

INTERVIEWS

An Interview with the Justice Minister and Attorney General of Manitoba[†]

THE HONOURABLE ANDREW SWAN *

I. ROLE AS HOUSE LEADER

BPS: The reason we wanted to do this interview is from the process point of view, the past session seemed to be the most remarkable one in about a decade. It was an extraordinary example of the Opposition's ability to put a spanner in the works. The Opposition extended this session, forced the government to make some compromise in terms of scheduling when things would be. Can you give our readers just a background on your rise to House Leader. What the job is about?

AS: I was appointed House Leader after the summer of 2013, when there was a cabinet shuffle. The Premier asked if I would take on the role. I was not that surprised as traditionally House Leader has gone along with the role of the Attorney General. I guess they presume that the House Leader who has to be reasoned and negotiate, often those would be qualities you would hope to have in the lawyer who fills the role of the Attorney General. So I wasn't surprised. I had served as the unofficial or backup house leader for Jennifer Howard, who was both house leader and Finance Minister in the last session. So I would spell her off and I would

[†] This interview was conducted by Bryan P. Schwartz and Jessica Davenport in June 2014.

* Andrew Swan was appointed the Minister of Justice and Manitoba's Attorney General in 2009. Minister Swan he graduated from the U of M Law School in 1990. He practiced law at the firm of Thompson Dorfman Sweatman from 1990 until his election to the Legislature. Andrew was first elected as the MLA for Minto in the 2004 by-election and was re-elected in 2007, and 2011.

serve as House Leader some mornings and help her out as much as possible without having spent the time to learn about the rules and procedures.

Being house leader is not a very glamorous job and it is not a job that gives you a lot of additional credit out in the community. People in my community, West End of Winnipeg, sometimes will say “Oh great you’re House Leader” but no one really knows what that means. They are not really sure why that means I have to spend even more time in the legislature than I already do. On the other hand, as a lawyer having practiced family law negotiating was something I did regularly and there is a certain satisfaction from getting things through the House, either by agreement with the other side or if you cannot reach agreement having to go and follow the rules and procedures to get things done.

The advantage that I had coming in as House Leader was the end result of last summer was a Sessional Order that had very clear dates of when the House was to sit again, when the House was to rise, and very clear dates as to when certain things would happen. So we were guaranteed to pass our interim supply bill and other budgetary measures, we were guaranteed to pass our legislation that was introduced in the House before May 1st. So really most of the options that Opposition has to make things difficult for government were taken away by the Sessional Order which is now expired. For next session we are right back into where we were, so I guess I may be called on to up my game and negotiate. But I was actually handed for the first year a pretty finite list of tasks I had to do.

BPS: The arcana of legislative process is not something a whole lot of people know anything about. Do you have any old pros, guys that could say “I went through this with the Bell-ringing or Meech Lake”? Do those folks still exist?

AS: The main one is Gord MacIntosh. Gord was the Justice Minister and the House Leader back early in our mandate, which was the last time the House sat into August. Gord before his career in politics was actually a table officer. He was one of the people who gave non-partisan advice to Elijah Harper in the Meech Lake issue. Gord had both the political background and also the clerking background through a very, very turbulent time in the life of the Legislature. The pressure that was

brought to bear on Elijah Harper and all three of the parties in the House was huge with the eyes of the whole country on them. Gord is certainly someone who I've turned to as House Leader. I have also turned to Dave Chomiak who preceded Jennifer Howard. There's also Steve Ashton who was also House Leader in Opposition. There are many folks I can go speak to, in addition to Jennifer Howard, for advice.

BPS: You mentioned that you do not get a lot of credit for it. It's my sense that in the Legislature you can spend an enormous amount of time making a good argument, preparing an excellent speech, mastering the details, so on and so forth. But there is very little resonance outside the legislature for what goes on inside. So few things that are sensational and specular are picked up but an awful lot of energy goes into things the press really does not cover anymore. Maybe this is why sitting days have been slowly decreasing – members say it's more useful to spend the time talking to their constituents, worry about what's going on there. Any views on that?

AS: Question Period is the big drama of the day. Most of the energy goes into what the questions will be, what the answer will be. At the end of Question Period, the media will want to interview the ministers, the critics, and the leaders. Then by and large the media go back to file the stories and we continue working for several hours in the Legislature. You are right there may be very good speech. Sometimes there may be a very positive result for a small number of people. If you are speaking to a bill that is very important and people are up in the gallery, the ability to present a good speech or critique and debate is still useful. But that's not always the case and unfortunately, sometimes you see both sides of an issue just reverting to the speaking notes each caucus has prepared.

BPS: Say you have your 400 people denouncing hog farm moratorium or Kelvin Goertzen is doing his unlimited time speech on PST bill. Unlike my students, you have to look like you're paying attention. What kind of discipline is required to project a professional appearance when there is this extended theatre?

AS: I would like to think that as a lawyer, I am more trained in sitting and listening to someone who is saying the exact opposite of what you're

going to argue. I know it can be very difficult for all members, and especially some members in Bill 18 when Kelvin Goertzen also used up a lot of oxygen debating that bill. I know for Nancy Allan who was then the Education Minister and very passionate about the Bill as many of us were, it was really difficult for her to sit there and have Kelvin take a meander through every other province and state's laws without getting into a real criticism of the bill. I've learned that you just can't take that to heart. Frankly if you start heckling, you are going to get yourself brought into Hansard. Same thing when I'm speaking and I hear someone chattering away I will make sure I mention them, and say "well the member of such and such clearly wants to thank me for doing this in his community" or "he doesn't believe in this, I don't understand why he's not supporting this." So you can turn your chair around, you can have conversations with other people, or sometimes you just sit there and make notes and think about what you would say if you could have the chance to have a turn debate with the person.

II. OPPOSITION PARTIES AND THE POLITICAL PROCESS

JD: Earlier you mentioned that the Sessional Order took away a lot of the powers and tools of the Opposition to disrupt the system. What do you think are the most important tools an opposition party has?

AS: It's been said in Manitoba that the government governs by the consent of the Opposition. Ultimately, there are enough procedures for the Opposition to hold up the passage of bills indefinitely. In Manitoba, there are procedures for; some call it closure or time allocations, that are used over and over again by the federal government. The current federal government, I think, has used closure 72 times. We actually haven't used closure once since forming government in 1999, but I'm not even sure if we would be able to. Because if you want to use time allocation in Manitoba you need to put your intention to use time allocation on the order paper. Which means the Opposition in the course of raising points of order, or points of privilege could actually prevent you from ever getting you to the time allocation item in the orders of the day. So there exists time allocation but practically speaking if an Opposition is bound and determined from getting there they have the ability to do that.

So in most cases, there will be threats throughout the year. In my experience, they will ring the bells a couple of times to delay things a little bit. There is always the threat of having to stay longer and not getting all your bills passed. Most times, we've been able to negotiate an end to the session. Sometimes it means we have to sit an extra week, but most times in the ten years I've been sitting this was the finish year we didn't finish sometime in the month of June. There was one year where we were we agreed to come back earlier in the fall. We held over a number of bills, which is what happened in 2013. But generally the Opposition has the ability, as long as the Speaker is adequately defending the rights of members of the Legislature to hold up bills indefinitely.

BPS: One natural check is that the Opposition doesn't want to be in the Legislature day in and day out. Another is public opinion. Those are the two theoretical constraints on the power of the opposition.

AS: If the Opposition is not gaining anything, if they are not able to generate a steady flow of letters, of people coming down to protest at the Legislature very quickly they realize no one is listening. People do not really know that we sit beyond May Long Weekend. I'll be at an event and well educated, intelligent people will say "When did you finish the session?" and I'll say we're still in it. So you are right it is kind of a natural way to balance that.

III. SECOND SESSION AND LEGISLATIVE CONTROVERSY

JD: One of the major concerns of the Opposition party during the past sessions has been the declining number of sitting days. Do you feel that the number of sitting days is sufficient?

AS: Manitoba actually sits as long or longer than every other western legislature. Our friends in North Dakota, very different situation but they only sit 40 days every second year.¹ It's hard to believe. But the question is what do you do with the sitting days when you are there. One of the ironies was that the Opposition would complain about sitting days then

¹ North Dakota's constitution prohibits the legislative session from being longer than 80 days in a two year period, N Dak Const art IV, §7.

ring the bells to make sure that we did not accomplish anything during the sitting days. I think that there is an obligation on government to provide enough time for the Opposition to debate bills, to be briefed on bills being brought in, enough time to determine their positions and gauge the public mood for something. What I think compounded the issue in 2013 was that we did not come back until the middle of April. The reason for that was not nefarious. The federal budget process had been delayed by about a month, and it is generally helpful to know what the federal government is doing. But that then meant we weren't coming back until April 16th, the PST increase in the budget which was a matter of hot debate and that compounded the challenged of getting things done. I think in future although there is no fixed sitting date I don't expect we'll try to come back to the Legislature as late as April 16th.

BPS: One of the issues with sitting days is there is an unnecessary combining of two functions: the processing of legislation and the holding the government accountable, through Question Period and so on. I think the tradition in Manitoba has been no committee hearings when the legislature is not in session. It seems to me in theory you could detach those two.

AS: In Saskatchewan, their rules provide for a lot more intersessional communities. We do that to some extent, Public Accounts committee will sit several times before September, Crown Corporation committee sits in the fall. Sometimes those are much better meetings because the Chair of the Board or CEO can give answers knowing there will not be a question in Question Period the next day about what was done. And it may focus the Opposition to ask better questions because they are not focusing on the short score, what will they ask that will result in a question for the next day. So we do get some stuff done intersessionally. But in Saskatchewan they have some different rules that provide for the guaranteed passage of bills as long as they get through the intersessional period. If you bring in a bill in the spring it is guaranteed to pass by the end of the calendar year. If you bring in a bill in the fall it is guaranteed to pass by the spring of the next year. I think there has been some discussion as to whether that works better than as has been traditionally done in Manitoba.

JD: In the bell-ringing scandal of 1984, closure motions were very prominent, although ultimately not that successful. Why were not closure motions used in this past session to hasten an end to the debates?

AS: Again there were procedural challenges, you have got to put your time allocation motion on the order paper which gives the opposition the opportunity to prevent you from even getting there. But overall, as a government for the past 15 years we've found it better to go have the committee hearings. Give people a chance to come down and in some cases take out their anger on us or vent. But to give people the opportunity.

Bill 17, the Water Protection Act for example established a moratorium on new hog barns in certain areas in the province, moratorium on expanding hog operations.² We had about 400 people make presentations. A majority of people were very angry. They were hog producers. But we gave everyone the opportunity to present. Again, you could tell there were some common speaking notes, some interesting presentations. Overall, we gave people the opportunity to tell us what they thought. And it was a bill that was polarizing. The Bill was primarily supported by people living in Winnipeg, and people downstream, people that use Lake Winnipeg, Lake Manitoba. It was primarily opposed by people in hog producing areas. So we heard from a large number of people from a relatively limited spectrum of Manitobans. In the course of the hearing - let me remember exactly what had happened - Stan Struthers was the minister, I was the other minister at committee. Stan went out to get a coffee at about 11 o'clock at night as we got the last presenters, so I sat in the minister's chair. There was a presenter, a pretty reasonable individual, hog farmer, from Morris and he wanted to talk not just about the moratorium but about some country of origin labelling problems they had been having. I was trade minister so I thanked him for his comments, and let him know I had met with Canada's Ambassador to the United States, Michael Wilson. The three Western prairie provinces despite having very different governments were all agreed on this. We were trying to do our best working with Alberta and Saskatchewan to have the American government lift these barriers. The Opposition Leader

² Bill 17, *The Environmental Amendment Act (Permanent Ban on Building or Expanding Hog Facilities)*, 2nd Sess, 39th Leg, Manitoba, 2008 (assented to 9 October 2008, SM 2008, c 39).

and also my friend Hugh McFadyen – I don't know if it was the lateness of the night or the number of people we're heard, and the fact that I was sitting in the minister's chair talking about trade issues – and he went over the top and at 11:15 at night announced that a Progressive Conservative government would repeal everything in Bill 17. Which was exactly what we had hoped he'd do but it had taken 12 days of hearings. And we were down to almost midnight. I remember I looked up at one of our political staffers and he smiled. Once the meeting was wrapped up Stan and I went back to my office and talked about how the committee process had ferreted out the Opposition's true views. Which is very dramatic but that did end up being a very large issue in the campaign. Which is why we continued to win more seats in the cities but we did not do so well in big hog producing areas of the province.

BPS: Your sense is that in Manitoba, as unpleasant as it may be to go through the process sometimes, the political fallout from invoking closure or shutting it down would not be worth the headache in terms of the overall political situation.

AS: Yes, another example is the Bill 18 debate.³ It was very emotional, and difficult. Of the people coming out to committee, some of them were deathly opposed to the Bill telling us they would pull their children out of public school. You had other people telling stories of how they were bullied in school and too bad that this bill didn't exist when they were going through school because it would have helped them so much. And it was fascinating during the hearings, which went on for many, many days, when the committee process was actually healing people, which is the last thing I would ever expect from a legislative committee. People would come up opposed to the Bill and proceed to stand there and tell us all the reasons we needed the Bill in the first place. There was some people who actually came and admitted that they had actually been bullies back in school; or other people told us about their experiences having been bullied. It became almost like people witnessing or testimonials in a church. Here were people sharing very personal recollections and feelings in front of a panel of eleven members of the Legislature with the Hansard

³ Bill 18, *The Public Schools Amendment Act (Safe and Inclusive Schools)*, 2nd Sess, 40th Leg, Manitoba, 2013 (assented to 13 September 2013, SM 2013, c 6)

staff taking down every word in the back. One of the most emotional nights, someone had talked about their own life and how they had come out and how difficult it was in their family, school and church. And one woman got up there with her statement opposing Bill 18, who put down her notes and apologized. She said "I did not know, I didn't realize, I've come here and heard the stories and I didn't know all the hurt my church had caused." It was incredibly raw and very emotional. Who knew that a committee which is always seen as such a partisan political entity could in some small way lead people on both sides of the issue to actually gaining some healing. It is not what the committee was designed to do but it was the result.

BPS: Is there anything that anyone could have said that would have made you make a substantive amendment to Bill 18? Students in my legislative process class wrote about it and their perspective was it was certainly an important substantive issue but handled very politically by both sides. Both had agendas about how they wanted to spin it and that there were in fact some reasonable substantive amendments that the opposition proposed but the government was not amenable because they wanted it to be a clear cut wedge issue.

AS: As things progressed, the Opposition clearly wanted to save face and find a way to vote in support of it. From the way it had been played we decided that that was not going to an option. That if they wanted to support the Bill they were going to have to vote for the Bill pretty much the way it was introduced. So it was an interesting time.

JD: In the last series of major legislative events, the Speakers were very much at the centre of the crises. Do you feel that Speaker Daryl Reid felt similar pressure this past session?

AS: The Speaker, I know wanted to find a way to have an end. But no, I think the Speaker did a good job at being fair, and ensuring that members who wanted to speak were afforded that opportunity. He acted in a very impartial way, which was not unfortunately how it worked in the MTS crisis. Which is why a lot of common law countries in less developed parts of the world study how a Legislature can go wrong, because that was a crisis in Manitoba back in the 1990s.

BPS: One of the reforms that emerged precisely because of that was the election of the Speaker by secret ballot by both sides. The Filmon Government couldn't immediately say "we are dispensing with this Speaker" but they could adopt the reform that had been started in other jurisdictions of electing the Speaker. This probably gives the Speaker a head start to legitimacy, credibility, things they didn't have in an earlier era.

IV. THE ROLE OF THE PUBLIC

JD: In a session dominated by discussions of referendum, what do you think of the public's role in the legislative process? Are committee hearings enough to ensure adequate input?

AS: Different bills work out differently. For example Bill 20,⁴ the PST bill, you were on either one side or the other. People came out to committee, and said that it is important for tax dollars to be used to support these things or the majority, who came out to the committee hearings, and there was organization to get people out which is part of the democratic process, the majority were opposed to it. It was not really the type of bill where you could make changes based on what people had to say. There are other hearings that are actually very very useful at moving things ahead. I'll give you an example from just a few weeks ago. Bill 52 is an amendment to the anti-smoking laws and is intended to limit the use of flavoured tobacco. Tobacco companies are always looking for new ways to sell cigarettes to young people. Making them taste like candy and putting them in shiny packages is a good way to do that. We drafted a law that was intended to deal with those practices. It became clear through some of the presenters that there was some other consequences for other business. Without giving the name of the business, there is a well-known tobacconist in Manitoba who came to committee and met with the minister to say "we don't sell these kinds of products because we do not want kids coming into our store". We prefer American fishers who are going to buy a box of Cuban cigars and are going to enjoy them during

⁴ Bill 20, *The Manitoba Building and Renewal Funding and Fiscal Management Act (Various Acts Amended)*, 3rd Sess, 40th Leg, Manitoba, 2013 (assented to 5 December 2013, SM 2013, c 36).

their time in Manitoba to drop a lot of money in our store. We offer really, really good service. We were able to work with that, listen to them and propose changes as result of those ideas.

Those things can happen. Sometimes will propose changes that night, sometimes we can propose report stage amendments based on what is heard. Another example was the advanced education bill to do away with the Council on Post-Secondary Education.⁵ Because of the presentations that were made and because of some additional information that came forward we made some changes to the bill to give universities, faculty and students some more comfort that the minister was still accepting the academic freedom of universities in the bill. So sometimes bills are conducting to the committee hearings being very useful, and sometimes, and Bill 20 was one of those, neither side was going to bring forward the constructive ways for change.

BPS: On the specific issue of referendum as a general concept, is there generally, or specific cases a role for plebiscites? Some of the other provinces require them before constitutional bills can be deliberated. In Manitoba there is still a referendum requirement for the privatization of Hydro. Is there is a spectrum there that maybe it is a legitimate part of the process and necessary?

AS: The last major plebiscite was on French language services, which was actually the opposite of going to get approval for constitutional change. It was a plebiscite, which flew in the face of Manitoba's constitutional obligations to offer French language services. Of course, a wide majority of Manitobans voted no in the plebiscite but it was clear there was an obligation to move ahead. That probably is not a good example for folks who say there should be more plebiscites or referenda. I think everyone would agree that it is appropriate in a situation as in Quebec or in Scotland as they determine their own future as a part of the United Kingdom or as a separate country. I know many states have plebiscites on everything from increasing funding to schools to other kinds of funding. I'm not a huge fan of referenda because it can take on a life of its own. You have a whole bunch of folks who have their own interest in the

⁵ Bill 63, *The Advanced Education Administration Amendment and Council on Post-Secondary Education Repeal Act*, 3rd Sess, 40th Leg, Manitoba, 2014 (assented to 12 June 2014, SM 2014, c 29).

outcome, and sometimes those who are better funded may be able to get their message out.

BPS: That seems to be one of the lessons from the United States that direct democracy can be surprisingly undemocratic in the sense that special interests can organize, put forward a question, do the advertising to get it sold and so forth. It was not an expected outcome but practical experience is that direct democracy does favour special interests at the expense of the general interest. Philosophically, you would take the view that budget matters are discretionary matters and that the government will be held accountable at elections?

AS: Yes.

JD: We have talked a lot about committee hearings, but do you think that stakeholders and the public have a greater role in the legislative process during the drafting of legislation or after in the creation of regulation?

AS: Many times, if we introduce a bill we will have done all the work with the stakeholders. There will be extensive consultation, the minister will have invited people in or go out to speak to an organization or group or a whole series. That happens often. The goal is of course that the day you introduce the bill you hold a press conference with all your third party validators telling what a great job this is. Sometimes, because of the nature of the bill we are not going to do that kind of consultation because if we went to a group and say “here’s what we’re thinking of doing” the second we leave the room they are going to call the Opposition and reveal what we plan to do. So we do not always consult beforehand. Generally, we would try to consult right away or at least a heads up that the bill is coming then offer consultation right away to try to explain our position. But to also see what kinds of things could be changed in the bill. Certainly, consultation is important and many times yes, we say “we want your approval basically on what we’re doing but we understand that there has to be a lot more done on what the regulations are going to look like.” Or we know there has to be a period of time before this law has to take effect because we are going to work with you to educate your members or people that buy your products, or people that are going to be impacted. That can be a matter of discussion.

JD: Is Opposition ever involved in the process?

AS: All the time. I offer a briefing to the Opposition critic, and that would be our normal procedure. After a bill is introduced usually within a matter of days, we would offer a briefing. The opposition critic and staff would come in; it would be myself, my political staff but also departmental staff who could answer any technical questions about the act. Sometimes, it does not happen often, but sometimes we can work together on what amendments could look like. For example on the COPSE bill I was talking about, it was agreed that some of the amendments would be moved by Minister Allum and seconded by Jon Gerrard.

V. LOOKING FORWARD

BPS: At the federal level there is a systematic process for regulations. I think you would agree that a lot of legislation now is a framework for decision-making, it does not make substantive decisions. The real action tends to be in the regulation making part. In Manitoba, we have maybe the most democratic process in the country because we have mandatory public hearings. The federal government in the Mulroney area established a systematic process for regulations, you have to put them in the Canada Registry, you have to have a comment period and cost benefit analysis or impact statements. Do you see that happening at the provincial level?

AS: An old committee that is supposed to deal with regulations has not sat in about thirty years. There is not any will to do that. What I can tell you is that any regulation that comes to cabinet there must have an analysis attached to it. That is a cabinet document that is not publically accessible or at least won't be for many, many years. But there is a requirement to take a look at regulations to see what the impacts would be, would there be any particular impact on small business, on any particular groups, are there any alternatives to bringing this goal in a less intrusive or technical way. So the analysis is done but it's for internal purposes.

I know that the New West Partnership, which is an agreement between Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia, there actually is an

obligation to share regulations among the jurisdiction. I'm not sure how you could bring in any regulations with any certainty. If you are Saskatchewan and British Columbia said "no we don't want that regulation its doesn't match ours", what the result of that would be?

BPS: Our proposal is to make the current internal process external. But you seem to be suggesting that there isn't any political will for that right now.

AS: Yes, but there is some internal checks and balances.

BPS: We don't seem to have too much room in our system for front end thinking. Legislation appears, and there is actually democratic process for processing it but we don't have a model where a committee could hold a hearing on an issue not a piece of legislation. We don't seem to use law commissions as much as we used to. The model used to be we'd have all these smart guys, law professors and such, thinking deeply about issues and that would feed into the legislative process. I think that was abandoned for several reasons, one of which was a lot of the ideas were not fiscally attainable. Another was there was a lot of policy analysis required and the professorial approach is not necessarily appropriate for that. Do you think that there should be more formal provision for front-end thinking in our system somehow?

AS: It has rather been ad hoc. I think about the smoking all party taskforce that went out and consulted people before we brought in major reforms to the smoking laws to prevent indoor smoking in most places. I was on the all-party Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures taskforce that went around dealing with injury prevention, nutrition, and activity that resulted in policy but also some legislative changes. We had the poorly attended all party committee on senate reform, which toured the province and nobody cared. The majority of people said it should be abolished. But that was a very small minority.

BPS: I give students advice about how to advocate in the legislative arena. Time is an absolute premium in the government arena. If you can get 10 minutes with a decision-maker it is pretty good. So you need to have your homework done and all the detail in a written document. But you need

to have a very short distilled statement when you are talking to somebody. The second part is never bring a problem to a politician without a solution. The solution should address the pragmatics. Does that sound about right?

AS: Well the formal way that lawyers are often involved in the legislative process is at committee. There you have ten minutes to make your pitch. Some people provide written materials then just read them. It is most effective to provide your written materials and then have a punchy ten minute speech, which when done well can attract attention of the committee members. Changes can be made to legislation either at that night or by report stage amendment. Lawyers are trained, obviously, to advocate and to convince people and that is lawyering at its best. When you have done up a more scholarly written brief and also got a strong oral presentation that focuses on a short list of things you want to change with a list of concrete ideas. When lawyers are meeting with cabinet members or MLAs or Opposition members, it may be a little more relaxed than that. But you are absolutely right that it is most helpful when there is concrete ideas on how government or Opposition can propose laws that can improve the ways things work. People who come down and present at committee who start off with invective against the government or heaping praise on the government have just lost half the people at the table. So it is much better to focus on the specific provisions, the strongest suits for what people want to change.

BPS: Now that you have gone to law school, practiced law, and work in worked in the legislative arena, should we be doing more at law schools to prepare people for the political side of law rather than litigation side?

AS: I do think it's helpful to improve the knowledge that law students get as to how laws are made. As a lawyer you are interpreting them, giving people advice on them, and many times, as I tell law students, you are coming down to committee, because we have a very open and democratic system in Manitoba, you are representing on behalf of your client, or community or your non-profit organization that you sit on the board of to try and improve legislation. From my experience at Robson Hall we really did not know how laws were made. We took it in passing but I never really had a good sense.

I know that DeLloyd Guth now brings first year law students down here. We meet in the committee room and I say we because and MLA has to sign everyone in and the *quid pro quo* of that is I get to address the class for a few minutes. Usually that happens in September and they do get to come down. They get legislative counsel to give them a little description of how bills become laws. It is also good for students to sit in the committee room in the Legislature and learn if only by osmosis of how things happen around here. I think it is definitely useful for students to get a better handle on how things actual work down here.