481. The government has allowed these roads

to deteriorate to the point they're impassable at certain times of the year.

I ask again: When will the minister stop treating the people of the area as second-class citizens and put a plan in place to improve these roads?

Mr. Lemieux: I respect the MLA for the area, and he knows that we put a lot of improvements into Highway 68 and many other highways that do link up to the particular region.

I am very much aware of the issues that he raises, and I know the department has looked into it. The Dauphin office has looked into this particular area. I have consulted also with the communities, and we await also recommendations coming from the region with regard to projects that we're looking at.

Mr. Speaker, just to reiterate again, for the first time in our history, \$4 billion over 10 years is a great, substantial amount of money that has been dedicated. For the first time in our history, a government has a plan, a serious plan, that working with the industry to ensure we have the capacity to address all the challenges we have in our province.

So I would just want to see how the members opposite are going to vote when it comes to budget time and putting the money where the mouth is with regard to a voting to the budget.

Spirited Energy Campaign Auditor's Report Untendered Contract

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I note in the Auditor General's report, which was tabled today, that there is, on page 14, an untendered contract of more than \$250,000, more than a quarter of a million dollars to Mid Canada.

I would ask the Premier: Is it normal practice for his government to be issuing untendered contracts of such sizes? I understood that the normal process was for contracts over \$5,000 to require to be tendered. What happened here? How did this get awarded without any tendering?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Looking at the report, first of all, the Auditor General—and I'm just reading the letter of transmittal—takes this opportunity to express gratitude to the dedicated volunteer members of the community, Mr. Speaker, that participated in this report.

So I would like to thank: Mr. Silver, Mr. Dave Angus, Ms. Roslyn Nugent, Harvey Sexter, Doug Stephen, Carole Vivier, Barry Rempel, Stew

Duncan, the members of the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, the Brandon Chamber of Commerce and the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce. I'd like to thank each and every one of those individuals because some individuals have used the terminology that the campaign was, quote, a war. I would take Bob Silver over the Member for Minnedosa (Mrs. Rowat) any day to run a campaign of marketing in Manitoba and in Canada.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, on page 28, we find that not only was this contract not tendered properly, but we find that the contract, which was this contract, was not reported properly as untendered. This is an extraordinary breach of government procedure, to not report untendered contracts when there is a due process for so doing.

I would ask the Premier: How is it that this was not only untendered, but it was also unreported, and what on earth was his government doing in such a breach of normal procedure?

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, the report goes on to talk about the proper tendering process, and it makes very, very definite comments. I know the member opposite will take the comments out of context. I know they were hoping for something more on this report. I would point out that this report, and I'm just reading through it myself, has a section dealing with the—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: —creation to have a non-government organization is a unique approach to managing of the brand and marketing issues to separate the government—*[interjection]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: It talks about the unique ability to have the government separated from a community-driven process with community decision making, the business communities, Mr. Speaker. It goes on to say, in other jurisdictions a government agency would have assumed full responsibility for ongoing brand management.

Obviously, Mr. Speaker, having this unique way of having the set-up with the private sector will require improvements in the future, but obviously we prefer—*[interjection]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: Looking at the specific organizations that the member's talking of, Mid Canada, I believe, is on the list of approved suppliers for the provincial government. I think it's one of the agencies that at least two political parties use, Mr. Speaker, because it has unique abilities on communications. I know that our ads are edited at that studio. I know the Conservative ads are edited there. I'm not sure where the Liberal ads were edited. Maybe in Toronto or somewhere else. Mid Canada is on the pre-approved list in government, but it was the private sector that was making those decisions.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, the Premier can wiggle, wiggle, wiggle, but the reality is that there are two extraordinary breaches of normal government procedure. We have a government which is trying to act in secret to hide the normal reporting and normal tendering process, and the government should not be doing that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of respect for the people on the Premier's Advisory Council, but there's a question which has to be asked in this context.

I would ask the Premier whether there are any members of the Premier's Advisory Council who received contracts, Mr. Speaker, untendered contracts, for themselves or their businesses, and can the Premier let us know what procedures were followed, if this is the case, in case there were conflicts in interest?

Mr. Doer: Well, Mr. Speaker, again I point out that this is a unique set-up where we actually agreed to have the private sector lead this process. The Auditor General's report, as I've read it, makes it very clear that this was led by the private and community sector. It was implemented by the private sector. The Auditor General goes on to say in her transmittal letter, while the report includes recommendations to strengthen certain administrative practices, we found that the vendor selection process was done in a manner consistent with government policies and procedures, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, so the member opposite can take things out of context, and I know he will. Mid Continent is on the approved list of suppliers for the government. This was a private-sector-led group, a private-sector-led organization. It was unique, and the Auditor General concludes that proper practices were utilized.

Foster Parent Recruitment Strategy Successes

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, could the Minister of Family Services and Housing share with the House and all Manitobans the success of our foster parent recruitment strategy?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Housing): Mr. Speaker, I just want to, first of all, table the Progress Report on the Changes for Children initiative that was launched last year.

Mr. Speaker, one component of the Changes for Children initiative was the Circle of Care campaign to address the real need for more foster beds in Manitoba. The child welfare authorities had a target of 300 new foster beds by November. I'm pleased to report to the House that, one month ahead of time, we now have 500. Manitobans obviously have come through.

Mr. Speaker, I want to conclude my statements by just thanking all those Manitobans who looked into this issue, carefully considered the challenges, the opportunities, the giving of being foster parents.

I'll just say that I don't think there's a greater gift to a vulnerable child than opening your heart and your home to that child. It is, I think, a great sacrifice and I believe, Mr. Speaker, that these parents have also found it very rewarding.

* (14:30)

Spirited Energy Campaign Auditor's Report Private-Sector Involvement

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Premier has indicated that his Spirited Energy campaign is led by the private sector, but I note in the audit report today at page 1: "Areas excluded from the audit were: the extent and value of in-kind contributions; and the extent of private sector spending in promoting Manitoba's place brand."

I want to ask the Premier: Given that the Auditor General didn't look at these issues which are the underpinnings of his argument about this campaign, is he prepared to be forthcoming about the extent and value of in-kind contributions and the extent of private sector spending, or is he going to continue with his bluster and spin around the extent of private-sector involvement?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Well, Mr. Speaker, I would ask the member opposite: Does he stand by

the words of his critic from Minnedosa who called the campaign a quote, wart? Would he stand by the Brandon Chamber of Commerce, the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce?

The last time I looked, they were part of the private sector. Would he stand by the leadership of Bob Silver? Is he part of the private sector or is he part of the public sector? Dave Angus, is he part of the public sector or part of the private sector? Roslyn Nugent, is she part of the private sector or the public sector? Doug Stephen, Mr. Speaker. The list goes on and on and on.

Mr. Speaker, all the allegations about expenditures, we verified that the total amount of spending by government departments on the campaign was \$2.8 million which was consistent with the publicly available information. It includes recommendations to strengthen in the process, but they also say that the vendor selection process was done in a manner consistent with government policies and procedures.

I want to thank those hardworking volunteers that have been smeared by members opposite for six months. They have had to endure the cheap shots for six months. I want to thank them for doing something for Manitoba, for standing up for Manitoba, not the member opposite.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, I know the Premier often says that turning up the volume doesn't make the story any better. He can turn up the volume as loud as he likes, but the facts are that the Auditor General has not looked into the issue of in-kind contributions or private-sector spending.

Mr. Speaker, we do have a list of Crown corporations who have spent ratepayers' dollars on this campaign: Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board; Manitoba Liquor Control Commission; Manitoba Lotteries Corporation, \$22,340; Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation, \$64,332 of ratepayers' money. We've got no accounting for the contributions by the private sector.

I want to ask the Premier if, rather than embarking on bluster, he spent \$3 million in taxpayers' funds. They've spent money of ratepayers on a campaign. It wasn't the Member for Minnedosa (Mrs. Rowat), Mr. Speaker, it was the regular Manitoban in the focus group who said that they found the Spirited Energy brand, I think the word was, nauseating and unintelligible. That's the regular

Manitoban who this brand was put in front of. The campaign has failed.

The Premier initially said that it takes a while to grow on you. I want to ask the Premier whether the brand has grown on him, whether he's ready to be honest about the private-sector contributions and whether he is comfortable with the fact that his chief economic adviser in the weekend newspapers indicated he can't do business in Manitoba anymore so he sent his jobs offshore.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, again, we on this side said and have said from the beginning that this was a recommendation made by the private sector, initiated by the community private-sector group. This audit report, as I've read it and I read it quickly, basically verifies the fact this was recommended by the private sector and the community sector. It was led by the private sector and community sector. It was led with volunteer time from the private sector and the community sector. It was led with volunteer time. I, unlike the members opposite, would like to thank the volunteers. I think it's important to thank people.

Crown corporations are advertising at the Bombers. Should they stop advertising at the Bomber games? They advertise at theatres. They put in 10 times more money, 10 times more money into the Pan Am Games than when the member opposite was chief of staff. We didn't criticize it because we're proud of Manitoba, even when the Conservatives are not.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

United Nations Day

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to speak in this House about United Nations Day.

In 1945, the United Nations Charter came into force on October 24. In 1948, this day was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly as an annual event to honour the extremely important organization that impacts the entire international community through its efforts.

Traditionally meetings, discussions and exhibits on the goals and achievements of the organization marked United Nations Day throughout the world. However, the General Assembly recommended in 1971 that this day be observed as a public holiday and several international schools used today to celebrate the diversity of their student bodies.

I would need to speak much longer to fully illustrate the importance of the United Nations to the security and co-operation of all countries. Formed from the remnants of the League of Nations after the Second World War, the United Nations has expanded throughout the last seven decades to include 192 member states, declare six official languages for the organization and have numerous agencies located in cities throughout the world, including New York, Geneva, The Hague, Vienna, Copenhagen and Montreal.

In a world with ever-increasing interaction between its citizens and government, the impact of the United Nations as a forum for communication of states becomes even more critical. Moreover, the organization's mandate continues to increase. Just to name a few of the broad areas that it encompasses, the United Nations addresses peace and security, human rights, social and economic development and international law. Through it all, the organization acts as a venue for global co-operation. It is the only organization existing today that has the legitimacy and the universality to address these significant changes facing all humanity.

The impact of the United Nations to creating and maintaining a co-operative and peaceful world cannot be underrated. It is important for us all to take the time to recognize the aims and achievements on this international organization, and celebrating United Nations Day each year on October 24 is surely a start. Thank you.

Ukrainian Canadian Veterans Branch 141 Ladies' Auxiliary

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, shortly after the end of World War II, the Ladies' Auxiliary to the Ukrainian Canadian Veterans Branch 141 was formed. It was comprised of the wives and sisters of the branch executive who met to put together care packages to be sent overseas. In 1947, their charter was issued, formally creating the auxiliary and marking this year as the 60th anniversary of its formation.

The 60-year history of the auxiliary is marked with boundless generosity and hard work by its members. Even when it was first formed and loved ones were still overseas, the women of the branch made many visits to Deer Lodge Hospital to spend time with its residents. This spirit of selflessness and exemplary service to the community has continued to the present.

The list of contributions that the auxiliary has made to the community, both big and small, is vast. One of their biggest single contributions was \$25,000 for the purchase of a portable kidney dialysis machine for the Health Sciences Centre. The auxiliary has been a strong supporter of hospitals, personal care homes, schools and countless other worthy causes through donations of both money and time.

* (14:40)

Remembrance Day is approaching, and it is during this time of the year that the contributions of veterans to our country are most prevalent in our minds. Legions play the important role of helping to perpetuate the tradition of remembrance in our society. They honour the past while also contributing a great deal to both the present and the future as volunteers and role models.

Mr. Speaker, I stand today to recognize the formidable achievements and community contributions of the Ladies' Auxiliary Branch 141. Their hard work and unselfish service has brought innumerable benefits to the many individuals and groups that their work has touched. I would like to congratulate them on their 60th anniversary and wish them many more years of success. Thank you.

Canexus Chemical Safety Award

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon West): Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate Canexus Chemical of Brandon on being the recent recipient of the prestigious national safety partners award presented by Safe Communities Canada.

Bill Turner, the plant manager, deserves special recognition because he has been instrumental in developing safe work practices and interweaving safety awareness into the fabric of the corporate culture. Safety training within this outstanding business is comprehensive and provided to all employees. The evidence of the business success and safety awareness is undeniable with over 3,700 days without a work lost-time injury.

The emphasis placed on safety by Canexus Chemical and by Mr. Turner, however, extends beyond the workplace and reaches into the local community. Bill Turner has extended the use of his professional expertise to the community, becoming involved in a wide range of local organizations. Mr. Turner has been actively involved in the Brandon Waterfall of Lights, the Canadian National Institute for the Blind and the Riverbank Development

Centre. Some of the efforts initiated by Mr. Turner and the company include community bicycle safety training, dissemination of safety equipment and targeted campaigns to heighten safety awareness within the community.

Mr. Speaker, Bill has supported a wide array of community-hosted sporting activities such as the 1997 Canada Winter Games and the 2006 Special Olympics.

Mr. Speaker, the cultivation of safe communities is an important aspect of inclusive and healthy neighbourhoods, but it is also a highly challenging and labour-intensive process. For their expertise, as well as all of their hard work, I would like to extend both my congratulations and thanks to Canexus Chemicals and especially Bill Turner. They truly embody the giving spirit of our city at the same time as providing a stellar example and setting the bar high for businesses in our province. Thank you.

Gamma Knife Purchase

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, I rise before the House today, to celebrate this summer's announcement of the acquisition of the Perfexion Gamma Knife. Our government's \$3.1-million investment in the Gamma Knife will allow for more advanced non-invasive neurosurgeries to take place here in the province. It will also help attract new medical professionals to Manitoba and retain the ones already involved in advancing the medical technology sector in our province.

I know from my personal experience the benefits the Gamma Knife provides for patients undergoing brain surgery. In 2002, by the divine Creator's grace and the skills of the neurosurgeons at the Health Sciences Centre headed by Dr. Patrick McDonald, I survived an eight-hour open-brain surgery to remove a brain tumour. This new Gamma Knife will allow for quicker, more focussed treatment of brain tumours, meaning quicker, easier recovery for patients undergoing the surgery. I personally know someone who came to the hospital in the early morning for a Gamma Knife surgery and went home in the afternoon. Rather than the eight hours of surgery I experienced, the actual Gamma Knife surgery is done in minutes, though the preparation and observation after surgery still takes some time.

Mr. Speaker, the impact the new Gamma Knife will have on a broader range of patients undergoing brain surgery by providing them with the option for a

non-invasive treatment rather than the open-brain surgery will be enormous. I am proud to be able to stand here today on behalf of all Manitobans and speak about this wonderful addition to the medical technology in this province. Thank you.

Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise to talk about the NDP Doer government's poor ability to plan and to implement their plans. Back in 2002 when the government talked about meeting and exceeding our Kyoto targets, the Premier (Mr. Doer) and his government said boldly, we believe that we can achieve reductions in greenhouse gases of up to 23 percent below 1990 by 2012. Well, the delivery on this has been so poor that, instead of going down, we are actually going up on greenhouse gases, and the Premier now has had to admit that his approach has failed and he's going to bring in legislation. His target appears to be only 6 percent below 1990 by 2012. We shall see, but it demonstrates poor planning, poor implementation.

We see that, again, Mr. Speaker, in the Auditor General's report, where there was poor planning, many untendered contracts, including one for more than a quarter of a million dollars, no reporting as their normal procedure is of these untendered contracts, the excuse of not tendering being that they were rushed. Well, that's the code word for they didn't plan properly.

Mr. Speaker, we know that this government has a problem with planning and implementation, and we see it both in climate change and in the Spirited Energy program.

House Business

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Official Opposition House Leader): On House business, I table, for the benefit of the House, Concurrence for Thursday, October 25. Following Routine Proceedings, we will call the following ministers in Concurrence: the Minister of Water Stewardship (Ms. Melnick), the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald), Minister of Conservation (Mr. Struthers) and Minister of Justice (Mr. Chomiak). All ministers listed will be questioned concurrently.

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced that for Concurrence for Thursday the 25th, the ministers that have been asked for are the Minister of Water Stewardship, Minister of Health, Minister of Conservation and Minister of Justice. They will be called concurrently. That's an announcement for the House.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): I wonder if you might call Concurrence.

Mr. Speaker: Okay. We will now move into Concurrence.

Madam Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Concurrence Motion

Madam Chairperson (Bonnie Korzeniowski): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

The committee has before it for consideration the motion concurring in all supply resolutions relating to the Estimates of Expenditure for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2008. On October 23, the Official Opposition House Leader (Mr. Hawranik) tabled a list of ministers of the Crown who may be called for questioning and debate on the Concurrence Motion.

The ministers listed are as follows: Family Services and Housing (Mr. Mackintosh); Agriculture, Food, and Rural Initiatives (Ms. Wowchuk); and Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Lemieux).

The floor is now open for questions.

* (14:50)

Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose): We are allowed to remain seated in this procedure, are we not? *[interjection]* Yes, okay, thank you.

I just wanted to go over a number of things that we weren't able to get to when we were doing Estimates and try and get a little more information on some areas that we did touch on, but didn't touch on very heavily, and some that we really never did get to.

Firstly, I know I had a little bit of information on requesting service purchase agreements, but it seems that they're not all yet in place. I have a concern about accountability until those service purchase agreements are in place, and I would like to know how many authorities that actually are in place for right now. If they're not in place, what are the time lines pertaining to getting them in place?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Housing): I have some reference information that I'm attempting to locate here.

There's been a remarkable increase in the number of service purchase agreements that have been concluded now with agencies that we work with for providing services. First of all, I know that there is a very small and nominal number that are being renewed. In the meantime, it's my understanding that one of the terms of the existing SPAs is that they remain in effect while the renegotiation renewal process takes place.

I also understand that there are negotiations on a very small number of SPAs. I can think of one, for example, where we are looking at flowing supports to an agency, but no monies have flowed yet. So an SPA will have to be negotiated and is, I understand, in the discussion stage. But I will provide the member with the update in terms of the numbers and the current status.

I might just, as well, advise the member that the Agency Accountability and Support Unit that has been largely and importantly tasked with the conclusion of the SPA initiative is being doubled. My understanding is that an additional six FTEs, resulting in a total of 12, is being added, and that three of the six new positions will support the Child and Family Services division.

Just to conclude, Madam Chair, two new compliance officer positions have been filled, one in September, the other October 22. The one senior business comptroller was posted on October 2, and it's expected that an offer will be made by October 26, which is, of course, just days away for starting in November.

The three other positions, Madam Chair, are the senior accountability consultant. There are financial management consultants as well. I know the second financial management consultant has a job posting that closed on Oct 10. We're starting with the filled position, it appears, on about November 19. So that's the status of the Agency Accountability Unit expansion that will also, of course, work on ensuring that the SPA initiative is robust. I may be getting information sent into the House just in terms of some of those numbers and, if not, I can provide the member with that perhaps even by the end of the day.

Mr. Briese: When we went through our other process, I had requested the audits and yearly statements from the various agencies and the various authorities. The minister had indicated to me that there was one or two still not available, but he had indicated that he would provide me with those

reports. I haven't seen them yet and it may be too soon, but I would certainly like to see them. I would like to know how many it was, I can't remember the number, how many that aren't available yet. There was some question about year-end and there was also some question about authorities, I think, on First Nations.

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, I saw the list of questions and requests for documents from the Estimates process that came to my desk and so I know that staff are addressing the numerous requests. That one there, I understand, is not going to be a difficult one to fulfil on a timely basis, but we'll certainly get those copies to the member once I have received them and have looked at them.

There were a number of other questions. There was one, I did receive some information on the Spectrum Connections question that I have some documents with me on and perhaps we can stroke that off our to do list if I can provide that now. Those were the questions regarding the FASD services the member wanted some more information about. I can advise that it was actually a joint work with Healthy Living and the Changes for Children initiative that we decided to invite experienced service providers rather than government doing it internally to submit proposals to develop this FASD service for children and adults living with FASD.

So the RFP went out, I understand, on September 19, and the RFP requested that the following services should be considered and expanded upon based on the expertise and advice of the vendor: family support, direct service provision, clinical services, case management, transitional planning for youth and outreach. We'll be looking for service providers that have a demonstrated knowledge and experience in health and social issues facing Aboriginal youth and adults. Experience working with community-based Aboriginal organizations and Aboriginal child welfare authorities is essential,

So the focus is to get the attention of agencies then with a good, rich experience in providing services, not necessarily similar services but services that may be of a comparable nature. In terms of working with adults and youth and Aboriginal people especially, then the department will analyze the strengths and weaknesses of each of those organizations. Now I have and I only have one copy, but I don't know if that is a difficulty to table, and I think they can make copies now, so I will provide the

member with the actual request for proposals so that he can see what the target of this request is.

* (15:00)

Now, my understanding is that this initiative, called Spectrum Connections, will be the first of its kind in the country. I just happened to run into someone yesterday who was asking about this initiative. What it's going to provide is a mobile team to go out to where persons with FASD are living, making sure that they have the proper supports, that they are connected, whether it's to employment training or employment itself, whether it's to housing, dealing with financial issues. Perhaps it's connections to their own family. It may be connections back to their foster family. It may be connections to other health services.

So what we're doing really is embarking on something very new, something very different, and it's our hope that based on the submission deadline of October 22, that we can get this initiative up and running very early in the new year, but that'll depend on the state of the organization that is successful, then, in being awarded the contract.

So I'll provide this for the member. He may have further questions as a result of that.

Mr. Briese: As part of that FASD commitment you're referring to—and I may have missed it when you read it off, but it was prevention, early prevention, programs that may lead to some prevention of FASD, such as better educational programs and more information to pregnant women, that type of stuff, is that part of what you're proposing, or do you have a separate avenue you're approaching those issues with?

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, the member asked a very important question, and I know, then, from how he's asked it that he recognizes that it's critical that there be a focus on prevention, that this is a wholly preventable challenge, and it's a very, very serious challenge facing us.

The Spectrum Connections is about servicing those who are living with FASD. So it is a service, then, for those that already are living with FASD. It is, though, part of a continuum and a development that recognizes a need for both services to fill in some recognized gaps but also at the other end of continuum the prevention piece.

I just have a note here. We understand that in the child welfare system there is a disproportional

representation of children living with FASD which is why the Changes for Children initiative has embraced the need to develop services.

But in terms of the prevention initiatives, I can just go over some of them. The government has put together across departmental lines a committee. In fact, it has developed some tremendous expertise at the official level, as well, on FASD. I know Manitoba has been recognized for, I've been told, providing leadership and innovation. At the same time, the more you get into it, the more we've recognized—and I'm sharing nods with the Minister of Healthy Living (Ms. Irvin-Ross)—the need for greatly expanded services.

But the member's question is bang on, that prevention has got to be the key focus, and we're seeing some remarkable efforts there. I think, for example, the Healthy Baby program delivered through Healthy Child Manitoba, a program that I hope the member may pursue with the Minister for Healthy Living, is really remarkable. It is leading edge. That strategy works with pregnant moms and identifies those who are particularly at risk and then provides services as a result of that assessment.

The current prevention initiatives also include education in schools and, of course, the general materials through the Healthy Baby programs. We have the MLCC awareness campaign, With Child—Without Alcohol. The member has probably seen that or maybe he never goes in there, but on all the bags—and there are actually some very high-profile materials that MLCC has been helping us with.

I understand that health professionals, as well, have as part of their protocol advice to pregnant moms on the role, the dangerous role of alcohol when they are pregnant.

I think the Stop FASD program is probably the single most important, unique Manitoba approach to prevention of FASD. That's being expanded now. That's working with those moms and we're looking at expanding it to three sites, I believe, in this fiscal year.

You know, I can go through, I guess, a list of some of the other areas, although I would prefer to defer to the Minister for Healthy Living (Ms. Irvin-Ross) because she has taken this on with particular vigour, this whole challenge. But I am also familiar with the Justice FASD project because of my capacity in the Justice portfolio for some time. We had, as a result of the leadership of the Provincial

Court, in particular, not only Chief Judge Wyant, but also Judge Mary Kate Harvey and MATC, the development of different protocols for young offenders living with FASD. I know that there's been a real interest in that from across the country.

We are starting in a targeted and sure-footed way and I know there are some discussions about how that can be expanded, but we have recognized, and the bench has recognized that the old traditional court order may not be as effective with young offenders with FASD because of the mental processes that are at play there. So there's a different way that they have developed in getting through the importance of court orders and how to comply. So that, I guess, is part of the continuum as well, not as a member said, you know, on the prevention side, but on the need for us to deal with those who are offenders.

It's also important to recognize that while there has been some prevalence of young offenders with FASD, it's absolutely critical to recognize that one living with FASD does not mean that one has a criminological—what's the right word?—has a propensity to crime. But it does present some unique challenges when offenders do have FASD.

So those are some of the initiatives. As I said, though, my area has tended to be—although I'm on the Healthy Child committee—but in terms of program delivery, it's on the Child and Family Services side.

We're also adding capacity within the child welfare system to deal with a solid base of expertise, understanding and insights into FASD with the development of specialized positions and training as well across the system, you know, whether it's for front-line workers or for foster parents. So that is unfolding as well as part of the Changes for Children strategy. I think I provided all the copies of that report to the member, but he will see in there reference to the FASD strategy under Changes for Children. That is an important part of that one and I think in the first year, we've seen some good strides forward, but particularly, and I'm going to end where I started, the Spectrum Connections. I think there's a lot of excitement out there in the community with those who have been working tirelessly on the FASD challenge that we're going to have this mobile service here in Manitoba. I look forward to a very positive outcome in identifying who's going to be the service deliverer on this.

* (15:10)

Mr. Briese: Thank you, Minister, for providing me with this. I haven't had a chance to look through it, but I presume this is the initiative that is coming out of the extra \$7.5 million that you proposed, and I guess is in the budget for FASD. This is, I presume, somewhat of a first step for it. So we'll be certainly monitoring that and probably we'll have some comments in the days to come on it.

Moving to a different area, can the minister indicate how many child-care centres are operating with the licensing variance at the present time? I know when there's a shortage of qualified staff there are licence variances made to child-care centres. I'm not sure of a number on child-care centres but I'd like to know how many are operating with variances on their licences?

Mr. Mackintosh: I certainly urge the member—maybe this is a gratuitous remark, but I certainly urge and welcome his surveillance, if you will, of FASD approaches in Manitoba. I think that's a real worthy role in ensuring accountability in that area. It's one that we're very keen to see strengthened.

Likewise, though, in the area of child care. There is a national challenge to recruit and retain child-care workers, and the member may well be aware of that challenge. In fact, much of the investments made over the last several years, not just here but in all of the jurisdictions in Canada, has been to address this challenge.

The sector I think—and this is I think trite to say now—has not had the wage scales necessary to ensure that there is long-time retention of workers that are so critical to the well-being of our children. So, as a result, there have been wage enhancements developed. There have been specialized retention and recruitment strategies, and we'll continue to have more of that. In fact, just in this budget there is some good investment in wages, and during the campaign, as well, we committed to further enhancements to wages over the next two fiscal years. So what has this challenge for retention and recruitment meant? It has meant, then, that the facilities sometimes do not have the staff that ideally would be sought to serve children in that facility.

The Manitoba Child Care program for many, many years has set out, of course, regulations in terms of training and the proportion of trained staff to children and the educational requirements for the levels of early childhood workers or educators. There are three levels and usually the ECE 2 is a two-year diploma and the ECE 3 is an approved degree in

early childhood. The others that do not have the approved ECE training are classified as child-care assistants.

So the response of the Manitoba Child Care program has been the ability to approve an exemption, then, to the regulations, and also to manage that is to allow for provisional licences to be issued so that centres can continue to operate but with certain checks and balances.

I know that the member may be aware of this one, but the Child Care program in Manitoba is supported by regional co-ordinators, individuals who, reporting to our department, work with the child-care centres where they are short-staffed or have differing levels of education on staff. So they work to determine how the centre can address the staffing shortcomings. There may be time lines that are agreed on. By the way, it's very important as part of the retention-and-recruitment strategy that we've allowed for the ability of childhood educators to upgrade their skills while remaining in the workplace. I've had some very good feedback on that one. So it's reviewed on an annual basis by the co-ordinator in the area and then the findings, of course, go to the issue of how the centre is re-licensed.

The data that I have is not current. So I know the member will have some information from the department that is from 2006. So I can arrange to get an updated snapshot of a certain point in time in terms of the number of exemptions and provisional licences, and, as well, the member then can see how these training initiatives are going to work.

So perhaps that's the safest way to answer it, is that we'll get some updated information to the member on a timely basis and save him the trouble of having to go through a FIPPA process.

Mr. Briese: The other thing is a kind of a follow-up on that issue. I know you recently, or your department recently launched a campaign to attract more child-care workers. Has that been successful, because I know there's a crying shortage. There's turnover. There are all sorts of difficulty finding enough staff for the child-care centres.

Mr. Mackintosh: Just starting with the most recent, but during the campaign we committed to a \$1-million training-and-recruitment fund for ECEs and, as well, to increase the operating grants to allow for a 6 percent salary increase for '08 and '09.

But in this budget, the one that's going to a vote this week, the salaries are increased by 2 percent. So I know, over time, in fact, since 1999, I'm advised that the actual average hourly wage for all ECE 2s is increased by 31.7 percent. It went from \$11.69 an hour to \$15.40 an hour, or from about \$24,000 annually to over \$32,000 annually in '06-07. Of course, with the new numbers that will have to be adjusted.

With the 2 percent effective April '07, that's in this budget, and the future funding commitments of 3 percent in '08, 3 percent in '09, ECE 2 wages are expected to increase to \$16.67 an hour or to over \$34,500 annually. So that would be 42.6 percent since '99 when we first came into office.

Now, what we know from our measures of success, the targets of what was called the five-year action plan that concluded this year, the target was to train 450 more ECEs, and, this spring—and that's the last date that I have numbers for—there were 350 graduates at that time with another 252 currently enrolled. So that was an accomplishment. We have been able to train those 450.

Now, on a go-forward basis, we're looking to see what the need and the realistic deliverable can be for more ECE training. We've been listening to front lines. We've been listening to other stakeholders and leaders in the child-care community on how we can best recruit and retain. We've even had very interesting and insightful conversations with males, who, I think, have a great role to play in the early childhood sector, on how we can start to focus recruitment strategies on the men as well.

*(15:20)

By the way, I'm aware of some men that are ECEs. They're wonderful ECEs, of course, but perhaps there has to be some tweaking of some of our campaigns because it would be great to have a greater balance in the gender representation of ECEs in our child-care centres, but that so far, I think, is the answer to the question.

We've met the five-year target, and that was a target that was put together by stakeholders. Now we have to move to the next level. So, with the commitments for wage enhancements, we can anticipate that we'll have some greater successes here, recognizing, and I'll end on this one, we know that there continues to be challenges on the wage issue that will have to continue to be addressed. We cannot rest on our laurels on that at all.

Mr. Briese: Another issue that I want to just touch on briefly: My colleague, the former Family Services critic, brought some concerns forward about the community of Lynn Lake last spring I believe it was, and very recently I was told that those problems haven't been resolved. Those problems rotate around no social worker in the community and no designated safe house, and I wondered if those issues have been addressed.

Mr. Mackintosh: There were some issues raised with regard to two northern communities, one being Lynn Lake and the other being Leaf Rapids, some similar concerns. We're very aware of the challenges of communities that have lost some of their major strengths in the economic sector. I know that the Mining Reserve Fund has gone to work to help these communities address some of the economic challenges there, but, of course, you can't separate economic from social challenges. I know that there were issues raised about the need for stronger social supports.

In fact, the mayor of Leaf Rapids has recently written to thank my office for the time and effort and concern, on behalf of the town of Leaf Rapids, and he reminds us that when my office was first contacted several months ago, the community, according to the mayor, was in dire straits. He thought that the community wasn't receiving the appropriate level of responses or ongoing services, and he now has gone out of his way to recognize the efforts that have been made. Leaf Rapids, he reports, had three meetings with Child and Family Services personnel, plans were put in place for a full-time worker stationed in the community and three emergency social services first responders to deliver services during the off hours. He also reports that a facilitator is soon to be hired on a contract basis to conduct a fact-finding community consultation in both Leaf and Lynn Lake and to formalize a strategic plan to address the many concerns that both communities are experiencing. There is even some talk, he says, about developing parenting and life-work skills training programs at Leaf. So there has been some good movement forward there.

Now in Lynn Lake there were some other kinds of challenges and we addressed these briefly in Estimates going back a couple of weeks ago. There were four houses that were deemed to be substandard and the four families, therefore, then had to be removed from these private rental homes under order, and we know that that can cause tremendous upheaval in a family. At first, I understand, the

families were moved to a local hotel, and my latest information is that currently all families are residing with friends or family. I noticed, though, that there has been some later work done on this, actually within the last several days, by way of some joint work across the departmental lines and involving the Burntwood Health Authority as well.

The Aboriginal and Northern Affairs and my department met, actually this week, to look at issues affecting the families, but I'm very pleased to report that Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation is going to be refurbishing five homes that are owned by the town. We've allocated some funding for that investment. Those homes are currently unoccupied, and it's expected that those homes will be available for occupancy in January. So that will be made available. So it looks like there have been some improvements as a result of work across the lines.

I just have a note that was sent in that relates to me that the Children's Advocate, as well, has been very helpful in meetings in Leaf Rapids, which suggests to me that the issues affecting the two towns, then, benefited from her role there. I notice here that Leaf Rapids has an advisory council that was put together and it involves reps actually from Leaf, from Grandville Lake, from Lynn Lake and the Mathias Colomb Band. So they're at work on this community facilitator. So I think that reports on the concerns raised. That's rather up to date.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): To the minister: As the minister knows, there was a study done which looked at the incidence of FASD in children in care under the Child and Family Services system. But, as we all know, that study was not complete and only provided a minimum number, not a real number for what the incidence is.

So I would ask the minister when he will ensure that the study is completed to give a real number for the incidence of FASD in children in care in the Child and Family Services system.

Mr. Mackintosh: A number of members and officials involved with Healthy Child Manitoba had a briefing on some of the new work that is being done to identify the incidence. It is disproportionate to the population and certainly, then, means that there's a disproportionate need for the child welfare system to develop innovative approaches and, as well, ensure that training and prevention initiatives are more robust than we've seen in the past.

I have a number of 17 percent, but I don't want to reiterate that as a fact right now. That was just from my memory, but that is a reason why the Changes for Children initiative and some of the early work that the member will know of from the annual report has focussed on the challenge of FASD.

In terms of dealing with services for those living with FASD, there's been some remarkable advocacy in Manitoba, some remarkable efforts by so many, to identify where the gaps are. I know the member has made a contribution to a public debate, and I welcome that because it is an area that is so important.

*(15:30)

But key to where we go, I think, is the development of Spectrum Connections; the RFP was issued in September. The response is due about now. I have every expectation that we will see several community organizations that have a good reputation come forward to provide that service. I'm just going by memory here, but I think we're starting with about \$450,000 or \$400,000 to get that initiative going which, essentially, will be the first mobile team service in Canada that will go to where people living with FASD live and making sure that they have the necessary supports to live in the community in a healthy way.

It's going to focus, as well, disproportionately though, on those who are aging out of the child welfare system, which is why Changes for Children is the funder of that initiative. So, Madam Chair, whether it's connections to housing, connections to employment opportunities or employment training, money management, all of those issues, connections to loved ones. That will be the job of Spectrum Connections.

We will see that develop. I think that will be a core feature of the service regime in Manitoba in the years ahead, but we are starting from a good place. I said to the member earlier, actually, this afternoon, the Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Briese), that we are going to make best efforts to work with the successful organization to get this up and running very early in the new year.

Mr. Gerrard: I remember the figure 17 percent as well, but the problem was that many of the children were not actually properly evaluated as to whether they had FASD or not. So, clearly, the number was going to be considerably higher than 17 percent. I would urge the minister to make sure, in the

approach that's taken, that it will actually give an incidence figure for the FASD, or prevalence figure, among the children who are in care. I think that's very important in terms of making good decisions, moving forward. It doesn't necessarily mean that you've got to assess every child in care, but it does mean that you need to do that in, one would say, a random-sample, statistically correct, scientific approach which will give you a responsible incidence figure for the proportion of children in care in the CFS system who have FASD.

Mr. Mackintosh: We, certainly, recognize and share with the member an understanding that there is a real challenge in knowing, on an objective basis, what the actual prevalence is because a lot of it relies on admission of the mom that she took alcohol during pregnancy.

That's an ongoing challenge that I'm sure the member will recognize, and by the way, which does suggest that that will always then be a challenge because, as well, when a youth presents to an assessor, there are so many different dimensions and so many—you know, we've gone way beyond recognizing that there's a physical feature attached to FASD. There are so many other measures of whether FASD could be playing a role in the youth's disposition.

We, at least in Manitoba, are the first and only jurisdiction, I understand, in the country to begin measuring the prevalence of alcohol use during pregnancy in the population, and so it's recognized as the next best measure, and I think it moves us along.

The Baby First post-natal screen now has added questions about alcohol use during pregnancy, and they're asked of all women who deliver a baby in a Manitoba hospital. I don't think this is widely known in terms of how robust it is that this is moving ahead now to try and get a handle on this. We've also recognized, and we've had discussions, of course, with the member publicly about—within the Justice system. I think there have been remarkable improvements just in a few years alone, the ability of officials in Justice, and in the health-care system and the child welfare system, to identify persons who at least should be assessed more thoroughly.

We all recognize that this is a real developing area, and I do commend the member, as I urge the Member for Ste. Rose to continue to advocate in this area. I just find it so hard to accept that we have to put all of these services and try and deal with the problem after the drinking has happened. I think it is

just so tragic, and we're starting to see not only the human and individual tragedies, but also the real demand for the financing of services after there's been a bad decision or unfortunate decision made or a lifestyle that, you know, has not been addressed.

So it raises all kinds of questions about the front end and other ways to deter moms from drinking during pregnancy. How do we best intervene? When is the best time to intervene? You know, it's been said, well, the best time to intervene is never when mom's drinking. When do you do that? It's obviously about really trying to raise, elevate the whole status and concern about this mixing alcohol and pregnancy.

You know, too, you have to be very careful with how the interventions happen, that, you know, if moms are going to stay away from any help for fear of apprehension of their child, we really recognize how you've got to have balance in your approach here.

So it's no easy task, but I did say to the member before, Manitoba is being recognized now for its leadership in the country. I would say that we should expect no less, however, and we are going to rise to that challenge. But what I see with the leadership of the Minister for Healthy Living is a great and newfound co-ordination and targeting on this issue across the government departments and involving community partners. So I think we're well positioned to move ahead now.

I think the one to watch now is Spectrum Connections and how that is going to unfold and get some experience with that, and then it's our expectation that we're going to see that grow.

Mr. Gerrard: To the minister: what has happened in the last number of years is that Dr. Chudley, who's done excellent work in this area, has been able to evaluate people at the Stony Mountain Penitentiary, prisoners, and come up with a figure for the prevalence of FASD in among the prisoners.

Surely, children and children in care are very, very important to all of us and that we have the best possible outcomes, and surely, we should have the best possible figure for what is the real estimate or the real number for children who have FASD or proportion of children in care. So I would just ask the member to perhaps even have a discussion with Dr. Chudley about the specific, you know, how do you determine on an accurate basis, the proportion of children in care who have FASD.

At this point, I'm going to pass over to the MLA for Portage, who, I understand, has some questions.

* (15:40)

Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie): Madam Chairperson, I appreciate the opportunity to question the minister of child and family services and housing. My questions are in the area of Housing and specific to Portage la Prairie.

Manitoba Housing owns a complex of dwellings known as Zelana complex. It is a collection of townhouse-style accommodations that was basically empty in 1996 and because of an on-reserve dispute, there were approximately 307 Waterhen First Nation's persons moved to Portage la Prairie. That Manitoba Housing complex was used to relocate residents from the Waterhen First Nation. Currently, there are still quite a number of the Waterhen First Nation's, formerly, living there.

I would like to ask the minister if the minister could update as to the number of Waterhen First Nation's residents still residing there. Also, too, there is, as the minister is aware coming from his previous responsibilities as Attorney General, an outstanding issue of a number of former Waterhen First Nation's persons who were charged.

The charges were dismissed by the Supreme Court of Canada. However, before the Supreme Court ruling, those persons that were charged did spend time behind bars. So there is an outstanding issue of either re-initiation of charges or, also, too, the settlement if no charges are going to be made for wrongful incarceration.

Now, that being said, I understand that the individuals engaged or involved in that particular scenario have not been paying rent, and I'm asking the minister as to the amount of arrears rent that is being considered owed by the individuals in this scenario.

Mr. Mackintosh: I understand from MHA that quite a significant number of units are vacant now, and I think there are even some complete multifamily buildings that may be vacant or close to vacant now for more varied use. I also recall that the department was having discussions with representatives of the community to look at possible tenants, certain populations that may fit in terms of both their need and the need to get these units filled. So I can let the member know the status of that. I can't recall the name of the local organization that was being consulted. I thought it had a connection to an

educational organization or a school, but I'll just double-check on that.

The member also asked about the issue of arrears. I know this is a long-standing challenge, and I can let the member know on a timely basis, because I have seen some information come across my desk on that one. I can advise him in due course the status of that, and perhaps we can have a briefing for the member so that he understands the status there. I think it would be important for him as the MLA to know the state of play. I'll arrange that with staff.

Mr. Rob Altemeyer, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Mr. Faurshou: Further to that, I know that the Dakota Ojibway Tribal Council Housing Authority is always on the lookout for potential acquisitions because of the continuing and unrelenting need for housing for First Nations people, and whether or not that is a consideration. I leave that with the minister.

Further to that, I spoke on a bill the other day regarding the nature of the clientele to Manitoba Housing. It is very, very important to many persons on limited, fixed incomes that they feel comfortable in their homes. What is happening of late is, if a place becomes vacant, it seemingly is that that place is then available to anyone and everyone. What we're seeing is an area that was formerly all senior housing with young families moving in or persons with mental challenges. It's making many former residents now very uncomfortable for the seniors that did inhabit or continue to inhabit those particular complexes. I want to leave it with the minister, and I could be more specific, but I just want to make the minister aware how vitally important it is that persons in public housing feel that that is their home and they want to feel safe and not encumbered and that their lifestyle is respected.

Mr. Mackintosh: I think the advice and concerns is well placed by the member. MHA has heard that as well. I understand that there are some conversions that are happening as a result of those concerns where buildings that were perhaps 55-plus then became more varied in their populations. I understand that, you know, it's very difficult to move someone, but there have been some decisions taken to reconfigure in light of concerns, as the member expressed himself.

If the member has any concern about a particular building I would be more than pleased, as I would with any MLA, to hear from that member. If there is, for example, one particular building where we

should do some tweaking or some re-profiling we could have a look at that. But, again, there are no guarantees ever. There's always a careful analysis of needs and populations. But I have seen these decisions happening over the last short period of time. So I take the member's advice and I look forward to any other specific concerns he might want to raise with me.

Mr. Briese: I think we're getting to where we'll wrap up here. I just wanted to make a couple of closing comments. The minister knows quite well, I think, from what happened in Estimates, that I do have concern about the chains of command to the minister, and how the minister is reported to from the Department of Family Services and from the authorities and from the other agencies.

I want to just put on the record that those concerns are there. I will be, certainly, interested in watching how those things work because accountability does ultimately lie with the minister and it's the minister that I'm supposed to go to and get answers from. So I want those things in place.

The other comment I would make is, I know there've been some substantial budgetary commitments to this minister's department looking for certain things like front-line workers and things like that. That's another thing that we'll be monitoring very, very closely as to see that those resources are actually doing what the recommendations that went to the department were, especially on caseworkers in Child and Family Services. We know they're overworked and overloaded and, certainly, there's a crying need for more front-line workers; not more bureaucracy, but more front-line workers. With that, I thank the minister and I thank the Chair.

* (15:50)

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): We do have some questions in Concurrence for the minister in regard to agriculture. I'd like to start off with the Manitoba Cattle Enhancement Council and get some clarification with respect to the letter of intent to invest in Natural Prairie Beef: when the monies will actually flow, and under what conditions. I know the letter was specific about the \$1.2 million. I was wondering if the minister would comment on the conditions that are placed on it and when they'll actually receive that money.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Acting Chairman, those conditions are put on by the enhancement council

and I know that the enhancement council has hired—they have staff that works with them to review applications and one announcement has been made, but those terms and conditions will be put in place by the enhancement council.

Mr. Eichler: Is the government going to have an equity share then in Natural Prairie Beef or will it be Natural Valley Farms of Saskatchewan? I know the *Free Press* article said it would be Natural Prairie, but Natural Prairie has a significant investment within Natural Valley, so could the minister clarify for the House which one it is and what share of protection the province will have as far as guarantees.

Ms. Wowchuk: We are at early stages in this process, and the Manitoba company, Natural Prairie, is planning to build a breaking plant here. They will be getting their product from the Saskatchewan plant to begin with until such time as there is a slaughter facility built here. So it will be the company that will use the funds from the enhancement council to have a sustainable supply of beef so that they can get their operations going and have a steady supply of beef until such time as they're able to build a slaughter facility.

Mr. Eichler: So, then, just for clarification again, Madam Minister, I'm not quite sure about the equity shares. So, then, that is in just Natural Prairie for the investment that's going to be made in Manitoba, then? Is that her understanding?

Ms. Wowchuk: The funds will be used to help Natural Prairie Beef get started, but funds will be used as well to secure supply and that supply will be secured at the Wolseley plant, but I would remind the member as well that there are many Manitoba farmers who have hook space in the Wolseley and are slaughtering animals there, so this would be securing hooks there until such time as a slaughter facility will be built here.

Mr. Eichler: With the breaking plant then that would be built, I believe if my memory serves me right, they are hoping to have plans to open a new facility in 2008 after a 15- to 18-month time period in order to get that done. So then the \$750,000 that's being used to secure the beef, that's just beef that's been pursued by Natural Prairie Beef with no growth hormones or antibiotics. So is that new cattle that's purchased or is this cattle that's been purchased previously and those farmers will then be paid for those cattle through the \$750,000 rather than new cattle?

Ms. Wowchuk: Those are details that I don't have at my fingers, Mr. Acting Chairman. What I do know is that the plan is to lend money to Natural Prairie Beef and that the funds that the member refers to of the \$700,000 is to secure product for the breaking plant that will be established here in Manitoba. So it would be the same quality of meat as is being produced and processed through Natural Prairie Beef right now.

Mr. Eichler: I know from calls that I've received from a number of producers that haven't been paid to date for some of the cattle that have been already processed by Natural Valley and Natural Prairie who—and I know it's very complicated to follow, but the \$750,000, then, the minister is confirming that this will be new cattle that is actually being purchased to be processed, and it won't be used in order to settle accounts that are outstanding, that've been already processed by Natural Valley in Saskatchewan.

Ms. Wowchuk: That's my understanding, Mr. Acting Chairman. These animals will not be secured until such time as Natural Valley Beef is prepared to do breaking.

Mr. Eichler: Mr. Acting Chair, it's certainly exciting as we know the cattle business is under severe stress at this particular point in time. We have been very clear that we need to see increasing slaughter capacity within the province. I know that BSE is far from over and anything we can do to increase slaughter capacity we're, certainly, in favour of. We just want to make sure that we do our due diligence, and I'm sure the minister and her MCEC will make sure that that does, in fact, happen.

The time line that Natural Prairie has put into place according to the business plan, does she have any idea how many employees are going to be actually involved or new employees created as a result of this plant that's been proposed for Neepawa, and do they have the land available to build this processing plant?

Ms. Wowchuk: I'm sorry, if the member could clarify which plant is he talking about at Neepawa?

Mr. Eichler: Well, the processing plant that Natural Prairie, in the news release, talked about was to be built in Neepawa, and that ground would be broken in 2008 and completed 15 months after. But it doesn't say whether or not the land has actually been secured or, in fact, how many jobs are going to be created.

I know that part of the letter says that the money goes towards the business plan, so are we just at the baby-steps side of things or are we actually going to be doing some sod-turning in 2008?

Ms. Wowchuk: That would depend on how the company moves along. At the present time money will be used to secure stock at the Neudorf plant in Saskatchewan. Natural Prairie Beef will, in partners with Natural Valley Farms, I think their plan is to move along slowly and ensure that their breaking plant is working properly. That's why they secured a supply from the Saskatchewan plant.

I think that—as the member said, are they taking baby-steps, I would anticipate that there's a lot of work to be done yet before they can move forward with a slaughter facility.

Mr. Eichler: The reason I'm asking these questions is because it's very important to the cattle producers out there now that, you know, some of them are still trying to hold on, and hopefully they'll get to the point that they will have that slaughter capacity increased within the province. I know that Mr. Penner has been working very hard at trying to get something done.

So, do we have any type of indication, according to the business plan that's been tabled, how much money we are going to have to go back to MCEC for in order to get the plant up and running? I know the \$1.2 million is just actually a small investment for the overall total package. So do we have any indication about what that project might end up costing based on the number of head they're going to be processing?

* (16:00)

Ms. Wowchuk: As this application is made to the enhancement council, I don't have details. However, I do not think that they are at the stage yet where they could make application for funds for the slaughter facility.

Mr. Eichler: Based on the numbers that Ranchers Choice used, and I know the plant would probably be similar to that, because they're going to be processing about the same number. So, is the minister in negotiations with them? I know that we do want to take those baby steps, but we don't want to lose out either. Has the council looked at the money that's available to Natural Prairie that's been allocated for Ranchers Choice? Is that similar funding that would be made available to them?

Ms. Wowchuk: I do not believe a business plan has been presented, so those details are not available. However, I could endeavour to check with the council and share whatever information I might be able to get with regard to the plan for further slaughter capacity by Natural Prairie Beef Inc.

Mr. Eichler: I do appreciate the minister keeping us up to date. I know she does a great job in that, so we do appreciate getting updates as they come forward. I do want to talk about the hog and cattle prices. I know our time is very limited.

We know the stress that's on these two particular sectors. I was wondering if the minister could tell the House what discussions she's had with her federal counterparts as regards to cash advances for—I know she's called for the pork, and I know we've had some problems with the MCPA as far as administering money there. I know the hardships out there for a number of producers who just haven't been able to access it. So, if she could update the House for that.

Ms. Wowchuk: The member is right. In fact, we made application for a cash advance for the cattle industry, and that did not go as smoothly as I had hoped it would because when you get a cash advance there's always a chance of an overpayment, and if there's an overpayment then you're required—it's like anywhere else, you have to pay that payment back.

The pork producers have asked us to make application for an advance on their case. We have made that application. I've had discussions with the federal minister on this issue, but, as well, there are changes that are being made to the safety net program through the Agri-Invest and different programs. But the top 15 percent of the CAIS program that will also allow for some funds to flow more quickly to producers, and we're working on the final agreement. That's not been completely finalized yet, although we know what the program will look like. There are still some details to work out but there's no doubt there is pressure on producers of livestock right now, particularly with some declining prices and with high feed costs.

Mr. Eichler: I thank the minister for that. I know that I have one producer that had contacted me and he's losing \$90,000 a month on his pork business. He's not eligible for a number of funds because he is diversified and has the grain sector plus the hog sector, so he's in a very awkward position. Now he's in a position whether or not he's going to have to decide whether or not he wants to get out of the hog business entirely and rely just on grain.

Unfortunately, the way the CAIS program's set up, he's not eligible for that cash advance because of the rising cost of the crops that he's grown, and then he turns around and feeds them, so there's a loophole there.

The minister's absolutely right, you know, they do get the advance, and they have to pay it back. But are there any discussions that are going forward for producers like that? Because I just know the number of—he's not the only one, and there are a number of producers that are in that same situation unless they have the money in order to incorporate separate companies. That's the only way they can go through that, and of course, that's not the way the program was intended so that there are loopholes to access that money. It needs to be done in an equitable way that is sustainable. So, if the minister would comment on that, I'd appreciate it.

Ms. Wowchuk: When these programs were designed, they're designed on a whole-farm basis, and the member is accurate that those people who have more than one commodity have to group their income into one. But in reality that's, I guess, what you should be doing. It's still income, whether it's income from pork or whether it's income from beef or whether it's income from grain. It's based on whole-farm income.

This does cause some hardship for some people, but if there's income on one side, it just doesn't make sense you should be able to draw government programs on the other. That's not the intent of government programs. But there is also the issue that there are people that could separate their operations and take advantage of the program. I would be disappointed, but, unfortunately, that does happen that people do split their operations, basically, to be able to access one program when they have income in another area.

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Carman): Madam Minister, I was asking you during the Estimates process about the Treherne Dam project, and there were some funding issues for a feasibility study.

The question is: Is the Province any closer to committing funding for the feasibility study for the Treherne Dam project?

Ms. Wowchuk: I can be very honest with the member and indicate to him that since Estimates, I have not had any discussion on the Treherne Dam project.

Mr. Pedersen: Then I'll just keep reminding you. It is very essential. I should bring you out and show you the Boyne River now. It's running very low right now and it's a concern. This is a water project for southern Manitoba. So I just urge the minister to take some priority on it. Thank you.

Ms. Wowchuk: I will take that advice, but I will also say to the member this is a very expensive project. There are issues with other people who are concerned about their water supply, where you'd be assisting one group of people with their water supply and another side. So I think that there has to be some regional planning here where, indeed, you're not helping one at the expense of the other. I will certainly look into it and keep in mind the member's comments.

Mr. Briese: I've had a number of contacts from farmers in my area, cattle producers in my area, in the constituency of Ste. Rose, over the issue of TB testing. Our area is now—Manitoba, I guess, now has been declared TB-free, but there's ongoing testing going on with a number of herds on both the east side and the west side of Riding Mountain National Park. There's a lot of hardship to doing that testing. Every time you handle the cattle, they get a little bit wilder. It's very difficult to handle bulls. There's chance of risk and chance of injury to the cattle and the producers.

After the area was declared TB-free, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency was recipient of an award for the good job they'd done in making it TB-free, and no recognition of the farmers of the area. The farmers are now saying they're the ones taking the responsibility for keeping Manitoba, and really even all of Canada, on a TB-free status and it's their test herds that will keep that record in place.

I would ask the minister if she's giving some consideration to some kind of compensation to those farmers.

Ms. Wowchuk: The issue of mustering fees, I believe, is what the member is looking at, a fee to help offset the costs of putting the cattle through the chute for the testing. That issue has been raised before. It's been raised with CFIA and, to this date, there are no plans to cover off those costs.

* (16:10)

Mr. Briese: I'm sorry, I just missed the very end of that.

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Briese: There are no—okay.

Ms. Wowchuk: What I said, that there are—I recognize the hardship that people go through when they have to round up these cattle and test them more than once, but it's also for their benefit, although others benefit as well. At this time, there are no plans on our part to compensate for that.

So that's it. There are no plans right now, but I can follow up for the member.

Mr. Briese: I would, certainly, urge the minister to do that because they are on no different status than the rest of us now. They are declared a TB-free zone, and I don't think they should be expected to have the hardship of gathering those cattle. Sometimes they have to gather them from the pastures in the summer which is a very difficult process.

I think there should be some compensation package in place for them when they have to handle those cattle more than they normally would have to. Thank you.

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): I'd like to just go back for a minute, Madam Minister, to the CAIS program and a diversification question that the honourable Member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler) posed.

When one diversifies, there's definitely an added cost to that diversification. There's an added cost to the tooling up for that type of a situation. In many cases, it's done so that you can bring a younger member of your family in, a brother or a son or a daughter or son-in-law into the industry.

I don't believe that it's fair for the minister to suggest that people have taken advantage of a program, as you have mentioned just earlier. I think these people have made a great economic contribution to the community. The more people that we keep in the community, we end up having people on parks boards, on church boards, on hall committees and volunteer firefighters and so on throughout our rural area.

We're populating the rural area with diversification. There's definitely a cost to that, and I don't think one should be penalized. I would hope that in the new CAIS program that's being developed, that each individual enterprise should be able to be insured separately. I agree that it's a whole farm operation. However, you, Madam Minister, can own 10 percent in 10 different hog operations and collect 100 percent in the hog industry when it's in

the tank, as well as being a grain farmer. I can't do the same thing when I own and I have my son owning in the hog industry and the beef industry when we are in a partnership, in a diversified partnership. So I would encourage you, Madam Minister, to look further down the road in that situation.

I would like to ask you more specifically, with the tentative border opening on November 19, post-border opening, knowing that there's no testing facilities, no handling facilities at the Emerson port—and that is the main port for north-south traffic for cattle and for horses, for hogs, for the whole thing. We have a quarantine station not far away from that port, but we have no federal vet, no handling facilities.

Madam Minister, could we expect you to be working towards that with our federal counterpart?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I've briefly done some checking on how traffic is moving through the border. My understanding is that there is a greater amount than usual of livestock moving through Emerson.

The biggest problem that is being faced is backlogs of trucks because they can't move it through fast enough. But, as I understand it, Mr. Acting Chair, that process can be speeded up somewhat by calling ahead, by making appointments with the veterinarians to move those cattle quickly. But make the appointment with the veterinarians, the U.S. veterinarian ahead of time.

I'm not sure why there would have to be holding facilities at the border. I'm not understanding the member's question because, if you have all your paperwork done ahead of time, which can be done, there is no need for holding facilities, and it's a matter of truckers arranging their schedule with the veterinarians to be there. The member is much more involved in this industry than I am. So, perhaps, he has a little different take on it than I do, and he could offer more advice.

Mr. Graydon: I would refer more specifically to cattle that are 1999 models and under that are proposed to be able to cross the border after November 19, and I would suggest that there needs to be, and may well be, a requirement to offload those cattle to have their tattoos or their identification verified, Madam Minister. Have you got some information to impart with us about how this process will work after November 19?

Madam Chairperson in the Chair

Ms. Wowchuk: Yes, with the older animals, there is going to have to be more verification, but my understanding is that the verification will have to happen, and the paperwork will have to be done ahead of time, before they get to the border, and they will not be unloaded at the border. However, again, I can check with my staff on this one, but I was advised that there really won't be need for handling facilities at the border, that the work will have to be done, all the manifestos and those kind of things will have to be prepared ahead of time and verified by a veterinarian, and then the truck is—because at the border, all the veterinarian does is check the list. So I will endeavour to check this out further, if there is going to have to be unloading of the animals, how it will be handled, and get that information back to the member.

Mr. Eichler: Just to follow up on that, I think the minister is absolutely right on her assumptions there, and I'm glad she will get back to the member on that.

I guess the concern that really we need to address, is the number of loads that are going to be available to go across the border. That's the thing that I've been having calls about, is there's not enough inspection time, and I think that's the discussions that need to take place between North Dakota and Manitoba in order to ensure we have enough veterinarians on staff, or, come November 19, once the age verification comes through, on top of the regular cattle. I don't think we're going to see a huge influx of cattle go there, but we do need to have those conversations. If the minister would tell us where she's at with that, would, I think, solve some of our questions in that area.

Ms. Wowchuk: As I had said earlier, there is a very heavy traffic in livestock moving this fall. So, when the animals over 30 months start to move, it is going to be heavier. But, as I understand it, if the proper paperwork is done, hopefully that will move smoothly. But we see now that there are backlogs of traffic, and, certainly, I will raise that with my federal counterparts because the border is a federal responsibility, and just check whether there are indeed any plans to increase the number of people on staff.

* (16:20)

Mr. Eichler: Thank you, Madam Minister. Anything we can do to help on that, we'd certainly be happy to do that.

I do have a couple of more quick questions before our time is up. One is on the McCain lagoon update for their plant in Carberry. We met with those people last week, and they're doing their best to be as green as they can. They'd certainly like to move forward on that project. I was wondering if the minister could tell us where they're at with that particular project as far as asking for funding, as far as moving forward on that new lagoon for McCain's.

Ms. Wowchuk: I know that staff from my department had been working with McCain's on the upgrade to that lagoon, and they are looking at being as green as possible. They are looking at different options to remove nutrient out of that water stream, and I do not believe they are at a stage where they are ready to make application for funding, but I would have to verify that and get back to the member.

Mr. Eichler: I know they have made a commitment to stay in Manitoba. We're certainly pleased with that. It's a huge industry for our business for that particular enterprise, and we know that the minister knows the importance of it. So we certainly would appreciate that.

I offered to let the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mr. Gerrard) ask a few questions. So, anyway, we'll go from there.

Mr. Gerrard: I thank the MLA for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler), the Agriculture critic for the official opposition.

On the hemp plant in Dauphin, I understand the minister had made a commitment this spring or early this summer of \$2 million for the hemp plant, but my understanding is that later that commitment turned into something less than that. So maybe the minister can explain what happened.

Ms. Wowchuk: Indeed, I have been and my department has been working for some time with the Dauphin hemp producers trying to get a plant going. We did make a commitment. The commitment was subject to the ability of the producers and the processors to raise equity. They have not been able to raise enough equity. So, because they couldn't raise enough, they could not get their financing in order. So the funds that we had committed were still on the table.

I can say to the member that we are still working with them to look at what other options might be there in order to get a hemp facility. But the real downfall of the project was their ability to raise

equity, and that's really a challenge for many projects. People think they can raise the money locally for their equity and then they run into difficulty, and they were not able to raise enough in order for them to proceed. It wasn't a matter of our money not being there.

Mr. Gerrard: The Premier (Mr. Doer) in the election recently has been saying he's going to bring in targets for reduction of greenhouse gases. So I would ask the minister what her plans are with respect to the reduction of greenhouse gas production in the agricultural sector.

Ms. Wowchuk: Indeed, this is a timely question, given the amount of work that's being done on greenhouse gases reductions, and I can say to the member that we are just going through a process and looking at various options that government could work on with producers to reduce greenhouse gases. Those are in the planning stages, and soon there will be an announcement of some of the projects. But we recognize that agriculture can play an important part in capturing carbons, and also changing agriculture practices can also reduce greenhouse gases. I think certain sectors of the industry are doing work on it.

But I say to the member that, yes, we recognize this and we are working in a couple of areas where we will have some new initiatives to reduce greenhouse gases. I certainly look at the ALUS project as one that the producers have embraced to take poorer quality land out of production and leave it with grass cover. I see this as a very positive step.

Mr. Gerrard: I ask the minister whether she's planning to work with the people in the agriculture community to reduce the agricultural greenhouse gas emissions to a level of 6 percent below the production in 1990 which is the Kyoto target.

Ms. Wowchuk: Well, when we talk about reducing the greenhouse gas emissions by 6 percent, this is a plan for all of the provinces. I don't think you can say one sector will do this, the 6 percent. You have to do some averaging out.

I think that the agriculture community has been taking some very interesting and important steps to reduce greenhouse gases, particularly in the area where they've reduced fuel consumption, going to zero till, using some more efficient methods and more modern technology to reduce greenhouse gases.

Our goal is to have the reduction across all of the province. Some will reduce more and some will

reduce less, but it's an average of 6 percent. I feel that the agriculture community has been doing a lot and will do more.

Mr. Gerrard: Thank you and I pass it back to the MLA.

Mr. Eichler: I know my colleagues want to get started on transportation. I don't want to tie it up much more, but I do want to ask the minister about the federal-provincial SRM money that was going to go for—I believe the deadline was December 31. I was wondering if that deadline has been talked about being extended because of the short time line. I'm not sure if, in fact, there have been applications received by the minister in order to ensure that we do sustain the processing plants that we do have here in the province.

Ms. Wowchuk: This is an important question and a very difficult issue. When it comes to disposing of SRMs, there are methods that can be used. Municipalities have to be involved in it and it's this attitude that we face with other livestock disposals where everybody thinks it's a good idea, but not in my backyard.

So there have been a variety of people that have been looking at it. There will probably have to be extensions, but that will be very difficult as well because we have a time line to meet to deal with these issues and CFIA is being very strict on how and when we implement this.

Mr. Eichler: I understand the frustration that the minister's going through and her staff. I do think it's important enough, though, if we could start the process now in order to ensure the deadline is extended maybe to the 31st of March, and I know the year-end is there at that time. We'd be happy to work with the minister in any way we possibly can in order to ensure that we do something to try and handle the SRMs.

Ms. Wowchuk: Certainly, I recognize the importance of this. This does create extra work for the people in the slaughter industry, but we will not maintain our status in the export world if we do not address this issue.

* (16:30)

Mr. Eichler: I want to thank the minister. I know that I have a number of more issues. She's been very good and her staff has been excellent at ensuring that we get the information in a timely manner. I know the rest of it I can ask outside of Concurrence. I do

want to thank the minister for allowing us to ask these few questions.

Ms. Wowchuk: I, too, would like to say that, if there are other issues the member wants to raise with me, certainly, we can do it outside of this Concurrence process.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): I look forward to continuing Concurrence with the minister of transport and Infrastructure, if we would proceed in that area. Is there a formal switch here?

I'll just continue, Madam Chair. I had a couple of quick questions for the minister. I just got his press release saying that he's going to be opening No. 1 highway tomorrow. I congratulate him on that as well. I'm wondering if he can inform me as to what time they'll be doing that tomorrow and what are the procedures, or is it just going to—the announcement is that it will just open.

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): Well, thank you very much.

With regard to Highway 1 west, people may be aware or not aware there's approximately 34 kilometres of twinned highway that we're working on out there. The weather has really co-operated, thank goodness, and we made great progress, but, again, the engineers have told us that they're the ones who tell us when it's ready to open or if it's not. In this particular case, it is. So I've been advised that tomorrow afternoon, hopefully early in the afternoon, the No. 1 highway to Saskatchewan will be opened. The twinned portion will be opened.

This is a project where the Province has put \$26.5 million into the project and the federal government has put in about \$6.3 million, or thereabouts. The Province has put in \$26 million and the feds have put in about \$6 million.

So we're very pleased that Highway 1, as of tomorrow I've been advised, hopefully everything will work out, but the engineers advise me that Highway 1 will be twinned. We're a very proud government to be able to do this. It has been long in coming. So tomorrow afternoon we put out a media bulletin advising people to be cautious when they're driving because of the transition lanes that are necessary, and the signage is there to ensure that people, when they come upon that stretch of road, realize that it's now four-laned. We just wanted to make sure that people are driving carefully.

To make a long story a little bit longer, I just want to say, though, that it is regrettable we've had some fatalities on that stretch of highway over many, many years, but, through the vision of the Premier (Mr. Doer) and vision of my colleagues in Cabinet and the commitment we made to transportation, even though it was costly—I mean, you can see the difference in money here: \$26 million from the Province, 6 from the feds. That's a huge investment, and that's the way we've looked at it. That has gone into that stretch of highway because we know it's important and it's needed, not only for trade but tourism and for our own citizens. So we're pleased that tomorrow afternoon our engineers advise us that the twinning section will be open.

Mr. Maguire: Can the minister indicate to me whether all levels of pavement, all of the layers of pavement, then, that are needed on that stretch of road, whether the weather has been good enough to finish them all this fall, whether the road is completely finished?

Mr. Lemieux: Well, thank you.

Certainly, at this point, I mean, I can get back to the member with regard to the specifics. I'm not an engineer, as he knows. I'm not sure about the particulars. I'm not sure if he's referring to another lift, meaning another layer to be added on top of what's there next year. Sometimes this happens in the fall. You run into the coldest part of the year, you try to wrap up as much paving as you can, but sometimes you have to put on an extra lift or another coating in the springtime or in the summer when the temperatures warm up. I'm not sure. I'm not certain, but I can tell everyone, even if an extra lift is needed, this has been done over the last decades and decades where a road may have two or three layers of asphalt and then they need to put the final coat on it. It's absolutely safe. It's an excellent road. There's nothing untoward about driving on a road like that. It's just that nice finish—it's like putting the icing on the cake where that's the final nice coat on the top. Sometimes that happens. So I don't have the answer for the member right now on that, but I can certainly get back to him and let him know whether that's the case.

Mr. Maguire: Can the minister indicate to me if the speed limit is going to be increasing to 110 on the four-lane sections of No. 1 tomorrow as well?

Mr. Lemieux: The highway will remain the same. It's 100 kilometres an hour on that particular stretch. Highway speed in Manitoba remains the same. The

Saskatchewan side is 100, as I understand it, as well. There are portions of the Saskatchewan side that are not even complete. In fact, I don't believe that the Saskatchewan side is even open. There are parts around Moosomin that need to be finished. To be fair to Saskatchewan, they have far more to do than what we did. They're not complete, obviously, in twinning all they need to do. But they should be congratulated for their vision as well in transportation and how much progress they've made. So, to answer the question directly, the highway speed remains at 100 kilometres an hour.

Mr. Maguire: I know that the Saskatchewan side over the last three years has done 150 kilometres in construction while we've been doing 40, and I appreciate their efforts as well. There is a 10-kilometre section that I have indicated is through the town of Moosomin on either side that isn't finished yet. But I was made aware that the government was looking in Manitoba—I know it is 100 today.

My question was, will it be 110 tomorrow when the highway opens?

Mr. Lemieux: Well, thank you very much for the question. I just wanted to be clear not only to my critic but also to people who are going to be driving that stretch of highway, that highway is 100 kilometres an hour. So we just ask people, please drive carefully. Even though it's twinned, don't take it for granted. Please ensure that you're following the speed limit and to drive carefully, no matter—and you should drive carefully whether it's a four-lane highway, a two-lane paved highway, a gravel road, dirt road for that matter. So we just want to ensure that people are driving safely.

The member is correct. We are committed to increasing the speed limit, but, as I've mentioned I believe to him, as we have mentioned publicly, we have a consultant that's looking at the speed limit issue on No. 1 highway as well as the Perimeter Highway going to south of Winnipeg and also No. 75 highway to Emerson from Winnipeg. So I have not seen a draft report or anything yet from that consultant. Well, actually, it's not a report; it's just a consultant's document that's coming to us. I haven't seen it yet, but I'm advised that we should be getting it soon because we were trying to ensure that we had that information by the fall. Here we are, the fall, so I'm sure we can anticipate receiving it anytime soon.

Mr. Maguire: Who was the consultant?

Mr. Lemieux: I'm sorry, I'll have to get back to the member. This is something that was done through the department through my deputy minister; I'm not certain. Often the consultants that they may hire, they do that internally, and often ministers are certainly not privy to that. But I can endeavour to find that out.

Mr. Maguire: I know we're in the fall, so can the minister indicate to me if he expects to have that report within the next few days or by the end of the month?

Mr. Lemieux: I didn't catch the first part of the question. If he's referring to the same consultant's document with regard to the speed, I'm not certain when we can receive it this fall. I mean, I don't want to play games with the dates. I think December 21 is the first day of winter or something, but I don't want to get into that. I just know it's this fall. I'll have to check with my deputy, and I'll certainly get the information back to him.

Mr. Maguire: Will there be pilot vehicles on the road when it opens tomorrow to guide traffic through on the new portion that will open tomorrow? Will there be any pilot vehicles used this winter?

* (16:40)

Mr. Lemieux: For those people that are not aware of the pilot vehicle, it's essentially a vehicle that leads the parade or gathers all the vehicles, slows them down to a certain pace. Often that's when construction is happening on the site. There won't be any construction happening as I am advised on the site, so I can't say a hundred percent for sure that they are not going to be there, but I would anticipate they are not going to be there, but there usually is signage. We put a tremendous amount of signage and go to some expense to ensure that people understand we are now transitioning from the four to two or from going from two to four. So, when they're driving along a long stretch of highway, and this is important to note without getting into a lot of detail, when people are driving long stretches of highway and, generally, flat, which the prairies are for the most part, and long distances of straight highway, east-west or west-east, there's a false sense of security there where you can be lulled into any kind of changes that may be ahead. So the department takes a tremendous amount of precautions to ensure that people understand there are some changes happening.

So, directly, no, I don't believe there are going to be pilot vehicles to slow traffic down to 50 kilometres or 80 kilometres, but there is and will be a tremendous amount of signage there. I understand there is going to be staff there, too, to ensure that, you know, this transition is as safe as humanly possible to make sure that people understand we're going to four lanes now.

Mr. Maguire: So there'll be no ribbon cutting by the minister or the Premier (Mr. Doer) there tomorrow?

Mr. Lemieux: Well, you know, I really appreciate this question very much and I'll tell you why. The member opposite, he's a gentleman and I like him, but I gave him a bit of a shot last week, I think it was, for politicizing the fact of deaths on the highway. At that time, part of my answer was, and this was no disrespect to him personally at all—I hope he knows that and I hope he understands it. This is not meant to impugn any kind of motives on him, and I hope he knows this. I sincerely mean that, but far often, I think, in politics you do this, and you try to take advantage of whatever is put in your hands, and that's fine. I guess that's fair ball in politics, but I was disturbed by that because highways are opened up not because the minister wants them opened up on a certain day or certain hour, not because the Premier wants them opened up on a certain day and a certain hour. Highways are not held up for ribbon cutting. Highways are not held up for the Premier, I would argue, the Prime Minister or anyone else.

When engineers say the road is ready to open, it's opened. The logic behind this is tomorrow afternoon it's opening at 2 o'clock. They're saying it's opening, and that's what's going to happen. I mean, if you use the logic of holding it up for some individual, you could plan a big gala, big event. You could have cookies and chocolate milk and Halloween candies and everyone can have a party, but, you know, when engineers say it's opened, it's opened, and that's what's going to happen.

So, no, I will not be there to the best of my knowledge, nor will anyone else. Well, you know, just on that point, I would, and I know the member is the MLA for the area too. I'm sure, you know, he may take it upon himself to be there, but I have work to do here at the Legislature. We're in session. That doesn't mean you don't make an effort to go out there, it's not important, not that it's not important, but the MLAs for Brandon West (Mr. Borotsik) and Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell), I have to tell you, have been, well I won't say they were knocking on my

door every month about working diligently on their behalf of their constituents to do something with twinning Highway No. 1 west, but they were very active. I can say, with the MLA for Brandon East beside me, that it's a proud day, quite frankly, and he should be proud of all the work he's done as the MLA to make sure that this happens. So thank you to the Member for Brandon East for all the hard work he's done in support. I thank you.

So, no. Unless the MLA for Arthur-Virden is going to be there with his big pair of scissors, the minister will not be there, nor the Premier. The engineers have told us it's opening, it's ready to go, so we're opening it. So there's not a lot of hoopla over it. Nevertheless, it is a tremendous and exciting announcement, and I think everyone appreciates that. Thank you.

Mr. Maguire: I appreciate the minister, and, believe me, I don't take it personally. But, you know, this minister's Premier (Mr. Doer) is the one that said that there might be a photo op on that road at some point with members from Saskatchewan, not me. It was back in 2006 when he made the comment. He kind of overruled the minister himself who in '05 said it would be open in '06, and I believed him. I know he is an honourable gentleman as well and tries to do his best, but it was his Premier on the radio who indicated in May of '06 that it wouldn't be open until '07.

Madam Chair, I only want to say that, in regard to the actual construction, to go back to that, the actual construction of the road, the minister has indicated, or it has been indicated to me in regard to the typical construction of a highway of this level, that there are four lifts that the minister referred to—I call them levels—on a paved highway like this. It's my understanding there are three done. Can he confirm that there are three done now and there'll be another one done next spring, or all four of them, because of the good weather we've had this fall, finished now?

Mr. Lemieux: I believe I answered the question previously, that I would endeavour to look into it, but to put three lifts or four lifts, the road is essentially complete. It's done. It's driveable. The engineers would not allow people to drive on it if it were not. I know that's not where the member is going, but because of conditions, and we're getting almost into freezing conditions now, almost every night, they need fairly nice weather to be able to lay asphalt, and they may be caught in this bind. It has happened for

decades in transportation. They do not always get all three, or four lifts in some cases, done, or layers as the Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire) puts it.

I can find out. Maybe if some of my staff is listening they can also—I can get the information today. But, again, I just want to re-emphasize that this is not in any way, shape or form taking away from this highway. This highway is quality highway, some of the best highway we have in all of Manitoba, brand new. It's certainly drivable by any kind of vehicle that is permitted on the roads.

Mr. Maguire: Yes, and I guess I only raise this because if we've got a highway that has three lifts on it, I understand it can be completely smooth and it'll take the traffic through the frozen part of the winter here. We could certainly try to finish it when it gets up and warms up a little bit next spring.

I was informed today that the government was considering raising the speed limit to 110 tomorrow across the province, except for the portion on the east side that I know tenders are going out for to finish as well. I guess I just wouldn't want to get the cart before the horse here. I just want to make sure that the road's finished.

Then, further to the engineers, and I give the engineers complete credit for the work that they've done, I don't think it was the engineers—that was the same engineers that the minister referred to that would have denied the opening of the 11 kilometres that was there for 15 months and not opened. It would have been the same engineers that would have recommended four years before that that the 14 kilometres from Virden to 83 highway junction north be joined again.

The issue of whether or not the citizens and drivers can move from four lanes to two is a safety issue, there's no doubt about it, but in this particular case the engineers would have been the same ones who recommended to the minister today to open the highway tomorrow. It just doesn't quite jive because the road is now going to do the same thing just two kilometres east of Moosomin. The four lanes will move back to two.

Can the minister advise me as to what the engineers said about the situation just two kilometres east of Moosomin? I know he's only concerned about making sure we get the road to Saskatchewan and get it open, and I in my opening remarks today commended the government for getting this road open as quickly as they possibly can. I'm a bit

sceptical around the circumstances that have moved it up a little bit, but that's okay. I appreciate the fact that it's open.

Can he indicate to me what the engineers' advice was on this opening in regard to how the joint at Moosomin will impact the safety of the traffic?

*(16:50)

Mr. Lemieux: Well, thank you for the question.

Maybe I'll respond this way, that I don't get into a lot of technical detail with the engineers—I'm sure my critic can appreciate this—on their rationale. They are professionals. They have a job to do and they do it well. Nor am I responsible, as far as I know, I'm not responsible yet for Saskatchewan and that decision. But, you know what? I'll be very pleased to speak to the new NDP government very, very shortly and that minister of highways in Saskatchewan about what they're going to do about Moosomin, and so on.

I'm not wanting to be glib about this, and I'm not going to be. I'm just saying that that's Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan's engineers, and they've made their decisions based on their information. Our engineers in the Transportation Department have used their rationale and their best practices to make their decisions. I know the departments talk to each other, but I'm certainly not privy and I don't sit in on those meetings.

We've worked diligently to get this highway opened as soon as possible. The construction companies need to be congratulated. You have a company that had the contract, I believe, out of Russell, Manitoba, that initially had the contract. But you have many companies who have worked extremely hard through trying conditions and wet, muddy weather to try to get this highway done as soon as possible.

The money's there. Our \$26 million was on the table. The feds had their money on the table. All the money was there. The money was ready to go. The cheques are going out. We're not going to hold back a highway for any reason. The commitment was made. We're trying to get it done as soon as possible, and the companies tried to get it done as soon as possible. They want to go on to other work as well.

I'm not sure why Saskatchewan at Moosomin, they're doing—in fact, I don't know what they're doing there, quite frankly. I just know there's a spot, a portion there that has not been twinned. They have a number of pieces like that that they're trying to

connect, but their transportation vision has shown that great leadership, that they want to move ahead. They want to have an infrastructure system that is, bar none, some of the top in the country.

We have that vision. We have our \$4 billion over 10 years. We know that there's a lot of work to do. We're sure in heck not perfect, but with the financial investment that we're putting forward we are really going to make some inroads, no pun intended, on our highways.

Mr. Maguire: Madam Chair, because we only have a few minutes left in Concurrence here today and there are a number of issues around the floodway that I wanted to ask the minister, I wonder if he could make available to me, I'll just have some issues that I want him to make available to me, and that is table a list of the contracts of the floodway that have been tendered to date since the start of construction of the floodway, the purpose of each tender, the amount of the successful contracts of each of those tenders, the time frame that each contract was to be completed in, and perhaps the location or address of each of the companies that were successful in those tenders.

If he could also, because of the forced unionization, I understand that there's a list of employees that needed to come forward in each of those contracts as well. If he could supply me with the numbers of employees that each contract had and a list of the employees' names in regard to what would have been required under the legislation that the government brought forward in the construction of the floodway program. Could he supply me with that in the very near future?

Mr. Lemieux: Well, let me say, first of all, thank you, Duff Roblin. Thank you, Duff Roblin. Thank you, Duff Roblin, for your vision. The city of Winnipeg has averted already a number of times—and I know some of the members opposite were a part of that government, part of the Cabinet in 1997 that had a huge challenge before them when the flood waters rose. No one will ever take away their effort to try to do something about it. But because of a Progressive Conservative premier in the province, with his vision, he took some flak for it, but, for his vision, the city of Winnipeg has survived a number of devastating floods.

So I have to tell you that this is truly one of those stories that bears repeating over and over again about a small province that has taken upon it this huge challenge to protect its capital city, has

provided contracts to First Nations people, for the most part who haven't had a chance to really thrive and to grow and to blossom, quite frankly, in the construction field, have an Aboriginal set-aside that has provided a tremendous amount of jobs for First Nations people and First Nations companies, something we should all be proud of in this province. I certainly am, and I know my critic is, as well. I'm sure he'll put that on the record.

I just want to say that there have been a lot of contracts. I can only say that the member who sits before me in the Chamber, the MLA for Thompson, was responsible for putting forward a lot of the positive and proactive approaches to the floodway. There are a lot of contracts. There're a tremendous amount of contracts. I know the member does not expect me to go through them right now, but I'll certainly endeavour. We're limited, the time is limited as well.

I understand that on the Web site, and I stand to be corrected, a lot of the contracts that are tendered and RFPs that are put out by the Floodway Authority are on-line. You're able to tap into it. But I'll certainly endeavour to get whatever I can to ensure that everything we're doing is transparent and open, which we are.

Mr. Maguire: I thank the minister for that commitment, and he can supply me with as much detail as he can on what I've asked for there. If he can't get all of the names and that sort of thing, I'd still just like to have a list of those contracts and who was successful in them, where they were from, that sort of thing, the dates.

There are a whole host of issues on highways that my colleagues would like me to ask about in the province, as well, not the least of which I want the minister to be aware of is a lot of shoulder work needs to be done still on the rest of No. 1 highway. I know he's aware of that. There's some paving that needs to be done on No. 1 highway and the other areas. I will be the beneficiary of the completed road on the west side, and I thanked the minister for that privately, and also wanted to acknowledge that safety is the main reason we do these things.

I would also say that we need to continue to work on these major thoroughfares, particularly No. 1 at Headingley in regard to what can be done to make it a priority to finish the twinning in that section between the Perimeter Highway and Headingley, whether dividers can be put into that area in the near future, and that sort of thing, by the

minister. Maybe some decisions will have to be made in those areas.

But there are bridges as well. Can he indicate to me when the bridge at No. 1 highway at Portage la Prairie will be complete, and that that section of No. 1 highway will reopen?

Mr. Lemieux: Well, again, it was scheduled to be this fall. I'll repeat I don't want to be cute with the dates, but it still stands that way. This is another one of these projects where the department tells us it's open, it's ready to go, and with virtually no notice when it's ready to go.

Now this is a project that has really expanded from an overpass to improving the actual highway around Portage la Prairie, and thank you to the City of Portage la Prairie for working so closely with the department on getting a bypass put around it's called Angle Road, to take a lot of the big trucks off their main street. I know both the City of Portage and the officials in the department worked closely together to make sure this would happen.

So, to be direct, I don't know when it's going to be complete and ready to go, but I know it's close. Certainly, this fall it'll be ready. A lot of work and time and money has gone into it. It's a great investment, but it's one of those things that needed to be done. Hopefully, in the very near future and the weeks to come, it'll be open, and we can be back using that highway that goes around Portage.

Mr. Maguire: I've many questions, Madam Chair, but there're two detours that are being used in Manitoba right now because of bridge closures, and the Angle Road that the minister just referred to in Portage la Prairie, will he, in his wisdom, be able to help those citizens in that community once No. 1 highway re-opens and look at the support that would be needed, because the road into Portage la Prairie wasn't meant to carry all of the traffic that it's had to in the last year, look at rebasing that road into Portage la Prairie, the city, in the part that's bypassed, as well rebasing and paving the Angle Road that's presently there. I know that there was a great deal of gravel and rock pushed into that road to make it so that it would carry the heavy traffic. Will he look at paving the Angle Road as well?

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

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I'd like to announce that the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development will meet on Monday, October 29, at 6:30 p.m. to deal with the following bills: Bill 7, Bill 9, Bill 11, Bill 15 and Bill 17, and I would like to announce that the Standing Committee on Justice will meet on Monday, October 29, at 6:30 p.m. to deal with the following bills: Bill 5, Bill 19 and Bill 20.

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced that the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development will meet on Monday, October 29, 2007, at 6:30 p.m. to deal with the following bills: Bill 7, Bill 9, Bill 11, Bill 15 and Bill 17. It's also announced that the Standing Committee on Justice will meet on Monday, October 29, 2007, at 6:30 p.m. to deal with the following bills: Bill 5, Bill 19 and Bill 20.

The hour being past 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow (Thursday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, October 24, 2007

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
Petitions		Agriculture Industry Eichler; Wowchuk	1613
Public Meeting—Premier's Attendance Lamoureux	1607	Hog Industry Eichler; Wowchuk	1613
Committee Reports		Manitoba Housing Authority Mitchelson; Mackintosh	1614
Standing Committee on Justice First Report Brick	1607	Tire Recycling Industry Derkach; Struthers	1614
Tabling of Reports		Letellier Bridge Replacement Graydon; Lemieux	1615
Auditor General's Report—Special Audit: Image Campaign for the Province of Manitoba dated October 2007 Hickes	1608	Highway Upgrades Graydon; Lemieux	1616
Annual Report of le Centre culturel franco-manitobain for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2007 Robinson	1611	Provincial Roads Briese; Lemieux	1616
Annual Report of the Manitoba Arts Council for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2007 Robinson	1611	Spirited Energy Campaign Auditor's Report Gerrard; Doer McFadyen; Doer	1617 1618
Annual Report of the Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2007 Robinson	1611	Foster Parent Recruitment Strategy Martindale; Mackintosh	1618
Matter of Privilege		Members' Statements	
Derkach	1608	United Nations Day Dyck	1619
Chomiak	1609	Ukrainian Canadian Veterans Branch Martindale	1620
Lamoureux	1609	Canexus Chemical Safety Award Borotsik	1620
McFadyen	1610	Gamma Knife Purchase Marcelino	1621
		Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Gerrard	1621
Oral Questions		ORDERS OF THE DAY	
Manitoba Hydro Power Line McFadyen; Doer	1611	GOVERNMENT BUSINESS	
		Committee of Supply	
		Concurrence Motion	1622

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