



Fourth Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

STANDING COMMITTEE

on

LAW AMENDMENTS

42 Elizabeth II

*Chairperson
Mr. Bob Rose
Constituency of Turtle Mountain*



VOL. XLII No. 20 - 7 p.m., MONDAY, JULY 26, 1993

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

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

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA
THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LAW AMENDMENTS**

Monday, July 26, 1993

TIME — 7 p.m.

LOCATION — Winnipeg, Manitoba

CHAIRPERSON — Mr. Bob Rose (Turtle Mountain)

ATTENDANCE - 10 — QUORUM - 6

Members of the Committee present:

Hon. Mr. McCrae, Hon. Mrs. Mitchelson

Ms. Barrett, Messrs. Evans (Brandon East), Gaudry, Helwer, Lamoureux, Pallister, Penner, Rose

APPEARING:

Jack Reimer, MLA for Niakwa

Ben Sveinson, MLA for La Verendrye

WITNESSES:

Wade Williams - National Black Coalition of Canada, and National Council of St. Vincent and The Grenadines Association in Canada

H.C. Lim - Private Citizen

Don LaFreniere - Private Citizen

Deon Ramgoolam - Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties

Donald A. Bailey - Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties

Terry Prychitko - Manitoba Intercultural Council

Marty Dolin - Private Citizen

MATTERS UNDER DISCUSSION:

Bill 28—The Manitoba Intercultural Council Repeal Act

Bill 50—The Statute Law Amendment Act, 1993

Bill 53—The Justice for Victims of Crime Amendment Act

WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS:

Bill Blaikie - Member of Parliament, Winnipeg-Transcona

Michael Lazar - Chairman, League for Human Rights, Midwest Region, B'nai Brith Canada

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Clerk of Committees (Ms. Judy White): Good evening. I would like to call the Standing Committee on Law Amendments to order.

I have before me the resignation of Jack Reimer as Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments. I will read the letter: For Monday, 9 a.m. session, I hereby resign as chairman of the Law Amendments committee, Jack Reimer.

The floor is now open for nominations.

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): I would nominate Bob Rose.

Madam Clerk: Mr. Rose has been nominated. Any other nominations? Seeing none, Mr. Rose, please take the Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please.

We have before us the following bills to consider: Bill 28, The Manitoba Intercultural Council Repeal Act; Bill 50, The Statute Law Amendment Act, 1993; and Bill 53, The Justice for Victims of Crime Amendment Act. For the committee's information, copies of the bills are available on the table behind me.

It is our custom to hear presentations from the public before detailed considerations of the bill. A list of the presenters has been distributed, and a copy of that list is available at the table at the back of the committee room for the public's benefit. For persons registered that are wishing to make presentations, please check the list at the back of the room to confirm where you are on the list. If there is anyone else in the audience that wishes to make a presentation to any of these three bills this evening, please identify yourself to staff at the back of the room and your name will be added to the list.

Also for the committee's information, written submissions to Bill 28 have been received, and copies of these have been distributed to committee members at the beginning of the meeting. A copy of these submissions will appear at the back of the transcript for this committee meeting.

What is the will of the committee? We presently only have presenters registered for Bill 28. Do you wish to consider Bill 28 or shall we dispose of the other two bills first?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Chairperson, I do not know exactly how long review of Bills 50 and 53 will take. We might get a better indication from honourable members in the opposition on that, but there are some 11 presenters on Bill 28 and we do have some staff people here who, if we were able to dispose quickly of Bills 50 and 53, might be excused.

Mr. Chairperson: Is it the will of the committee then to deal with Bill 50 first, followed by Bill 53? [agreed]

Bill 50—The Statute Law Amendment Act, 1993

Mr. Chairperson: Does the minister have an opening statement on Bill 50?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): No, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Chairperson: Do the critics for the opposition have an opening statement? Hearing none, we will move into clause-by-clause consideration.

As always during the consideration of the bill, the Title and Preamble are postponed until all clauses have been considered in their proper order by the committee. Is it the will of the committee to consider the clauses as one? [agreed]

Clauses 1 to 110 inclusive—pass; Preamble—pass; Title—pass. Bill be reported. That completes consideration of Bill 50.

* (1910)

Bill 53—The Justice for Victims of Crime Amendment Act

Mr. Chairperson: We will now move to consideration of Bill 53, The Justice For Victims of Crime Amendment Act. Does the minister or any of the official critics have an opening statement?

An Honourable Member: No, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Chairperson: Hearing none, we will move into clause-by-clause consideration, again postponing consideration of the Preamble and Title until after all clauses have been considered in their proper order.

Clauses 1 to 6 inclusive—

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): No, on division.

Mr. Chairperson: You are prepared to accept all clauses, to consider all clauses at once on division. Again, I will call, Clauses 1 to 6 inclusive—

Ms. Barrett: No.

Mr. Chairperson: Clauses 1 to 6 to pass on division, is that acceptable?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you.

Shall the Preamble pass—

Ms. Barrett: No.

Mr. Chairperson: The Preamble is passed on division; Title—

Ms. Barrett: No.

Mr. Chairperson: The Title is accordingly passed on division. Shall the bill be reported?

Ms. Barrett: No, on division.

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Chairperson: It is agreed on division. Is it the will of the committee that I report the bill?

Ms. Barrett: No, on division.

Mr. Chairperson: That is agreed on division. That completes consideration of Bill 53.

Bill 28—The Manitoba Intercultural Council Repeal Act

Mr. Chairperson: We will now move to public presentations on Bill 28. Does the committee wish to put a time limit on the presentations?

Mr. Brian Pallister (Portage la Prairie): With all due respect to the . . . in the groups, I have decided to . . . I think we have a number of people here who—[interjection]

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): I think, with all due respect to the individuals who are presenting, it is only fair that on a bill that is as important as it is to the people who have come here tonight, we not put a time limit and assume, as we have been able to assume with virtually all other bills in public hearings, that people will be reasonable in their deliberations and the members on the committee will be reasonable in their questions. It is very unfair, particularly as I look around us and see that there are not a huge number of people making presentations. I think it would be very unfair at the beginning of the process to state that there should be a time limit.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Chairperson, I am very concerned in terms of putting a time limit on a bill that is going to really put the death knell into the Manitoba Intercultural Council as we know it today and would like very much so for these individuals—and I have gone through the list, just looking at the individuals who are present, I know a number of them as participating on the Manitoba Intercultural Council. I think it is imperative that the minister responsible hear what these individuals have to say in however much time it might require them.

The member for Portage la Prairie is not only putting a cap on how long it might take them to express their thoughts about the future fate of the Manitoba Intercultural Council, but he is also suggesting that the critics also hold their questioning to within that 20 minutes. I think that is, again, most unfortunate in the sense that individual presenters, if they speak for 15 or 18 minutes, it gives two minutes for opposition critics of two parties to be able to get on the record some questions, some questions no doubt that are very important and answers that do warrant to have some form of a response to.

I do not see any need to try to rush this thing through. I am available for the evening. At 20 minutes, if you put a cap, we will probably be done in two hours. I believe that the Manitoba Intercultural Council is worth a lot more than two hours of this committee's time and that in fact, Mr. Chairperson, I am sure, if we do not have a time limit, we will be able to hear the presenters out. I do not believe you are going to see abuse of the committee's time and would very much encourage members of this committee not to support this motion and at least allow and hear members out. If you want to put a limitation on something, go ahead and put a limitation on the number of questions being asked from the appropriate critics, allow each critic five minutes to ask questions possibly.

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Mr. Chairperson, indeed, I think that people have gone to a lot of time and effort to put their presentations together, and I would agree that we would want to hear a full presentation from everyone who has come forward. I know the Liberal opposition would be amenable to sort of a time limit on the question-and-answer period for those who are here to present.

So I would certainly support listening to full presentations from all of those who have come to make presentation and then limiting the questions and answers. I think that we are all wanting to co-operate and ensure specifically that the people who have something to say are heard.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you. I do not as yet have a formal motion, but I have allowed discussion— [interjection]

Mr. Pallster: Mr. Chairperson, based on what I have heard and with respect for the comments that have been made, I move that the Standing Committee on Law Amendments, sitting July 26, 1993, at 7 p.m., set no time limit on public presentation. However, we do set a maximum of five minutes per critic for questions.

Is that fair enough?

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you. Is that an acceptable amendment?

Mr. Pallster: For clarification, Mr. Chairperson, with a maximum of five minutes for each of the ministers and critics. How is that? [interjection] Yes, that is exactly as it is.

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Speaking from experience, just in another committee last week we had many, many more people than we have here and we had sort of an agreement. We did not need any motions. The Chair said, well, okay, let us try for 20 minutes and we will try to be reasonable on our questions and just play it by ear and be reasonable.

I agree with the minister. The minister is being generous, saying let us give the delegates unlimited time, but let us try to contain ourselves on our questions. I do not think we need a motion. We can just get agreement on that.

We seem to be killing a mosquito with a big sledgehammer here, because I think there is agreement on the part of the minister to not limit the delegates' time, and I think that is the critical issue. I do not think we should even have a motion on this.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, I accept the comments from the member for Brandon East.

I guess I just wanted to clarify, I have been a minister who, traditionally, when listening to public presentations on pieces of legislation that have come forward from my department, has listened, has not asked very many questions at all. I do not think the five minutes of questioning should be

limited to the minister necessarily, but if there were members of the government caucus that wanted to ask questions, it certainly should be limited to the five minutes.

Traditionally speaking, I would like to listen to the comments, take everything into consideration before we go clause by clause on the bill.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you.

For clarification, Mr. Pallister, I have before me: I move that the Standing Committee on Law Amendments, sitting July 26, 1993, at 7 p.m., set no time limit on public presentations to Bill 28 but limit to a maximum of five minutes each of the critics and the minister. Is that acceptable?

Mr. Pallister: I am quite prepared to stand that motion, but I will hold it in abeyance pending conduct of members who ask questions. It has not been my experience, despite the respect I have for the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans), that members are consistently reasonable in their conduct in these hearings and tend to belabour points for political benefit and at the expense of speakers remaining to make their points.

So I will withdraw the motion, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Chairperson: Is there unanimous consent for the committee members to agree to the withdrawal of Mr. Pallister's motion? [agreed]

My instructions then are there are no time limits of any kind on the presenters.

We will call first, Mr. Wade Williams, National Black Coalition of Canada.

* (1920)

Mr. Wade Williams (National Black Coalition of Canada, and National Council of St. Vincent and The Grenadines Association in Canada): Good evening, Mr. Chairperson and members of the committee.

Not since I have been at your seats some 15 years ago as a Member of Parliament have I seen the kind of discussion that was going on here. You spent exactly 13 minutes and 12 seconds to decide how long we should speak. Bearing that in mind, now that I have unlimited time, I probably would like to speak until about eleven o'clock.

On a most serious note, though, Chairperson and members of the legislative committee studying Bill 28, a bill to repeal the MIC act, personally, it is with much displeasure, agony and absolute frustration that I appear before your committee

today to make one final plea to you, the elected legislators of multicultural Manitoba, to retain the legislated mandate of the Manitoba Intercultural Council, the MIC.

My name is Wade Kojo Williams, and I make this presentation on behalf of the National Black Coalition of Canada, the Winnipeg Chapter, and the National Council of St. Vincent and the Grenadines Associations of Canada. I am currently president of both organizations.

Although I am not here officially representing the Manitoba Intercultural Council, the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Association of Winnipeg, the City of Winnipeg Community and Race Relations Committee and the Council of Caribbean Organizations in Manitoba, as an executive officer and member of these organizations, I am sure that my presentation is consistent with the views and positions of most of these organizations on the matter at hand and multiculturalism in general.

Additionally, being consistently active in my own black and Caribbean community over the past decade, serving in over 20 organizations and committees, serving as editor of my community's only newspaper, host of our only radio show, producer and host of our TV show, the African-Canadian Journal, I believe it gives me the opportunity to interact with a broad cross section of our community, as well as the wider Manitoban community. I firmly believe that my presentation tonight reflects a majority opinion within the black and Caribbean community as well as the wider Manitoban community.

The National Black Coalition of Canada, the Winnipeg Chapter, was formed in 1980. Our aims and objectives include: to ensure that black people of Canada achieve full social, cultural, political and economic participation in the shaping of a humane society and that blacks benefit fully from this society; to eradicate all forms of discrimination in the Canadian society; to foster communication and a spirit of solidarity among blacks in Canada regardless of national origin; to foster communication and co-operation with blacks of other nations in matters of common interest; to provide a basis for a national community response to crises and issues of general concern; to provide a vehicle through which each black community may avail itself of the aid and advice of the most experienced, skilled and committed resource person.

The National Council of St. Vincent and the Grenadines Association in Canada was established in 1987. This national organization is the umbrella for St. Vincent and the Grenadines Associations in Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Winnipeg, Edmonton and Calgary. It is the recognized representative organization of Vincentians living across Canada.

The aims and objectives of the council are: to provide a national representative body of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Associations in Canada; to provide a forum for discussion and to facilitate the interchange of information among member organizations; to initiate, co-ordinate and assist in the provision of aid to member associations and to the St. Vincent and the Grenadines community at large on issues of a social, economic and political nature; to promote the development and advancement of St. Vincent and the Grenadines community here in Canada; to give effect to the policies of government or its agencies with respect to any matter affecting the St. Vincent and the Grenadines community in Canada, directly or indirectly; to participate in activities with other groups, associations or bodies within the Canadian mosaic with compatible aims and objectives; and to operate in such a manner as to enhance and complement the activities of the member associations.

The NBCC and NCSVGAC network with organizations, groups and individuals in a variety of ethnocultural communities in Canada and elsewhere.

The NBCC has been very visible in the ongoing struggle against racism and other forms of discrimination. Our organization has been an active member of the MIC since its inception. We of the NBCC have always had representation at the council and executive levels of the MIC. We understand the important role the MIC plays in our multicultural, multiracial and multireligious society.

It is against this background that we are here in support of the concept, legislated mandate and the valuable work of the MIC over the years in the areas of community development, advice to the government and Legislature on multicultural affairs, and advocacy role on behalf of its membership. The MIC has been the eyes, the ears and the voice of the voiceless, newly emerging immigrant communities in Manitoba.

Let me now briefly outline the structure and mandate of the MIC. The Manitoba Intercultural Council is a bilingual legislated body established through the MIC act of 1983 to provide information and advice to the government of Manitoba and the Legislature on behalf of Manitoba's ethnocultural communities.

According to Section 3 of The Manitoba Intercultural Council Act, the purpose of the council is to, and I quote, "make recommendations and provide information and advice to the Government of Manitoba through the minister on all ethnocultural matters in the province including education, human rights, . . . and cultural heritage, and may undertake such other ethnocultural activities as the council deems advisable."

Unlike most arm's-length agencies, the Manitoba Intercultural Council is community based. Every ethnocultural community in Manitoba has the right to be represented on the council, and those communities elect their own representatives to the council at the biennial assembly. Process of registration, criteria for membership are in the MIC by-laws. The Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship could also appoint one for each two members elected by the ethnocultural communities. The council presently represents over 40 such communities and has an organizational membership of over 400.

The Manitoba Intercultural Council realizes its objectives through an elected executive committee and committees consisting of volunteers. Members of the MIC or any person in the province of Manitoba can sit on any of these committees and voice his or her concern pertaining to multiculturalism. Membership on a standing committee shall be from the time of appointment until the conclusion of the next following biennial assembly.

The executive committee consists of 15 members. The role of the executive committee members is well defined in the MIC by-laws. The executive committee consists of a chairperson appointed by the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship in consultation with or without the executive committee of the council, a vice-chairperson, a past chairperson, a secretary-treasurer and standing committee chairpersons and directors at large, five in number, who act as vice-chairpersons of standing committees.

The council has five permanent standing committees: a standing committee on cultural affairs and heritage resources; a standing committee on education and youth; one on human rights; one on immigration and settlement; and one on media and communications.

The purposes of these standing committees are to (a) research and develop policy on the relevant subject areas which pertain to the committee; (b) prepare and present recommendations and resolutions through the executive committee to the general council and to the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, (c) establish liaison with community groups, organizations and individuals for information sharing, exchange of ideas and mutual support; and (d) undertake such other responsibilities as directed by the executive committee or council.

(Mr. Ben Sveinson, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

* (1930)

Let us look at the process that the MIC puts in place before recommendations are forwarded to the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, the government of Manitoba and the Manitoba Legislature in general.

1. The standing committees identify and prioritize issues of concern. The minister may also direct the council to provide advice on specific issues of immediate concern to the government of Manitoba.

2. Working groups are formed to consider a specific issue.

3. The issue is thoroughly debated and researched; staff consults with government officials, community agencies, academics and available documentation and publications.

4. Working groups submit their reports to the respective standing committee for consideration.

5. If the report is adopted by the standing committee, it is then submitted to the executive committee for its consideration. If the report is rejected by the standing committee, it is then submitted back to the working group for revision. This process repeats itself until the report is accepted by the executive committee.

6. Upon approval of the report by the executive committee, the report is submitted to the council for consideration. If the report is rejected by the council, then steps 4 and 5 are repeated. If the

report is accepted by the council, the report is then submitted to the government of Manitoba via the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship and the Minister responsible for Multiculturalism.

7. Upon submitting the report to the government for consideration, the council monitors and makes the government accountable on the submitted recommendations.

Apart from the above process outlined, occasionally issues of concerns are also subject to province-wide public hearings. Public symposiums and written consultation with all member organizations will take place on pertinent issues. The membership of the MIC, over 400, has, at all council meetings and biennial assemblies, supported the actions of the executive and council. In fact, there is not a single resolution or motion on the record to suggest the contrary. Ministers and governments past and present have showered praise on the MIC for the work of the council.

(Mr. Chairperson in the Chair)

Just in 1990, in Volume 2, issue 3 of *In Contact/En Contact*, the newsletter of the Manitoba Intercultural Council, the Honourable Bonnie Mitchelson wrote, and I quote: Since being in office, I have had the opportunity to compare with other provincial governments the role and structure of the Manitoba Intercultural Council. From our observation, we believe the MIC to be the most representative multicultural advisory body in the country.

As Minister responsible for Multiculturalism, I believe that Manitobans are being well served by having an elective, broadly representative community-based organization to bring multicultural issues to the government. One needs look no further than this year to see the countless occasions wherein the MIC was able to contribute to provincial policies. They are a symbol of what good consultation could achieve.

I believe the minister was alluding to the MIC's report, *Combatting Racism in Manitoba*.

The Manitoba Intercultural Council has received national acclaim for its report, *Combatting Racism in Manitoba*. Several Canadian universities, particularly law schools and sociology departments, have requested and received copies. Requests have also been made for this well-researched report by some American colleges and universities.

In her address to the April 16 to 18 biennial assembly, the Honourable Bonnie Mitchelson said: The MIC has played, and I am sure will continue to play, an important role in our community. I want to take this opportunity to commend all members of the council and executive, who have served with dedication and commitment over the past two years.

Well, those past two years were the worst years of the MIC; yet, we were commended. These remarks from the minister came at a time when her government had already commenced the legislative process of repealing the MIC act, and only weeks after her government had cut all funding to the organization, promising only that the new MIC incorporated will inherit close to \$100,000 in the bank held by the MIC and other assets of the organization.

Despite the fact that another major cultural function coincided by design or by accident with the last biennial assembly of the MIC, despite the state-of-the-art orchestration and announcement of the government's decision to accept some of the recommendations of a questionable, unscientific report submitted by the chair of a one man J. Don Blair commission, the assembly was very well attended. This fact was alluded to by the minister in her opening remarks to the assembly.

During that assembly of April 16 to 18, delegates overwhelmingly passed a number of resolutions. Unfortunately, our minister, who is widely perceived as a messenger of the government and party which still sees multiculturalism as song and dance and WASPs funding other groups, opted to ignore the legitimate voices of the people's representatives.

There is also a general perception in our community, and I am talking about in the Manitoban community and the wider Canadian community, that politicians, including most here in Manitoba, still define the Canadian population as Canadians, immigrants, and visible minorities. We believe that their real agenda is to remove the word "multiculturalism" from the Canadian vocabulary.

Those of us who are following politics on the national scene would see the new Prime Minister has removed the name from the multiculturalism ministry in Ottawa, and it is now shuffled under Canadian Heritage and citizenship.

In her release dealing with the J. Don Blair report, Minister Mitchelson said that the ethnocultural

communities want the MIC to be free of government's interference and to be an independent organization; hence, her government's reason to repeal the MIC act. Well, it is quite apparent that the minister must have clearly misunderstood the message from the MIC and from Manitobans.

We asked that the government's actions over the past few years of appointing large numbers of individuals to the council be discontinued. We asked that the government give authority to the MIC to elect its chairperson and hired staff. This has been our call even before this government came to office.

After politicizing the organization, removing its important roles, and setting up the Multicultural Secretariat, the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council and their Access Office, costing the taxpayers of Manitoba well in excess of \$400,000 annually to operate, and finding jobs and appointments for their political disciples, the government conveniently read our message to mean: Axe the MIC and leave the voiceless without voice. In short, we read the government's message to read: Let them grow up vulnerable and in ignorance; we will be better able to manage them.

*(1940)

In fairness to Minister Mitchelson and her government, after pleas from the MIC and some of its constituents, the minister has agreed to continue to recognize the MIC by allowing the organization to incorporate prior to the passage of Bill 28.

Minister Mitchelson has also committed in writing to hand over all assets to the MIC Inc. It has also promised that Bill 28 will be amended to effect this agreement between the minister and the executive of the MIC. Based on this agreement, the MIC filed incorporation papers last week. We are now MIC Inc., and rightful inheritors of all of the assets of the MIC.

It must be made clear though that the NBCC and the National Council of St. Vincent and the Grenadines Associations in Canada, our support for this compromise in no way, shape or form implies that we are abandoning our position as far as the legislated role of the MIC is concerned. We believe that the MIC has served its constituents and the Legislature well and still has an important role to play. We supported the compromise

because we believe survival is of the essence and survival is crucial for the MIC.

The NBCC and the MCSVGAC believe that a legislated MIC is necessary and vital in maintaining racial harmony in our province and country. Those misguided legislators, both provincially and federally, and their supporters who believe that multiculturalism is a song and dance, and programs to fund visible minorities are dead wrong. Multiculturalism is the very soul of Canada. We may sit here and try to wish away and legislate away multiculturalism, but let us not forget that multiculturalism is the Canadian identity now and forevermore, amen.

We may take actions to out-reform the Reform Party and realize electoral gain, but we must also understand that the ultimate price is racial discord and societal pain. At a time when multiculturalism is under fierce attack from politicians and other citizens from all corners of this nation, we believe it is incumbent on our legislators on both sides of the House to ensure they receive the very best advice on multicultural affairs, not from anointed leaders, but from elected representatives of the communities.

It just does not appear to make sense to our organizations that less than two years after our government passed The Multiculturalism Act, it take action to remove its official advisory body on multiculturalism. Even if the MIC still has the blessing of the government, how will the MIC continue to function over the next year or two without financial assistance from the government? How does this government and opposition expect to cut both my hands off and tell me go out and work to feed myself? This is the situation the MIC now finds itself in. Without its legislated mandate, the MIC will lose its authority and clout whether that is perceived or real. The government may or may not accept advice from a nonlegislated community organization.

The June 1, 1993, editorial of the Manitoba Chinese Post titled: Why a Legislative Status and Mandate for the MIC speaks for all of us and for all Manitobans. It is incorporated in this presentation, and I think that the members considering Bill 28 will find it very useful reading. The editorial is attached.

So why are we here today? We know that this exercise is one of formality and one in futility since the government has decided to repeal the MIC act

and it remains adamant. However, we are here because we believe it is very important that we have our views put on the public record.

The next few days The Manitoba Intercultural Council Act will be history and so will the legislated authority and rule of the Manitoba Intercultural Council. However, we continue to believe that the government of Manitoba is ill advised on this issue, and we believe that their action on this issue is misguided. As member organizations of the MIC, we will continue to support this organization, and we will continue to urge the government and opposition to reverse this decision whenever they can.

In conclusion, the National Black Coalition of Canada and the National Council of St. Vincent and the Grenadines Associations in Canada call on the government and the Manitoba Legislative Assembly to:

1. During the next session of the Legislature, amend The Manitoba Intercultural Council Act to provide for a legislated role for the Manitoba Intercultural Council as the advisory body to the government on multiculturalism.
2. Take immediate action to restore administrative funding to the Manitoba Intercultural Council.
3. Dissolve the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council and return the funding role to the MIC.
4. Clearly define the roles of the Manitoba Intercultural Council, the Multiculturalism Secretariat and the Community Access Office; prevent duplication of functions and services of these agencies; and promote and encourage co-operation among these agencies.
5. Finally, and most importantly, we call on the government of Manitoba to immediately appoint a task force on multiculturalism to study the concept of multiculturalism as well as its economic, social and cultural benefits to Manitoba and to Canada.

On behalf of our organizations, I will be leaving with you copies of some of the many presentations, briefs and recommendations prepared by the Manitoba Intercultural Council during its short 10-year life.

We call on this committee to ensure that Bill 28 dies on the Order Paper. Enjoy your summer because it is the right thing to do. Thank you very

much for this opportunity, and we wish you a very happy and rainy summer.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you very much, Mr. Williams, for your presentation. Just for clarification, I understand that you are also presenting for the—

Mr. Williams: Mr. Chairperson, I originally was here to present on behalf of two entities. We have combined our presentation, and we have consulted with the MIC and agreed to give our second spot to the Manitoba Intercultural Council for their presentation if it meets with the approval of your committee.

Ms. Barrett: One brief comment and then one question, mindful of the time that I have. I would like to say that I agree completely with the thrust of your presentation.

I want to specifically say that I am glad you came tonight and I am glad that you made the statement that it is important to get your views on public record, even though in the short term the government with a majority can do what it will on this particular piece of legislation. I hope you continue to urge the government and the opposition to reverse the decision on Bill 28, should it be repealed. I also would like to state publicly that your five recommendations that you have just spoken here tonight are recommendations that we as the official opposition have gone on record as saying when we form the next government, we will implement all five of these recommendations.

I have one question, Mr. Williams. You stated on page 13 of your brief—you talk actually about the advice role of the MIC. Can you please tell us where you think, should Bill 28 pass and the MIC no longer have a legislated mandate to give the government advice, where the government, you believe, will get the advice and the programs and the activities that MIC has provided over the past 10 years? What do you think the impact of getting advice from somewhere else will be on multiculturalism in Canada?

* (1950)

Mr. Williams: Well, frankly speaking, I, though not in my capacity as the President of the National Black Coalition and the National Council of St. Vincent and the Grenadines Associations, have had several meetings, conversations, discussions with the minister, the Honourable Bonnie Mitchelson, with the executive secretary of our

Multiculturalism Secretariat. I am confident, given the new political demographics of Manitoba, that it does not matter which government comes to office; I believe that all of us here would understand that multiculturalism is not something for so-called visible minorities or people of colour.

When I say multiculturalism, I include the Honourable Attorney General, my good friend comrade Jack Reimer, everyone around the table. All Canadians belong to a multicultural society. It does not matter what we say or what we do to suit our political purposes and our political agenda at the time; we will be faced with the hard, cold facts and reality in this country that we must preserve the multicultural fabric of this Canadian mosaic.

To get specifically to your question, I believe that the Minister of Culture, whether it be the Honourable Bonnie Mitchelson now or it be Becky Barrett or it be Kevin Lamoureux or it be David Langtry in a new government—I believe that the Minister of Multiculturalism would continue to see the Manitoba Intercultural Council, as the minister said in 1990—and I have it here; I will be distributing it to you—the MIC is the most representative and independent body of this nature in entire Canada.

I believe that, when all this dust has settled, politicians would use the common sense and do the right thing, and that is to ensure that the Manitoba Intercultural Council remains strong, that the Manitoba Intercultural Council is recognized, seen and used as the official advisory body in this province on multiculturalism. A failure to do that we would be courting with racial discord in this province.

There is another presenter here from the aboriginal community, and there is one from the Chinese community. There is one from the Ukrainian community. I never knew these gentlemen before I came to the MIC, and without an MIC we would not have been able to interact. I do not know what would have happened to Manitoba without an MIC when the Ku Klux Klan and when Keegstra and others had dared not only in Alberta but in Manitoba. Things could have been very much different if the tone for racial tolerance was not set by the works of the MIC.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, in essence, Mr. Williams, you have commented on many of the things that I have talked about earlier this afternoon

in opposition to Bill 28. I know that you had asked originally at the beginning of this evening if in fact we as an opposition party oppose this particular bill, and it should be very clear to all individuals that in fact we do oppose Manitoba Intercultural Council [Repeal Act]. Not wanting to presume that we will be in government next, it is Manitobans that will decide that, but I would presume that if in fact there was a Liberal administration that you would see a Manitoba Intercultural Council, and I am sure the critic, which would likely be the member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer) would likely be disappointed if in fact it did not, a Liberal administration did not materialize on that particular commitment.

I want to get on specifically to a question, because I will address the bill when we get into the clause by clause. You made reference in terms of the procedure for reports that MIC goes through when making presentation, ultimately, to the minister. The last one is, upon submitting a report to the government for consideration the council monitors and makes the government accountable on the submitted recommendations.

You made reference to the Combatting Racism report, which I have had the opportunity to go over, and again it is something that I talked extensively about earlier this afternoon. In your opinion, how has the government, and particularly this minister, addressed that particular report?

Mr. Williams: Again, let me be straight to the point, be blunt, be honest, be frank. Personally I do not believe that the government of Manitoba has moved fast enough in terms of dealing with the recommendations contained in that particular report. However, let me say as well that I am a bit disappointed that the opposition has not put enough pressure on the government to implement some of these reports.

I have very intimate knowledge of how Legislature's work, and I believe if something is very important to the members of the Legislature on both sides, if one side falls down the other one would make sure that other side gets up. I believe the time has come when we have to see opposition parties start using the methods available to them under the democratic western-minister-style parliament that we operate here in Manitoba to ensure that the government delivers the goods. The government has implemented some of the recommendations. You know because I use the democratic process very well. I speak with

members of the Liberal Party; I speak with members of the NDP; and I speak with members of the government party because I believe it is the thing for me to do in the interests of my community.

I do not believe that those recommendations have been taken very seriously. I do not believe that the government has made an effort to implement any of the recommendations of substance. Yes, the government has been doing some work with the Manitoba Federation of Labour and the government has brought in, I think it is an antiracism co-ordinator. I do not know what that person does because I have never seen him. He has never called me.

But, no, to be honest, to answer you, I do not believe that enough is done, and I am hoping—and I am sending the message loud and clear here today, no political party in Manitoba should take the new emerging communities for granted. Any political party wanting to form a government in Manitoba must be assured at least nine seats in Winnipeg. We have political power, and we are going to use it and use it wisely to ensure that all political parties take our needs and aspirations and our concerns very seriously, and we hope that during the next election campaign and in the years to come we will be able to flex our political muscles, use our political power, to lobby and force political parties to do the things we believe are necessary for Manitoba.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Thank you, Mr. Williams, for coming here tonight to speak to us.

You referred in the early part of your presentation to—

Mr. Williams: Page?

Mr. McCrae: Page 1—associations you have with a number of organizations, and you made the point that you are not here officially representing MIC, the St. Vincent and The Grenadines Association of Winnipeg, City of Winnipeg Community and Race Relations Committee and so on. My question is that even though you are not here officially representing them, I wonder if you have discussed this with those organizations, whether there has been any formal acceptance of this as their presentation to us tonight?

Mr. Williams: Yes, this proposal was discussed with the organizations that it is presented on behalf of. But let me tell you—and I am glad that this

question was asked because I did not know how to get this little piece into this presentation, so I thank you for the opportunity. The St. Vincent and The Grenadines Association discussed this report, of Winnipeg, and they are in favour with it.

I sit on the board of the Council of Caribbean Organizations in Manitoba, and we represent 14 organizations in the Caribbean community. We discussed the MIC and the fate of the MIC at length, and let me say to you, Mr. McCrae, that I am rarely disappointed.

Fifteen years ago, if I had to make a decision to leave my country to seek citizenship somewhere else, had I known that democracy was so fragile in Canada, had I known that politics of spite and victimization and politics of fear were so rampant in Canada, I probably would have chosen Cuba to live.

I hate Cuba in terms of living in Cuba, because I like to be able to criticize Minister Mitchelson without her holding a grudge against me tomorrow or putting me in jail. I like to be able to criticize Justice Minister McCrae, when I believe his policies or actions are wrong, without fear of going to jail, but these organizations are not here. Madam Minister knows and I think most of your colleagues around the table know that they are not here.

* (2000)

Let me quote what was said by the person under whose portfolio a presentation to this committee should have been made from the Council of Caribbean Organizations.

I am not going there to make any presentation because I work for the government and they are firing all kinds of people, and I want my job. Nobody's job is secure, and other comments like we do not want to jeopardize our funding with the government so we are not going.

I do not know what funding they do not want to jeopardize because the St. Vincent Association applied for funding, and we have been serving this province faithfully and well, saving this government hundreds of thousands of dollars over the years for the volunteer work we have been doing, helping to generate millions of dollars through Folklorama and all the song and dance things we do here in terms of tourism, racial harmony which brings productivity. We applied for funding and the government of Manitoba, through this grants advisory council, would watch an organization that

has done so much work. Now all you are getting for a full year is \$3,000, and they do not want that \$3,000 to be taken away. That is why they are not here.

The leaders of the visible minority communities in large are people who work with the government. Most of them are teachers with the school boards or they work for any of the three levels of government. They are not here, even though behind closed doors they will tell you how bad the government policy is on its health reform, they will tell you how bad the government policy is on the MIC, they will tell you how bad the government has been dealing with visible minorities in this country, but they are afraid to present.

I am here tonight, and I am sure, as the sun does not shine outside tonight, that I was laid off from my job and it was termed restructuring only because I refused to become a part of the Reform Party of which the owner of my company is a senior money-investing member in that political party. This is the kind of Canada that we live in. I am saying we should not be overjoyed about representing this kind of government.

Mr. Chairperson: If there are no further questions or comments, I thank you very much for your presentation this evening, Mr. Williams.

Mr. Williams: Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Just to clarify again, Mr. Williams has also spoken on behalf of the No. 2 presenter, and he has suggested that the No. 11 presenter might take the position No. 2. I think it is standard procedure for the committee to hear the presenters in the order in which they have registered. Unless I have other direction from the committee, I will proceed in that fashion.

I will call then No. 3, Dr. Yantay Tsai; No. 4, Dr. H.C. Lim.

Dr. Lim, a written copy of your presentation is being distributed. You may begin when you are ready.

Dr. H.C. Lim (Private Citizen): My name is H.C. Lim. I am the secretary of the Manitoba Intercultural Council. However, I do not represent the MIC at this hearing. The president-elect, Mr. Terry Prychitko, does. I am here on my own behalf, and as the representative of the Chinese community to the MIC.

Frankly, I wonder if I am not wasting your time as well as mine by appearing at this hearing. We all know that the government has already made up its mind to repeal the MIC act. The delegates to the biennial assembly in April 1993, the MIC council and its executive committee have all pleaded with the government to reconsider its decision and recommended alternative courses of action to save money as well as to strengthen the MIC.

Other individuals and organizations have also criticized the decision of the government. However, all this pleading, recommendations and criticism have fallen on deaf ears. I know of quite a few people who have also concluded that the government is too intransigent to listen and have therefore decided not to appear at this hearing.

In any event, I am going to be very brief in my presentation. Our position on the question of repealing the MIC act and the future of MIC has been stated in several documents, two of which are being attached to my presentation at the end of this paper here. Some of you may already have read them.

Essentially, we believe that Manitoba needs a collective or umbrella organization representing all ethnocultural communities. Such a collective body will greatly facilitate interaction among the diverse ethnocultural communities and further understanding, co-operation and unity among them. It will also provide a unified voice on all multicultural issues.

We believe that the government has the responsibility to encourage and promote unity among the diverse ethnocultural communities. It must treat their collective body with respect. It must help to ensure that the organization remain relevant and effective. It must accord it with the status of being the representative body of all ethnocultural communities and advisor to the government on all ethnocultural matters. We believe that under present circumstances the best way to achieve this is through legislation, recognizing the status of the collective body and making it answerable to both its constituent communities and the provincial Legislature instead of the party in power.

People who argue that the ethnocultural communities should form their own umbrella organization completely independent of government, that is, without a special legislative status and some form of guaranteed public funding,

are indulging in self-deception. It is easy for the government to render the organization ineffectual and irrelevant. More importantly, because of their different backgrounds and the disparity of the economic and social conditions, the ethnocultural communities are understandably divided internally and among themselves over many issues. It is virtually impossible at the present time for several ethnocultural communities to unite and co-operate under a new umbrella organization.

The success of MIC to bring practically all ethnocultural communities to work together for the common cause within a single organization, owed primarily to its special legislative status and the many important functions it was allowed to perform, including the allocation of community resources.

* (2010)

The importance of a special legislative status to the viability and vitality of the umbrella organization of the ethnocultural communities may be better understood if I draw your attention to the fact that the federal Tories were notoriously divided prior to 1984, when they were out of power. Since then, however, they have demonstrated surprising unity over even very divisive issues. They definitely are more united than the Liberals, who are out of power. The great secret is, if it is still a secret, the Tories now have power which brings status, influence and lots of goodies.

It is not good for democracy if the opposition parties are weak and divided, although it is probably good for the party in power. By the same token, it is not good for multiculturalism and the future of Manitoba if the ethnocultural communities are weak and divided. It is of course good for the opponents of multiculturalism.

If the provincial government wants to see the ethnocultural communities strong and united rather than weak and divided, then amend the MIC act, do not repeal it.

Thank you for your patience.

Mr. Chalrperson: Thank you very much, Dr. Lim.

Ms. Barrett: Thank you, Dr. Lim, for a very short but very well-stated presentation. I particularly liked your comments on the government role in dealing with multicultural issues and the comments you made about the current situation and what will happen, the divisiveness that will happen if we do not have a strong legislated umbrella organization

to deal with the multicultural situation and issues and concerns.

My question to you is, do you have any comments on the Blair Report, anything you would like to say as to the process or the outcome or the recommendations of the Blair Report?

Mr. Lim: I think I have only two things to say about the Blair Report. One is that except for the government and opponents of multiculturalism, the report has received very, very poor review from practically every quarter. I do not think that I want to spend more time discussing that report.

Secondly, although it is quite, I think, a shame, I think quite correctly a shame, that the author of that report was given an assignment to facilitate the demise of MIC, and yet he somehow found it impossible to come up with only one recommendation. He actually came up with two recommendations, one or the other. And the second recommendation actually sounds more reasonable and more acceptable to the majority of the multicultural organizations.

That also happens to be the position, I understand, of MIC. Basically he was saying that perhaps since the major concern of the government—or at least the publicly-stated major concern—is the so-called misconception or perception of government's intention to manipulate and control MIC. So in order to do away with that kind of a wrong perception, you may repute the act.

The second recommendation of Don Blair seems to suggest that you can do without repute the act. You can do it easily by just making some minor amendments to the act.

Mr. Lamoureux: Thank you to the presenter. You are quite right in your assessment in terms of the second recommendation. I think that if we had the second recommendation that we probably would not have—or it would be a minimal number of presenters to incorporate it or to leave it the way it is with the exception of the chairperson and so forth.

My question to you, Dr. Lim, is, do you believe given—and there is no doubt this legislation will pass in all likelihood by the end of the week. It will have Royal Assent, it could be as early as tomorrow in fact. Do you believe that MIC can survive into the future without legislative mandate?

Mr. Lim: I am not very optimistic. I think in a lot of this editorial that is attached to this presentation,

we refer to the internal division, partly because of their background. There is nothing very unique about that kind of division. So you really need a lot of encouragement and help from the government, like providing—we are talking in terms of this legislative mandate and status. You need that kind of special clout to allow this organization, an umbrella organization, to hold all different organizations, all different communities together. That is one reason I am not optimistic.

But a second reason, perhaps also very fundamental, given the attitude of the government in terms of the effort it is trying to repute, to end its relation with MIC—in terms of what the minister or other responsible people say as to whether their interest in consulting or treating this umbrella organization as a truly representative body of all intercultural communities, I am not really optimistic in the sense that the government may not be very willing to try to help this new organization.

As I have said somewhere in there, it is very easy for the government to render this organization ineffectual and irrelevant. You set up a multi-umbrella organization and the government refuses to consult with you, ignores you, refuses to provide you any kind of guaranteed funding. It is awfully difficult for such an organization to survive for long. Maybe for six months, a year or even two because of initial kind of response to this kind of unacceptable position on the part of the government. But after a while the government has all kinds of ways of making sure that you are not going to be effectual.

So in the long run you may continue to exist, but it is not going to be a very effective and effectual organization.

Mr. Lamoureux: One of the most important aspects and both you and Mr. Williams made reference to it is the bridging of the different cultures that are out there. Do you see any other organization that would be able to fill that mandate? You know, if MIC were, as a result of this legislation, being brought in, are you aware of other organizations that are out there that would be able to fill that particular gap? Because, at least by listening to your remarks, it sounds as if it is an absolutely essential thing to do is to bridge the different cultures that are out there, and I concur with those remarks. I am wondering if you are aware of any other organizations?

Mr. Lim: Quite a few organizations have tried, partly as a civic responsibility, partly to really benefit their own organization, their own community, to try to promote mutual understanding among different groups. So there are all kinds of multicultural organizations that are trying to perform to some extent this kind of intercultural interaction, but as far as I know I do not think there is any organization that is as successful, that is as comprehensive as MIC.

Mr. Pallster: Thank you, Dr. Lim, for your comments. I was interested to hear your comment, or your analogy that you drew to the federal government by saying they were divided prior to coming into power and that somehow by being in power they developed a unity and an influence. I think that has very likely got some truth to it. I think it is certainly true in this province that this provincial government has considerably more unity and more influence than perhaps its opponents.

But I think this is somewhat a question of power, of how you define power. In the case of the federal government, their power, I think it is important to observe, was not bestowed upon them by someone else from above. It was earned through organization, through effort, through the quality of the ideas that the political party presented. The power was bestowed upon that political party by individual Canadians. Individual Canadians expressed their preference for that party and gave it, therefore, power.

Would it be fair to say that given that concept of earned power, would it be unreasonable then to expect that multicultural organizations, whether individually or collectively, would go through the same process, that they would earn their power through their own relevance to their adherence, their members of this society? Would that be an unreasonable thing to expect?

* (2020)

Mr. Lim: No, we are not talking in terms of black and white. When we talk in terms of providing this particular organization with a special status, we are just saying that this will provide a certain kind of incentive on the part of the constituent assembly to come together, provide the leadership of the organization with a certain kind of clout to bring different factions or different communities together. What we are saying here is just a kind of extra ingredient in bringing about that kind of unity.

We are not saying that the communities per se by themselves would have no responsibility whatsoever in trying to come together. We are not talking in terms that this is entirely the responsibility of the government to help set up this new organization or maintain the old MIC. What we are saying here is that they need close partnership, but it is wrong to assume that the government has no responsibility. The government would just say I wash my hands, you do not want any kind of government control so you are going to take care of yourselves. You are going to support yourselves. We are not to have any responsibility.

What we are saying here is that it is true, the communities have their own responsibility. They have to really make sacrifices—the very fact that we are working, we are doing work for MIC without getting any kind of pay in the sense that we also contribute to the building of this kind of organization. What we are saying here is that the government also has a role. I do not think we should be too ideological about this kind of thing, culture thing, should be entirely private, the government should have no role. The government should have a role, have an important role. It has a responsibility in trying to help different organizations come together.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): I certainly enjoyed your presentation, Dr. Lim. I feel somewhat akin to you and your organization having been a member of a cultural organization for quite some years and having played a role in some of the cultural organizations, but beyond that, having been the leader of a very significant organization in this province, I feel somewhat close to your feelings.

It is interesting to note in your presentation that you sort of give the indication that without government funding it would be very difficult for you to operate. When we formed our organization some 10 years ago, there was no funding provided by the government to the organization that I represented. After 10 years, there is still not any government money provided to that organization, yet it has grown very significantly over the last 10 years and is representing the organizations and the membership of the organization very well to government without hesitation of voicing any criticism to government in any aspects and/or supporting government in any aspects that it chooses to. So it has a very free conscience from

an organizational standpoint in making presentations to government.

I wonder whether your organization could, in fact, fund itself if it chose to in the long term and represent the views of that multicultural community in this province. I think there is a great deal that can be achieved by organizations such as yours, because government has a great deal of interest in ensuring that the multicultural communities' views are not only heard but also supported in many areas, as I think this government has clearly demonstrated on an ongoing basis. I would suspect that we probably have been more active in our efforts to try and maintain and promote the cultural activities in this province over the last five years than has been done previously.

I would like to ask you, Dr. Lim, whether you in fact can maintain yourself as an organization without funding of government, if the legislation, in fact, would remain intact?

Mr. Lim: I, personally, do not think it is the best way to go about having a multicultural organization with the kind of role we have in mind.

When you talk in terms of your organization, although I do not really quite understand the nature of the organization, my thinking is that we are talking perhaps two different kinds of organizations and also different times. Presently, there are a multitude of organizations trying to get funding from all kinds of different sources. It is difficult to get that funding.

It, perhaps, is possible, but in the process of trying to get that kind of funding, are we going to compromise ourselves in terms of our ability to really perform the kind of function? Yes, we spend all our time thinking of projects. I do not consider MIC as a project-oriented organization. If you are thinking in terms of a project-oriented kind of thing, I do not think we need MIC. The government can always decide what project is going to go, or any organization can decide certain projects and then apply for funding.

I am thinking of MIC as really a kind of continuing organization, like phoning Canada Council in terms of giving advice to government on developing Canadian culture on the federal level, that kind of thing. So you do not expect Canada Council to go out and apply funding, raise funds. Yes, you could, perhaps, but are you going to be preoccupied with fundraising rather than performing your legitimate

and necessary role? So I do not really see much prospect, much excitement in terms of, yes, you go out and raise funds for yourselves. It is possible, but I do not entertain that kind of function for MIC, unless you set up kind of a new business, set up a fundraising bureau or something, a different section.

Mr. Penner: Mr. Chairperson, the question I put is: Can your organization maintain itself without government funding?

Mr. Lim: I do not think we could.

Mr. Penner: You do not think you could.

Mr. Lim: No.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you. If there are no other questions or comments for the presenter, I thank you very much, Dr. Lim, for your presentation this evening.

Mr. Lim: Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. I will call Professor C.M. Wong, Professor Wong.

Murray Trachtenberg, B'nai Brith. I understand from the Clerk that a written presentation has been forwarded in place of this presenter on behalf of the B'nai Brith. With the committee's permission, I will call that name a second time and then stroke it off the list. Is that agreeable? [agreed]

I call Murray Trachtenberg, B'nai Brith, the second and last call.

Don LaFreniere, private citizen. A copy of your presentation is being distributed, you may begin when you are ready.

Mr. Don LaFreniere (Private Citizen): Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

First of all, I would like to say to the honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mrs. Mitchelson) my condolences on her loss last week. Those are my personal condolences. I think it is also on behalf of the rest of the MIC.

In regard to the report that is in front of you, for some reason, page 6 went missing. What I am going to do is for page 6 I will do it verbatim, if you do not mind. Mr. Chairperson, is that okay with you and the rest of the members?

* (2030)

Mr. Chairperson: Yes, proceed. It is agreeable.

Mr. LaFreniere: My name is Don LaFreniere. I appear before the committee today to make a

presentation as a member of the aboriginal community and a representative of the aboriginal community to the Manitoba Intercultural Council.

At the outset, I would like to state that I strongly believe that the government is making a mistake by repealing The Manitoba Intercultural Council Act. I hope the members of this committee will be open to our views and consider them carefully in their deliberations.

As a representative of the aboriginal community and the past executive director of the Winnipeg Council for Treaty and Status Indians, I see the following as the objectives for my community:

To provide aboriginals with a suitable facility for counselling, information, guidance and referral services;

To create a better cultural understanding between people of aboriginal origin and nonaboriginal people, and to plan with government, health, welfare, church and other agencies for the improvement of the quality of services and facilities for the aboriginal people in the community;

To provide opportunity for the development of aboriginal leadership in the community; to encourage the fuller participation of people of Indian origin in community affairs and activities with a goal of strengthening mutual understanding;

To encourage open-minded inquiry in the study of aboriginal problems and needs;

To assist in the undertaking, if necessary, of any program or activity designed to promote the welfare of people of the aboriginal community;

To encourage the public to take an informed interest in the promotion of these objects and in the general welfare of the problems of the aboriginal.

As an agency promoting racial harmony and advising the government on multicultural affairs, the Manitoba Intercultural Council has done a lot of good work for the ethnocultural communities in Manitoba, including the aboriginal communities. It has helped my community to interact better with other communities and to promote racial understanding.

The Manitoba Intercultural Council has received much praise for its fight against racism and discrimination, its recommendations on various issues such as multicultural education, health care, foreign accreditation, human rights and for its efforts in community development.

Recognizing the importance of the MIC in promoting multiculturalism, the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson, praised the council's work in her writing in the 1990 issue of *In Contact/En Contact*, Volume 2, No. 3, by stating: From our observations, we believe MIC to be the most representative multicultural advisory body in the country. I believe that Manitobans are being well served by having an elected, broadly representative, community-based organization to bring multicultural issues to government.

Since then, the MIC has continued its good work, but it seemed the minister no longer saw the need for such an advisory body on multiculturalism. Only two years later, the minister started to dismantle the MIC, the community-based, the representative and the independent umbrella organization, based solely on a one-man report, the Don Blair report on the review of the role and mandate of MIC.

Since the release of the Don Blair report, MIC representatives and other community leaders have tried their best to point out unrepealed of the report. However, the minister and her government would rather take one person's recommendation than heed the views of our communities.

A good critique of the Don Blair report was provided by Dr. Yantay Tsi, a well-respected leader of the Chinese community and a prominent citizen of Manitoba and Canada, who analyzed the report objectively. For those who are familiar with the MIC and have read the Don Blair report, the report is unacceptable for the following reasons:

1. The information gathered by Mr. Blair is unreliable.
2. Many facts, including MIC's mandate, are distorted.
3. Community views on MIC are misrepresented.
4. Comments about MIC's structural flaws are misplaced.
5. It manifests misconceptions about multiculturalism itself.
6. Its allegations are self-contradictory.
7. Its arguments are irrelevant and fallacious.
8. There is no convincing rationale to justify its major recommendations to repeal the MIC act.

A detailed analysis is attached.

Nevertheless, the government ignored our opinion and went ahead to introduce Bill 28 to

repeal the act. The minister has insisted that a nonlegislated MIC is best for the organization and the ethnocultural communities because it will be free of any government interference. The minister's reasoning sounds right, but in reality, the decision to repeal the MIC act can only leave the ethnocultural communities in Manitoba without their only independent voice on multicultural affairs.

Yes, our communities want a truly independent MIC, but we also want a legislated MIC, an organization whose advice on multiculturalism has to be heeded instead of being ignored by the government.

A legislated MIC will also demonstrate the sincerity of our government's commitment to multiculturalism. By maintaining the legislated mandate for MIC, the government will dispel the misperception that the government wants to divide and rule. It will also show the ethnocultural communities that the government does not want to limit multiculturalism to only song and dance.

For the aboriginal community, the decision to repeal the MIC act is just another proof that the government does not care about racial minorities. Even though the United Nations has proclaimed this year as the Year for the Indigenous People, the government of Manitoba cut its funding to many organizations helping aboriginals such as the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, MKO, Friendship Centres in Manitoba, the Flin Flon Crisis Centre.

Now the government proceeds to repeal the MIC act. How can a government on the one hand claim that it is committed to—and this is where I have to wing it—multiculturalism, and on the other hand, cut all the funding to many multicultural organizations? How can a government on one hand want to empower the ethnocultural communities, but on the other hand adopt policies that will divide and rule the communities? I want to see a government committed to multiculturalism. I want to see a Canada with a racial harmony, but for this to happen we need to legislate at MIC truly independent representatives, organizations for the ethnocultural communities in Manitoba.

I hope my views, as well as those of my community's, will be considered by your committee. Thank you.

I would like to refer to the analysis of the Blair Report and make a couple of notes, if I may. I do not want to take up too much of your time.

* (2040)

In regard to the survey, first of all, the Blair Report contained little more than compilations of personal opinions supposedly based on 117 of 971 questionnaires distributed and 91 individuals interviewed. Since there is no disclosure of the criteria for selecting these people, no one except Mr. Blair would know the credentials of these so-called representatives he has chosen to interview. Similarly, no one can be certain about the extent of duplication among his respondents and his interviewees.

As a result, opinions cited are obviously highly selective and more than likely to be biased. The one-man commission insistence on strictest confidence has effectively removed all possibility of verification or authenticity of information assembled during the review process. This deliberate concealment of information source would allow maximal manipulation of data to suit a particular outcome. The scarcity of returns to the questionnaire and the secretive manner by which the conclusions are derived invalidate the report completely. Any decision based on such an unreliable survey clearly lacks credibility.

The crucial facts that are distorted, the report has misstated several crucial facts and it makes a number of erroneous assertions which have in turn led to untenable conclusions. Three of the most glaring examples are distortion of the MIC original mandate. For example, the report maintained that the original goal of MIC was to make the government more knowledgeable about Manitoba's multicultural reality. It then argues that the advice of the MIC is no longer needed because the government has already reached an increasing awareness of multiculturalism. Clearly, anyone who knows anything about multicultural development in Manitoba would never accept such a convoluted argument based on false premises.

Example No. 2, distortion of self-identification principle: Similarly, the report claims that MIC does not represent all groups because its self-identification principle excludes certain organizations. On that base, it goes on to insist that MIC only represents special interest groups. This argument is then advanced to support the recommendations to repeal the MIC act so that the government can avoid the perception of giving special status for the ethnics. Any fair-minded individual can see it plainly that the MIC act

bestows no more special status to ethnics than any other Manitoba act does to its target segment of society. Obviously, the report has ignored all those universal values of multiculturalism and sees MIC's advocacy activities as only serving the special interests of the ethnics.

Example No. 3, distortion of the level of groups development: The report believes that the groups are currently well developed and effective and able to access government more easily and freely. Therefore, it concludes that MIC no longer serves a purpose. Only one needs to look at any of the visible minority groups or the newly arrived groups to realize that the ethnocultural communities are far from being well developed.

Thirdly, the report claims that the opinions received were fairly consistent. Yet one examines the crafty constructed quotes which were presented as community views on MIC, there is neither fairness nor consistency. Out of the total of 22 quotations cited, eight were supportive of MIC, eight were critical, and six appear unable to make up their mind. When one analyzes carefully the reasons given, they are all very different. Those negative feelings were as diverse as those supported or ambivalent, yet the report claims it to be consistent enough to justify MIC's demolition.

The accusations of the report that the activities of MIC were primarily focused on its funding role, which overshadowed its other work, are equally groundless. The recorded number of consultations, reports, presentations and formal recommendations during those years when MIC was actively involved in a funding role can abundantly speak for themselves. More importantly, the report chooses to leave out the tremendous community development work which had gone into the funding process. It denigrates, instead, council members' devotion as MIC's attempt to enhancing its own position within the community. Worse still, the report has attributed selfish motivation to the enthusiasm towards MIC as a manifestation of community politics to ensue adequate funding. Such slanderous charges are completely unjustified.

Now, those are just some points. I do not want to get into it in detail, because this is not my report. I had read it in detail with my colleagues. I have supported it wholeheartedly.

I think that I would like to revert now to the speech to the Assembly by the Honourable Minister Bonnie Mitchelson on April 17 of '93, and it was a delightful speech. I was somewhat mystified because the following day, I mean the following working day, we found something quite contrary to what was said. Anyway, this is what was said—we also have it on tape and on video.

Good morning. I am delighted to see you here today. This gathering is quite possibly the most important biennial assembly in the 10-year history of the Manitoba Intercultural Council—realize that, 10-year history.

You know, everybody else this year, of all the events that I have attended, their anniversaries, their 10th anniversary, whether it was the Caribbean Club, whether it was Black-O-Rama—and here it is our 10th anniversary and we are dying on this table. You know, it is ironic but that is the way life goes.

It is a new beginning for MIC, an opportunity to explore and establish what the future direction of the council should be and to embark on that course. It is essential that the community be able to determine its own needs and develop the structures necessary to meet those needs free of perception of government control and influence.

I know from my own experiences over the past five years as minister that it is not always easy to balance competing views and interests, while effectively representing all Manitobans and trying to do the right things. One thing I have learned is that we must all work together to ensure that we are all effective partners in the development and promotion of multiculturalism, and it is not good enough to dwell on the past. We must focus on the new and emerging issues which challenge all of us today.

MIC has played and, I am sure, will continue to play an important role in our community. I want to take this opportunity to commend all members of the council and the executive who have served with dedication and commitment over these past two years. In addition, thanks to the staff of the MIC for their ongoing contribution to the council. I especially want to recognize the outgoing secretary, Sam Koshy. Sam, your efforts have been valued, appreciated, and I know we all want to wish you the very best in the new position with the City of Winnipeg. I know you will devote your

efforts there to the promotion of racial harmony in Manitoba, an area that we must all work together to address.

Many of the community-based organizations have undertaken projects, initiatives to combat racism, including MIC's forum featuring the Popular Theatre Alliance of Manitoba on May 30, 1992, and the panel discussion it held on November 28, 1992.

We as government have continued to increase our efforts to combat racism, an issue which is a major concern to the community as a whole. We appointed an anti-racism co-ordinator, an anti-racism outreach officer within the Citizenship Division of my department. We have developed and implemented a respectful workplace policy in my department, which we are offering throughout government.

The Bridging Cultures Program was introduced to bring communities together on projects and issues of mutual concerns or benefits, and we are funding the City of Winnipeg's 1994 Year of Racial Harmony.

This past year saw significant initiatives of our commitments to continued development of multiculturalism. They include the introduction of the multicultural education policy in May 11, 1992; the opening of the Community Access Office, May 14, 1992; the passage of The Manitoba Multiculturalism Act, October 24, 1992.

This act recognizes multiculturalism as a fundamental characteristic of our society; recognizes its economic, social and cultural benefits; and stresses the importance and benefits of heritage languages. The act continues our policy of embracing and promoting the concept and reality that multiculturalism is all inclusive, that it crosses all political lines and covers the entire socioeconomic spectrum.

* (2050)

We believe we must continue to promote the fact that multiculturalism is each and every one of us. This is essential to achieving this true equality and respect for all Manitobans, and to ensure all aspects of society that are reflective of our cultural and racial diversity. The recognition of the economic aspects of multiculturalism continues to grow, and I urge everyone to explore and promote and seize these opportunities.

It is important to realize these opportunities are increasing almost daily. As we see major portions

of the world undergo rapid transformations, we are coming to understand our unique advantage. Our knowledge of languages, cultures of the world, enables us to better compete locally, nationally, internationally, in this ever-shrinking global marketplace.

In looking to the future, we can see the need to promote Manitoba as a good place to live, work and raise a family. We need and we want more immigrants to come here to become active, contributing members of our society. Manitoba's continued growth depends, in part, on our ability to attract and retain new Canadians. Clearly, there is much to be done, and many great challenges lie ahead for both the community and the council.

As you come together in discussion, you will be focusing on the need to determine what role you want the council to play in meeting those challenges. Close to \$100,000 in the bank account—which is \$60,000—of MIC will enable you to deal with the fundamental issues facing your future as organizations, without the need for interim fundraising.

You have structures to develop, programs and actions to define, and, above all else, a commitment to make, a commitment to continue to promote multiculturalism throughout our community.

I extend very best wishes for a fruitful and productive weekend, and I look forward to continuing to work with MIC over the years ahead. Thank you.

That was the speech that was made by Bonnie Mitchelson.

Mr. Chairperson, as being an aboriginal person of Sioux ancestry, I had the opportunity as a young child to grow up in poverty. I grew up in a small town of which I am very proud to say that I come from, and that is Portage la Prairie, the same place that Mr. Pallister comes from. If he is as good a pitcher as he is a politician, he is going to do great.

People have to realize the plight of the urban Indian people. The urban Indian people have been put into a Catch-22 situation where they are damned if they do and they are damned if they do not. You have the federal government here on one side, and you have the provincial government on the other side, and then you have the City of Winnipeg in the middle, but nobody wants to take the responsibility. No one. No one wants to take the

responsibility. Like I said, when I came and I tried to help and I tried to assist various Indian bands in the North. I travelled extensively through the Northwest Territories. I travelled extensively in the northern parts of Manitoba into Churchill. I have been up at Bakers—I have been everywhere. I have worked with the Inuit people. I have worked with the Dene nation. I worked closely with Georges Erasmus.

I had the opportunity, and maybe I wish that more aboriginal people had the opportunity that I had; I had parents that would send me to school to educate me and to show me the white man's world, as you would so call it. As we used to call it, when we used to be the Winnipeg Council for Treaty and Status Indians, what we used to have underlined is the first citizens of Canada, first citizens of the world, as you would so call it—I mean, of North America. I said to myself, well, I consider myself a Canadian first, and to me that is important. Without myself feeling proud of being a Canadian, then I would not have the ambition or I would not have the integrity to push ahead to try and help my people.

As you know, and I think everyone at this table that has known native people and grown to respect native people, they are not all drunks that are on Main Street. I imagine that you can see just as many white drunks as you can see native drunks that are on that street; I bet you can go down to the centre there and probably find the same thing. I am not trying to get away from what I am talking about here, Madam Minister and Mr. Chairperson, it is that I think that it is important that people realize that when, for example, people came to Canada from other countries they were either well educated or had money for their children to go to school to learn.

The children of the native community, what do they do on the reserve? They sniff this; they sniff that. They have the highest rate of suicide in the world in the Northwest Territories. You know, they have no inclination what the world is all about. They come down here from the reserve. They attend school, and people, they say that there is no racism. There is always going to be racism. There is going to be racism till the day we die, but let us give it a break. People have the right, as you have the right, to voice their opinion. But if they are not able to achieve their goals—and the only way that they are going to be able to achieve their goals is by being taught, either by their elders or by people, that when they do come into urban settings that

they are accepted as one of us. It is ironic that everyone else is not.

You know, the funny thing about it, when I was the executive director there for close to seven years, is that I went to the Manitoba Intercultural Council back in 1985. I applied for a grant, and this was just for a temporary operating grant until we could receive other monies through Secretary of State, because there are other places, like the honourable member has said, that you can receive fundings, but at least it was a start. It was the only organization, I can say honestly, that looked at us and said, hey, we will give you a hand. Then we turn around—and I think it was the fault of all governments at that time, because I had the opportunity to serve as a special assistant to a cabinet minister, a very well-known one, and I know what politics are all about. I have been involved with it for 21 years.

The thing that I do not understand is that when people, say, for example, say they are going to do this and then they are going to do that, and this is the way sometimes that the government works. Here is a good example. The Winnipeg Council for Treaty and Status Indians applied for a grant through the Core Area Initiative. The Core Area Initiative granted them \$750,000, that is three-quarters of a million dollars of the taxpayers' money, to this organization. You know what is ironic about it? That after the three levels of government gave this money to our organization for us to build this beautiful structure which is still sitting at 650 Burrows—you have probably seen it—now someone else has taken it over because we had to sell it because we could not pay the bills.

* (2100)

But I am telling you, to give us three-quarters of a million dollars and then turn around and then say, listen, we are not going to give you any operational funding. Well, we thought you were going to get this through Secretary of State, and Secretary of State, well, we thought you were going to get this from the province. The province says, I thought this was going to be a bilateral thing, you know. I am saying to myself, well, where are we going to get it from?

So I remember receiving a letter from the Minister of Indian Affairs at that time, David Crombie I think it was at that time, and he had said to me that he was very encouraged on how I was trying to get the native chiefs involved with the

urban Indian people in society, because it seemed that the Indian people up North were taking advantage of the people that were in the urban centres.

You know, I said to myself, well, what do you mean by that? Well, he said, you see the federal government they base the monies that are allotted to each tribe by per capita, and all of a sudden he says, I have got this one reserve and there are supposed to be 1,500 residents and yet there are only 800 there. Where are the rest of them? There are 700 of them here in the city of Winnipeg sitting on the streets doing nothing. Now, I think it is unfair. I really, truly, do think that is unfair. I think that they should take a responsible role also in helping the urban Indian people.

To end, my closing remarks, I just want to thank you for the opportunity to speak at this important hearing and hope you have a good summer, as I know I am not. I am going through another operation. So take care, and I am open for any questions. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you very much for your presentation. Have the committee members got any questions or comments to direct to the presenter? Hearing none, again, thank you very much for your presentation this evening.

I think for the sake of the committee members I will declare a five-minute recess. We will return at five after nine.

* * *

The committee recessed at 9:03 p.m.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 9:13 p.m.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. The Standing Committee on Law Amendments, please come back to order.

I will now call the next presenter, No. 8, John Jack, private citizen. No. 9, Marty Dolin, private citizen. No. 10, Donald A. Bailey and Deon Ramgoolam, Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties.

Mr. Deon Ramgoolam (Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties): Mr. Chairperson, members of the committee, thank you for your attention this evening. I promise you that this submission will be very brief.

The submission that I am making tonight on my behalf and on behalf of Don Bailey, vice-president of MARL, is also on the behalf of MARL.

MARL is dedicated as an organization to promoting respect for and observance of fundamental human rights and civil liberties and to defending, extending and fostering recognition of these rights and liberties in the province.

The decision to cancel funding to the Manitoba Intercultural Council raises important questions about the government's commitment to ethnic issues in Manitoba and to the ending of ethnic, religious and racial discrimination. For a government that has had success in addressing issues of pressing importance to Manitoba's ethnic communities, the need to develop a forum through which this relationship might continue becomes important.

The report commissioned by the government on the future of the MIC notes that the policy of multiculturalism remains an important standard around which to organize the government's efforts to address ethnic concerns, but a government committed to laying the foundation for a level playing field, a playing field that is a prerequisite for the full and equal participation of every member of ethnocultural minorities, must look beyond multiculturalism as an organizing principle.

Culture and heritage, per se, are no longer the issues they once were. Where multiculturalism may have had some success in helping to preserve minority ethnic cultures, there exist today more pressing issues, issues that have little to do directly with culture and heritage and more to do with the existence of free and open opportunities for all Canadians to participate equally in our economic and social life.

It remains today only too true that ethnocultural minorities still face enormous discrimination and prejudice in our province. A government that believes in the ideal of equality of opportunity for all of its citizens, as I believe this government does, must move vigorously to stem the tide of hatred and lost opportunity that confronts so many of Manitoba's ethnocultural minorities.

It stands that a government that is committed to a substantial program of human rights in general will be in the best position to effect the changes and provide the leadership necessary to make Manitoba's ethnocultural minorities feel more

secure and confident as citizens of our province. Moreover, a government that actively sets out to invest formerly marginalized citizens with a renewed sense of dignity will only be the benefactor of their gratitude.

As an initial prefatory note, it is important to discuss the inappropriateness of the current understanding of multiculturalism for the ethnocultural project. The difficulty in pursuing a coherent and just rendering of multiculturalism is that, as a legal and social concept, it is often terribly misunderstood. What is most often held out as the substance of the multicultural policy is a reductionist understanding that defines the minority culture as a series of simple expressive symbols.

Equally, it lauds only the benign symbols of minority ethnic consciousness, such as food, dance, costume and religion as doctrine, and falsely holds these as standing at the apotheosis of the achievements of the culture in question. To this end, minority cultures are perceived as somewhat provincial, if not quaint, and it is too widely thought that the quicker their members embrace modern Canadian cultural norms, the sooner they will be full and equal members of Canadian society.

Such a simplistic understanding of multiculturalism makes it highly vulnerable to the sort of attack levelled by the academic Howard Brotz. Arguing that Canadians readily adhere to a single culture, he notes that Canadians of all ethnic groups stand for the same thing, which is an economically successful way of life. Cultural diversity is reduced to little more than, and he quotes, ethnic customs, outlooks and tastes, and thus multiculturalism turns out to be a choice of pizzas, wonton soup and kosher-style pastrami sandwiches to which one can add ethnic radio programs. Brotz is not alone, by any means, in voicing this understanding of multiculturalism. Given that his position is widely held among many, many Canadians, both at the popular and the elite levels, it merits serious consideration.

If this government is interested in assuring the dignity of Manitoba's ethnocultural communities, it must not embrace a program that holds out the achievements of minority cultures to be little more than their contribution to Folklorama. Such a policy denies Manitoba the richness and diversity of the experiences of the many ethnocultural groups located within our province. To force ethnocultural minorities to adopt traditions that are not their own

and to relegate their cultural contributions to benign symbols, such as food and dance, robs Manitobans and in fact all Manitobans of the immense value of the age-old cultures that lay far beyond our young borders.

The discrimination and prejudice that so plagues Manitoban society only abets this situation. When ethnocultural minorities are told essentially that that which they value and hold dear is held in disrepute and scorn by other Canadians, their sense of self-worth is severely hampered. At a more practical level, having a workforce in which a fairly significant segment is forced to feel perpetually inferior cannot possibly aid our economy's productivity. For those that have never felt the deep sting of racial hatred, it is difficult to express the sense of inferiority that accompanies these denunciations.

It follows that a government committed to assuring the dignity of all of its citizens must actively pursue those measures that will guarantee this situation. By rigorously pursuing a program of human rights, the government will move closer towards achieving this goal. The mechanism to promote human rights in Manitoba is already in place. What is now necessary is a commitment from this government.

Now, the criticism to this proposal can be easily anticipated. The most significant, of course, is the cost. In a time of deep fiscal restraint, it is difficult to direct resources to a program whose results may not be all that tangible. Indeed, it might be argued that having human rights at all is a very costly proposition, one that can be ill afforded in times like these.

* (2120)

Perhaps this line of thinking continues, resources should be directed to human rights only when the times are good, because that is when we can best afford it. Unfortunately, however, discrimination and prejudice do not wait for signs of an economic upswing to manifest themselves. Indeed, it is most usually when times are tough that those who are a little different and those whose lineage in Canada is not as long are singled out as scapegoats. It is thus precisely during these times that human rights safeguards are needed the most.

The Manitoba Association of Rights and Liberties sees a strong link between individual freedoms and intercultural tolerance. This having been said,

investment in human rights can have impressive economic as well as social returns. The ongoing government project of attracting investors to our province will only be abetted by the presence in Manitoba of a well-adjusted and diverse workforce that is less hampered by the racial intolerance and xenophobia that threatens ethnocultural minorities across Canada. Moreover, the image of a Manitoba committed to a program of social justice through human rights can only have positive ramifications in our image across the country and indeed across the world.

It is important to add that these proposals do not speak only to the relations between the dominant and minority ethnocultures, but between different minority groups as well. These groups also harbour prejudices vis-à-vis one another that need to be talked out, and they need the self-confidence that comes from being set free to negotiate their own context and framework for involvement in Canadian society. Currently, both this self-confidence and this context are lacking.

The end result of this proposal is the nurturing in Manitoba of a multicultural principle that is as close to the ideal as possible. When ethnocultural minorities achieve the respect that they are owed as members of the provincial community, when they receive the affirmation of their government's commitment to positive social measures to improve the quality of their life in Canada, we will be as close as possible to the most substantial rendering of the multicultural principle. The government's role in this task must not be underscored.

Governments are a source of legitimacy in any society. Those projects that the government chooses to undertake, those positions that it chooses to adopt, enjoy great legitimacy in terms of public perception. The legitimacy that the recognition of ethnocultural minority human rights concerns would win with government approval would go a long way in helping Manitoba's minorities to feel like a valued part of the provincial community. Stringent human rights enforcement that recognizes the legitimacy of the cultural choices made by ethnocultural minorities would help them escape the cultural ghettos in which they now subsist.

Once members of minority ethnic communities are afforded a secure context through which to enjoy their culture, it then becomes possible to examine a sophisticated conception of

multiculturalism. When a person is securely placed within her own cultural context of choice, the sort of psychological affluence that it engenders allows her to consider the worth of other cultures without the baggage of her own cultural prejudices.

In other words, if I am secure within my culture and I enjoy the self-respect that stems from that security, I will be less likely to prejudge other cultures. Rather, I will consider culture X in terms of its own system of valuation and not through my own which is, to begin with, alien to the culture in question. Where my appreciation of a culture will result in determining how resources, be they symbolic or material, will be divided among cultural groups, any ethnocentric attitude on my part will result in an unjust division of resources.

Commenting on this point the McGill philosopher, Charles Taylor, develops this idea, and he notes: For a sufficiently different culture, the very understanding of what it is to be of worth will be strange and unfamiliar to us. We must learn to move in a broad horizon, within which what we have formerly taken for granted as the background evaluation can be situated as one possibility alongside the different backgrounds of the formerly unfamiliar culture. Real judgments of worth suppose that we have been transformed by the study of the other, so that we are simply not judging by our original familiar standard.

A substantial regime of human rights will help ethnocultural minorities to develop the institutions and attitudes that will permit them to finally make substantial contributions to Manitoba's cultural mosaic. If ethnocultural minorities are to be valued as equal members of our provincial community then their contributions must not be marginalized.

There is no question that the task set before the government is great. However, it is imperative that Manitobans share a government committed to ensuring the equal dignity of all its citizens.

I thank you for your patience.

Mr. Chalrperson: Thank you very much, Mr. Ramgoolam, for your presentation.

Ms. Barrett: Thank you as well. It was an excellent presentation. I would like to ask you, on page 4 of your presentation you talk about, the third paragraph, the facts that interrelations between multicultural, various ethnocultural groups, not just between the majority and the minority groups, sometimes are not as positive as they might be,

and that the prejudice that sometimes arises needs to be worked on.

It is our contention, those of us who are supporting the retention of the Manitoba Intercultural Council, that one of the best things that council was able to do in its 10-year history was to try and work among the various ethnocultural groups in Manitoba society to try and alleviate that intercultural distinction, or to enable the various groups not to alleviate the distinction, but to enable the various groups to work better one with another.

Would that be your sense of what the MIC was able to do? Is that how you see it working in this context that you have outlined here?

Mr. Ramgoolam: Well, I think the MIC certainly contributed to that, but at the same time I think we have to go beyond the contributions of an organization like the MIC and look at what happens to immigrants when they arrive in this country. Given social norms in Canada, immigrants essentially become part of cultural ghettos, those minority cultures that are their own and the opportunity to interact with other cultures, be they the dominant culture or be they other minority ethnic cultures, is severely limited. It is these sort of attitudes that contribute to this sort of misunderstanding that I have discussed here, but in answer to your question, yes, I think the MIC does go a long way in fostering attitudes of tolerance that may have not been there previously.

Another important thing to note, I think, is that many immigrants who arrive in Canada have often faced this sort of interracial or interethnic strife in the country from which they came from. For instance, if we look at the situation in India, Sikhs and Hindus seem to take great pleasure in killing each other at any opportunity that they get. I think it is very interesting to consider, why does this not happen in Canada? Why is there not the same antipathy that colours ethnic relations in India? Why is it not here? I think the government's commitment as it exists now to multiculturalism has certainly helped this, but what I am suggesting to the government now is that now it is time for the next step.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, I am interested and followed very closely what the presenter was putting forward. This next step—maybe I will just ask you straight out. What do you believe the next step should be?

Mr. Ramgoolam: Well, as I have suggested here, I think it involves a greater commitment to the whole notion of human rights. Multiculturalism, so far, really has not done much to change the social situation of most ethnocultural minorities. What it has done, and I contend and I have mentioned here is that it provides an opportunity only to express the very benign symbols of ethnocultural minorities.

What about other things, for instance, what about lifestyle choices? What about those cultures where religion is an important and integral facet of their life? One example I might point you to is what happened in France as of late. I mean France has a multicultural problem that ours simply pales to, but, for instance, in France, Muslims are allowed to follow shari'a law, Muslim law, in certain issues of family, of marriage, of cohabitation and whatnot and this has worked out very successfully for them. It has worked out very successfully for the French. It has helped to avoid the sort of ethnic misunderstanding and ethnic intolerance that we have had in Canada.

I am not suggesting that this is a model for Manitoba. I do not know if this government could easily sanction the idea of polygamy, which is practised among Muslims, but nonetheless I think it is something to consider, allowing people to live in the cultural context in which they grew up.

Of course, the argument goes out that, well, you know, you have come to Canada, so now you have got to live as a Canadian, but I ask you, what does it mean to live as a Canadian? If it means to be true to yourself, then indeed we have to explore the legitimacy of other cultural options as being a part of what a Canadian is.

Mr. Lamoureux: If government gives strength to organizations through different ways, whether it is direct funding, whether it is through legislation, through actions that it might take addressing a particular area of policy that might have a dramatic impact on some of the things that you have referred to, keeping that in mind, the repealing of MIC, do you see that as a backward step in addressing the different issues that are in fact out there, keeping in mind again more so the government legitimacy argument that you present?

Mr. Ramgoolam: It is certainly not a backward step by any means. There is the legitimate role to be played by MIC, but what is more important, I think, is the government. What is the central

location of power in the province addressing these multicultural issues? I mean let us face it. Let us look around this committee table tonight. It is not exactly representative of Manitoba's ethnocultural diversity by any means.

It is these sort of questions that we have to begin addressing, if in fact we are honestly interested in providing a greater measure of equality for the representation of Manitoba's ethnocultural minorities. So while the MIC would not hinder this project, in fact, I think it would help it.

* (2130)

Mr. Lamoureux: Yes, just a final point. You bring up a very interesting observation when you say you look around the table and it does not necessarily reflect the demographics of the province of Manitoba. At the 1993 biennial conference, if you take a look at the individuals that were involved through the Manitoba Intercultural Council at that particular conference, you would say, yes, that more reflects the demographics and the make-up of the province of Manitoba, and that would be a very positive thing and something that could be and should be emulated, whether it is economic, social, political activities in society. This is more of a statement. I do not know if you want to comment on it at this time, otherwise, good presentation.

Mr. Ramgoolam: No, I agree with you.

Mr. Jack Reimer (Niakwa): Indeed it is a pleasure to address you, Deon. I will call you Deon because I have known you too long to call you Mr. Ramgoolam. You make a very interesting presentation, and I am certainly not disappointed in your presentation. It is well thought out and very, very precise and very accurate in the lines of thought that you have developed in here.

You make an interesting comment on page 2 here, that I just wanted to get a little further response from you, and I will just quote it, "if not quaint and it is too widely thought that the quicker their members embrace 'modern' Canadian cultural norms, the sooner they will be full and 'equal' members of Canadian society."

When we compare various nations and cultures, we look naturally a lot of times to our neighbours to the south where they have the so-called "melting-pot" theory of the various ethnic groups that come into their country.

Here in Canada we are unique in a sense. Here in Canada we have more of a, for lack of a better

word which I feel sort of characterizes it, salad bar approach in our culture. We have various entities that are unique and contribute by themselves, but at the same time they form a total entity in Canada because of its diversity, because of its strong ethnocultural diversity, and particularly here in Manitoba where we have such a very strong, in fact, it is the strongest proportion of non-English, non-French ethnic minorities of anywhere in Canada.

We have this uniqueness here in Canada and that makes our strength of Canada, and it makes us stand out, not only in North America but within the world.

I am interested in your comment here where you said that you feel that maybe there should be more of this blending together for this Canadian society. Canadian society, I do not know what the definition is of a Canadian society.

Mr. Ramgoolam: That is exactly it, and I think that is why it is very difficult to make the comparison with the Americans. While there is a fairly well-thought-out and well-defined American national character, I think we are lacking this in Canada.

Mr. Reimer: Well, is that bad?

Mr. Ramgoolam: No, I am not suggesting that is bad at all, because the less of that character there is, the more we have an opportunity to develop it at this stage of our social and cultural development, and part of that development, I think, is the diversity that you speak of. Ensuring that diversity and ensuring a diversity that is true to the people that are part of that diversity, I think, is helping these people avoid being untrue to themselves by adopting what I call these modern Canadian cultural norms, which we really do not know what they are, but eventually what they end up being is the initial native culture is no longer considered to be of any legitimate worth, and I think that is what I define as that cultural norm.

Immigrants arrive here and the first thing that they want to do, because, I think, of the social reception they receive in Canada, is to lose all aspects of the culture that they brought with them. I think ultimately that is not only unfortunate for themselves but unfortunate for the province as a whole because we have people whose self-identities are so confused that it cannot possibly be beneficial.

Mr. Reimer: Just one short further comment on that, very short. I agree with you in a sense, because I think this sort of levelling off to get to a definition point may in a sense stifle the initiative and the growth of the individuals and the culture that they are, because the more that they strive to compete, if you want to use that word as a comparison, I think the stronger it is for the individuals and the stronger it is for Canada and the stronger it is for Manitoba as a province.

Mr. Ramgoolam: I agree with you. There is no question of that.

Mr. Chairperson: If there are no further questions for the presenter, I thank you very much, Mr. Ramgoolam, for your presentation.

Mr. Ramgoolam: Thank you for your patience.

Mr. Donald A. Bailey (Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties): Would you mind if I augmented the answer to Mr. Lamoureux's second question, very briefly? I was not sure whether I misunderstood Mr. Lamoureux's question or whether my colleague misunderstood, but I think the question was, would this repeal of the Manitoba Intercultural Council be a backward step? I think the answer to that is yes, it is a backward step and there are two reasons for that.

One is that it removes the imprimatur of government legitimacy, that it stands behind the concept of intercultural relations and intercultural discussions, and to have a government-sponsored umbrella council is very important for the legitimacy of standing behind this proposition.

But the second reason follows up on a line of questioning that the government side pursued earlier about what you should be doing with your time. The council might survive financially without government support but then it would be spending 50 to 80 percent of its time raising money. Since what it has to do is so important, it is extremely important that it not waste its time raising money but that it spend its time pursuing the goals of getting the cultural communities to interact, and I think, as Dr. Lim said in response to that question, it is critical that this kind of organization be allowed to spend its time doing its job rather than wasting its time trying to raise funds in the general community.

Thank you for allowing me to augment that answer.

Mr. Chairperson: I will call No. 11, Terry Prychitko, Manitoba Intercultural Council.

Mr. Terry Prychitko (Manitoba Intercultural Council): Mr. Chairperson, members of the committee, my name is Terry Prychitko. I am the elected chairperson of the Manitoba Intercultural Council. I am here on behalf of the Manitoba Intercultural Council to make our presentation on Bill 28, The Manitoba Intercultural Council Repeal Act.

The Manitoba Intercultural Council, the advisory body to the government of Manitoba on multicultural affairs strongly opposes the government of Manitoba's decision to repeal the MIC act by its Bill 28, The Manitoba Intercultural Council Repeal Act. We are very disappointed at the lack of commitment to multiculturalism by the government, the lack of recognition of the importance of an independent and representative umbrella organization of all the ethnocultural communities and the lack of acknowledgment of the valuable work done by the MIC since its inception.

At the outset the council wishes to state that our position has always been clear and firm that the MIC act must be maintained, although some amendments to the act are needed to strengthen the organization and its role.

* (2140)

(Mr. Ben Sveinson, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

Since the government announced its intention to repeal the MIC act, the council has been working very hard to build understanding with the government. However, now that Bill 28 is at the committee hearing stage, it gives us a last opportunity to present our views regarding the repeal act. We hope that the Legislative committee considers the views of the Manitoba Intercultural Council.

In order to provide a background to the issue, the first part of our presentation gives an historical review of the MIC. The second part provides some possible implications and impact of the repeal of the MIC act. The final part presents some arguments as to why the MIC act should be retained and strengthened.

A Review of the Manitoba Intercultural Council: The Manitoba Intercultural Council was established by the government of Manitoba in 1983. Before the legislation was introduced, an Interim Liaison Committee on Multiculturalism was set up to

consult with all communities throughout the province to elicit their participation. The communities responded enthusiastically to the proposal to create a multicultural council to advise the government.

The first ethnocultural assembly was held in April of 1983 to launch a new organization and to elect representatives from 42 ethnocultural communities. Based on recommendations gathered through the process, The Manitoba Intercultural Council Act was introduced and passed by the Legislature. It was proclaimed into law on August 31, 1983. It was clear from the start that the MIC was the product of the efforts of the government and communities working in partnership.

The first council, 1983 to 1985, which I had the pleasure of chairing, was busy putting in place the mechanisms for the functioning of the new organization. The council recommended to the government on many issues, such as the extension of French Language Services, the Linguistic Support Program, teacher training at post-secondary institutions, and the restructuring of teaching of English as a Second Language in Manitoba. The standing committees reviewed the policies regarding daycare, The Manitoba Human Rights Act and Affirmative Action programs. The representative of the council also appeared before the Task Force on Canadian Broadcasting to voice the council's concern about multiculturalism in broadcasting.

At the end of the first term, the MIC had very firmly established itself as an advisory body to the government on issues of concern to the ethnocultural communities. It had also become, after intense study and debate, a funding body to the communities, a funding body as a multicultural umbrella for the dispersion of lottery funds through a subcommittee called the Community Resources Allocation Committee.

The establishment of the Community Resources Allocation Committee included a broad review and workshops, consultation with all of the communities throughout Manitoba. Public hearings were held in Brandon, Thompson, Dauphin, Gimli and Winnipeg in order to get the input of all of our communities as to the role that MIC would play as a funder.

The second council, 1985 to '87, elected at the 1985 assembly, continued the work of the first council. It developed a position paper serving as

the basis for the council's approach to funding and to community development.

Standing committees prepared submissions to the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission regarding the CRTC's review of Educational and Institutional Radio, to the Minister of Education on the provincial guidance system, to the government of Manitoba on the Human Rights Code in Manitoba and human rights education, to the federal government on immigrant settlement and to the House of Commons standing committee on culture and communications on Canadian broadcasting policies.

The third council, 1987 to 1989, took office in November of '87. It reviewed the green paper of the provincial task force on multiculturalism and prepared a brief to the federal government's Bill C-93, the Canadian Multiculturalism Act.

The standing committees made submissions to the Folk Arts Council of Winnipeg's task force on Folk Arts, Folklorama, Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties, MARL's task force on affirmative action, Where is the Action?, and to school divisions on race relations. The committees also addressed issues like police-minority relations, access to health and social services by seniors in ethnocultural communities, and obstacles to equality of access to employment.

The fourth council, 1989 to '91, was elected to office on June 10, 1989. The concern about the need of better communication by the council's membership was addressed by publishing its bilingual newsletter, In Contact, En Contact. The executive committee was very active, attending many functions in the communities, making presentations and participating in seminars and conferences.

Upon the request of the Minister responsible for the Manitoba Intercultural Council, a comprehensive report on combatting racism in Manitoba containing short- and long-term strategies was prepared for the government's consideration. The council also submitted its concerns and recommendations to the University of Manitoba's task force on Initial Teacher Education Preparation and the City of Winnipeg's ad hoc committee on the review of police department policy.

The council continued to provide consultations to agencies and departments such as the Winnipeg

Police Department, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Red River Community College, the Province of Manitoba's working group on accreditation, the Province of Manitoba's art policy review committee, the Department of Education's agency dealing with English as a Second Language, the Winnipeg Boys and Girls Clubs, the University of Manitoba faculty of social work, the immigration and refugee board, the Canada Council and other nonprofit ethnocultural and service providing agencies in Manitoba.

The fifth council, 1991 to '93, took office in June of '91. The council took part in the planning and organizing of several well-attended and well-received conferences on aboriginal issues, Multiculturalism and Canadian Identity, Facts and Myths, and multicultural antiracist and aboriginal education.

The council did a research project entitled Perceptions of Multiculturalism and developed a report entitled Issues, Trends and Options: Mechanisms for the Accreditation of Foreign Credentials in Manitoba. The MIC presented a paper to the university education commission recommending that the government take certain steps to ensure equal opportunity for all to attend and to succeed in publicly funded universities.

The MIC actively participated in both the constitutional debate and the development of The Manitoba Multiculturalism Act by initiating discussions among umbrella organizations and making a presentation during the hearings.

The sixth council, 1993 to '95, was elected to office in April of '93. In many ways the new council was a response of the communities to the government's decision to dissolve the MIC. When the assembly was held, it was well known among communities that the government was ready to repeal the MIC act. With the mandate given by its member organizations at the assembly, the council has tried its best to work with the government and preserve the MIC.

Implications of the government's decision to repeal the MIC act: Although the government insists that the decision to repeal the act will empower the MIC, ethnocultural communities see the move as the last step in the process to dissolve the council. The first step started in 1988 when the predecessor government ordered a special audit of the MIC. Although the Provincial Auditor found

nothing particularly wrong with the council's books and actions, the government went ahead with its decision to take away the funding role of the MIC, in effect, from the ethnocultural communities and transferred it over to a government-appointed body, the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council.

In 1992, the government introduced The Manitoba Multiculturalism Act which did not even mention the MIC, the only representative umbrella organization in Manitoba. Meanwhile, the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship announced an independent review of the council, the Don Blair report. By excluding the MIC and The Multiculturalism Act, the government did nothing to clear the perception that it intended to dissolve the council. In other words, ethnocultural communities felt that the government had a hidden agenda and was using the review to rationalize it.

More seriously, the independent review and the exclusion of the council in The Multiculturalism Act could polarize the ethnocultural communities. A split between the established and the newcomer communities could occur regarding the need for an advisory body to the government of Manitoba.

In the past the council has tried to avoid such a split in the already politically charged debates in and among the ethnocultural communities in Manitoba. These considerations were presented to the legislative committee on The Multiculturalism Act, but the government refused to take them into consideration.

The review of MIC's role and mandate done by Mr. Don Blair came out in February of '93. Without examining its findings thoroughly, the minister declared in a news release that the government accepted the report and would introduce legislation to repeal the act. The readiness of the minister to accept the report raised the question of the government's prior intent to dismantle MIC and to abandon its responsibility to the ethnocultural communities.

Although Mr. Blair did recommend the repeal of the MIC act, he also recommended as option two, the amendment of the act. Indeed, the general consensus of those he interviewed was that the governmental manipulation and control of the MIC must end. Surprisingly, the government ignored all his other recommendations and only adopted his recommendation to repeal the MIC act.

The announcement was followed by a 100 percent cut of funding to the MIC as stated by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) in his 1993 budget. Having had to operate under severe financial constraints for the past few years the MIC was dealt a severe blow by that decision.

* (2150)

After the government made clear its intention to repeal the act, the MIC executive committee held several discussions with the minister and the Multiculturalism Secretariat, seeking ways to save the council. Many suggestions have been made to build a new co-operative relationship between the government and the council, but the government has made up its mind and appears unwilling to listen.

The objections to the repeal of the MIC act from the communities is also strong and clear. At the assembly held in April of 1993, the delegates from MIC member organizations overwhelmingly adopted a resolution for the retention of the MIC act. They even proposed ways to find monies for the MIC if the government, as it said, cannot financially support the council. They called on the government to dissolve the Multiculturalism Secretariat, the community access office and the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council, a proposal that would save the taxpayers of Manitoba some \$370,000 annually. The resolution was sent to the minister but was not taken into consideration.

The government of Manitoba has The Multiculturalism Act, but a true commitment to multiculturalism needs more than a piece of legislation. The decision to repeal the MIC act would be viewed as further proof that the multiculturalism policy of the government is only culture oriented and built on song and dance.

The MIC has in the past primarily worked to improve the political and economic status of minority ethnic groups. The repeal of the MIC act would deprive the ethnocultural communities of an organization which is not predominantly concerned with song and dance.

Why a legislated MIC? At a time when multiculturalism is attacked on every front, it is the government's responsibility to nurture and protect the framework of a Canadian identity, not to weaken it by killing the legislated mandate. This is, of course, if the government truly believes that multiculturalism is for all people. The minister and

the government seem not to understand the importance and necessity of a legislated MIC. The minister indicated that the repeal of the MIC would stop any governmental interference and control over the council and that the MIC can rely upon its communities for support both morally and financially. The minister states that the future of the MIC will be better without the legislation.

It is true that ethnocultural communities in Manitoba had started to call for an end to governmental control of the MIC when the NDP government was still in power. Ending governmental control of the MIC requires amendments to the MIC act. Examples such as repealing provisions empowering the government to hire its executive secretary and appoint its chairperson and one-third of its members, but not the repeal of the act.

There should be statutory funding of the organization which will operate more or less like a Crown corporation answerable to its constituent ethnocultural organizations and the provincial Legislature.

A completely community-based organization is ideal and many of the ethnocultural communities in Canada are still young in terms of their political maturity, and they need a collective voice to speak on their behalf. A legislated MIC gives the communities such a voice.

Moreover, there are already numerous divisions within individual ethnic communities. Any government, if it is committed to empower the communities, must and can help by not causing further division within and among the ethnocultural communities.

A legislated MIC will demonstrate the government's will to create conditions and provide incentives encouraging co-operation and unity within and among all ethnocultural communities.

Manitoba has proclaimed the first formal provincial multicultural policy and introduced The Manitoba Multiculturalism Act reflecting its commitment to developing and promoting multiculturalism in Manitoba. From this perspective, the ethnocultural communities should be able to count on the government to help protect and strengthen its representative organization, the MIC, and to work with it in partnership for the common good of a multicultural Manitoba.

The ethnocultural communities still believe in the principle of partnership. The government may seek advice from individual community organizations and individuals if it so desires, but it must not try to divide the communities. Instead, it must try to encourage co-operation and unity among all ethnocultural communities by recognizing the MIC as their representative body and maintaining its legislated mandate.

A more thorough argument was given in the editorial which appeared in the June 1, '93, issue of the Manitoba Chinese Post, and I have attached that copy for your information.

In conclusion, if the government of Manitoba is fully committed to multiculturalism beyond song and dance, the government of Manitoba must recognize the importance of the Manitoba Intercultural Council in fostering harmony and combatting racism on behalf of Manitobans. It must not repeal The Manitoba Intercultural Council Act.

We strongly urge that the government of Manitoba consider the following recommendations:

First, withdraw Bill 28, The Manitoba Intercultural Council Repeal Act.

Secondly, amend the MIC act to make the council more representative and give it more clout with the government and its agencies.

Thirdly, fund the MIC from savings effected by efficiencies and cancellation of the Multiculturalism Secretariat, the community access office and the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council.

As the minister has indicated on many occasions, it is only in partnership and co-operation with the public that governments will be able to develop meaningful public policies.

The government of Manitoba still has this opportunity, if it does not make an important decision based on a one-person report, which has no scientific or factual basis, the Blair Report.

With that in mind, Bill 28 should be withdrawn and the MIC act retained and amended after consultations with the communities. The Manitoba Intercultural Council would be happy to be an active partner in the process.

I would also like to put on the record that there have been presentations made directly to the minister by the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg which I am sure that the minister could

provide members of the committee and from the Winnipeg Jewish Community Council as well.

To add an additional point not made in the presentation that maybe not all members of the committee are aware, but the full council and executive have given up all remuneration for services that have been provided in the act, and that has been ongoing for a number of years now for most of the council and executive, but this year it is 100 percent for the present body.

I thank you for the opportunity, and I would be glad to answer any questions, Mr. Acting Chair.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Sveinsson): Thank you.

Ms. Barrett: Thank you, Mr. Prychitko, for a very interesting and informative presentation. I think all of the presentations tonight have talked about and have outlined very clearly the positive things that the Manitoba Intercultural Council has provided not only to the government, but also to its member organizations and the entire multicultural community over its 10-year history.

I would like to ask you specifically, and your whole presentation actually answers this question, but what do you think will be lost if Bill 28 goes forward? I guess a second question is, whom do you see advising the minister? Whom do you see providing the kind of advice that MIC has been able to give the government if Bill 28 goes ahead?

* (2200)

Mr. Prychitko: Certainly the loss, if Bill 28 is passed, would be in sending a message especially to the newcomer communities that perhaps the MIC is not the representative body. We certainly hope that, however, based upon the assembly that was held in April—to follow up on the second part of the question—and the overwhelming support of the communities, that should Bill 28 pass—and, of course, the government has the majority and has the ability to pass Bill 28—that the new Manitoba Intercultural Council Incorporated, which the minister has given the council permission to incorporate, will be the body that will replace MIC.

However, that body is without funding, and as we have heard from the very able presentations made earlier, it is very difficult for an organization to provide the services of an advisory body to government and to have to spend a great, significant amount of its time following up on project grants and, in fact, doing projects which may not

necessarily be part of the long-term strategy and raison d'être of the organization, but in order just to obtain funding from whatever sources are available.

Ms. Barrett: Thank you.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Acting Chairperson, another very good presentation brought forward to the committee. I want to ask the current chair of the Manitoba Intercultural Council what he believes is going to happen to MIC in the future given what has happened over the last couple of years at the Manitoba Intercultural Council. What type of future does he see for MIC?

Mr. Prychitko: It is a very difficult question. I would suspect that if this act is not brought forward and the MIC retains its legislative authority or, as in Mr. Williams' presentation, there was a suggestion that perhaps the Manitoba Multiculturalism Act could be amended to provide for the MIC Incorporated to be an advisory body to government in the same way that Status of Women is an advisory body to government and is funded by government.

The role of women in society is a very important role but no different from and very much a part of multiculturalism. Women, of course, play a significant role in multiculturalism, and those who are attending the assembly would have seen a very representative group of the Manitoba population. I think that a very high percentage of the delegates represented the female side.

So what do I see as the long-term role if MIC does not have legislative authority and does not have funding? I do not see a very bright prospect, to be frank with you.

Mr. Lamoureux: You know, Mr. Prychitko, when MIC was first created back in '83, came into being, there was a lot of criticism that it received from the present government when it was in opposition, saying that really what this organization is is political appointments, individuals who are going to be working for that particular government. I was not around at that time to be able to make a value opinion or a knowledgeable opinion in terms of how legitimate the arguments were being made, but today or over the last couple of years do you believe that the Manitoba Intercultural Council is affiliated or assists any political parties?

I know earlier today, for example, I made reference to the fact that I am not aware of anyone on the Manitoba Intercultural Council who has

helped me personally in one of my campaigns. It would be nice, but I am not aware of it, yet I am likely one of the biggest fans that MIC has inside the Legislature.

I am wondering if you could give us some sort of an opinion about MIC and its apolitical status that is there. I believe, at least in part, the reason why we have this bill before us right now is more so because of what has happened in the past. Can you give committee members a sense of an assuredness that in fact that is not the case, or what is going on with the committee, even if you want to comment about that 1983?

Mr. Prychitko: I can only say that in 1983 I was a political appointee, though not a member of any political party at the time. The government in power appointed me as chair upon the recommendation of the elected executive of MIC. I did not at that time belong to the party, and I have not since belonged to the party. I have not since belonged to any political party.

The situation insofar as political appointments, I think, is one of the issues we address; that could be an amendment and should be an amendment that allows to take away the one-third ratio of appointments. There needs to be a mechanism, though, that provides for appointments upon recommendation because oftentimes the ethnocultural communities are divided and one faction may be the dominant group at the assembly, but it leaves out a very significant portion of the community. I think there may be some value to appointments.

To suggest whether this action is motivated by that, I really could not say. I do know that there have been no appointments to this body, and, as a matter of fact, it was so stringent that I have not been confirmed as chair. So I have no legal standing as chair of the council at this stage of the game.

Mr. Lamoureux: A very quick question, is the council making any presentation or getting prepared to make presentation to the minister with respect to the multicultural act? Even though we might have lost this particular round, making presentation to try to get it incorporated into the multicultural act—are they pursuing that?

Mr. Prychitko: Yes, we are. We are working with the minister. We are working with the secretariat. We believe that if the legislation passes—we are

still committed to be against this legislation—but if the legislation passes because the government has a majority and does not see the basis of our arguments, then we have to be prepared.

We are in discussions with the secretariat and with the minister to see ways in which we can work together, redefine the roles of the secretariat, the Community Access Office. We have suggested that perhaps one of the things that could happen is that the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council could be restructured whereby, perhaps if control is not given to the MIC, at least half of the appointments can be made by MIC and the two groups then elect a chair so that there is community input into the grants allocation process.

We are working into those areas, Mr. Lamoureux, and we certainly feel it is our role to work with the government. That is why we were elected as an executive and as a council, to be an advisory body to the government and to the Legislature. If they do not see the merits of our argument, then we certainly have to try and find common ground, and we are working towards that.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Sveinson): Thank you for your presentation, Mr. Prychitko.

Second calls: Dr. Yantay Tsai, Professor C.M. Wong, Mr. John Jack, and Mr. Marty Dolin.

Mr. Marty Dolin (Private Citizen): I am Marty Dolin.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Sveinson): Mr. Dolin, do you have a written presentation?

Mr. Dolin: No, I do not have a written presentation.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Sveinson): Then go ahead, Mr. Dolin.

* (2210)

Mr. Dolin: It is a pleasure to be here this evening. I realize that this is a much tougher Chair than I used to be. When he says five minutes, he really means it. You cannot even go for a smoke.

I am here mandated by both the Social Planning Council, which was mentioned by Mr. Prychitko, and the Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council, which is a body that represents most of the faith groups in Manitoba, neither of which is directly involved in MIC, although they are somewhat sympathetic.

The Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council is an organization representing, if I can remember them all, the Presbyterians, the Anglicans, the Catholics,

the United Church, the Muslims, the Jews, the Bahai. I am probably leaving a few out. My board directed me to come here, and I am not going to repeat the very articulate discussion and the definitions made of what multiculturalism is all about or what the value of MIC has been over the years. I think Mr. Prychitko and others have been very clear. I know the minister and the Attorney General, the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), are both very aware of the contributions made by MIC.

The concern both of the Social Planning Council and of the Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council is the perception of what is being done by repealing the act. There is a saying that justice should not only be done but should be seen to be done. The problem is that the reverse of that is also true. Injustice should not only not be done, but injustice should be seen not to be done.

The perception here, and what you have heard from each of the speakers before me, is a perception that somehow the government—and this is not the Conservative government we are talking about; this is the government of the people of Manitoba—has decided to cut MIC loose because they do not give it the proper significance that it deserves.

The concern of the church groups I represent and the Winnipeg Social Planning Council is this is a perception that we do not think the government wants. A significant question was asked by Mr. Penner earlier. Mr. Penner asked: If the bill were not repealed, could the Manitoba Intercultural Council survive by raising its own funds? The answer to that is, as one would expect from the council, is that we do not know until we have tried it and that we know it would be difficult.

The reality of all the negotiations and the concern of both the Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council and the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, the perception is, there are many, many legislated government advisory bodies: in Agriculture, in Housing, the Manitoba Advisory Committee on the Status of Women, et cetera, and why was this particular group that represents the multicultural community of Manitoba singled out? The answer to the question is not easy, and it is not clear.

Repealing the bill, if the accomplished task was to save money, it has been made very clear and it has been agreed to, that it could have been done, as Mr. Penner suggested, by not repealing the bill,

just cutting the funds. There are other alternatives. If there were other reasons, aside from what has been perceived by all the speakers who went before me and by my board at the Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council and the Social Planning Council, if the perception is one that our government, the government of Manitoba, does not consider this a significant issue—and I know in my meetings with the minister on many other issues that is not true, that is not the case.

(Mr. Chairperson in the Chair)

The case is that multiculturalism is significant. Multiculturalism is all of us. We are all the products of our ethnicity, of our genetics, of our heritage. That is the reality of Canada. That is the truth. There is no ethnic group. There is no ethnic—in the States, you have a problem. We do not have the same problem here. Multiculturalism tries to avoid that kind of problem where you refer to certain groups of people as ethnics. In this country we are all ethnics, and we all recognize that. Multiculturalism recognizes that. This government has recognized it.

There have been operations set up by this minister. There have been things done by the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) to show this.

The reality is, by passing this bill, which repeals The Manitoba Intercultural Act, it sends a very loud and clear message that all the other things we have done really do not count. They do not mean anything. The reality is—when you were a child and mama spanked you, and said this hurts me more than it hurts you, you knew damn well it hurt you more than it hurt her.

The fact is, when you are saying, we are cutting you loose for your own good, everybody out there is perceiving that it is not for your own good, that it is something on our part. I do not think that is a correct message. I do not think that is the message the minister wants to give; I do not think that is the message the government wants to give; and I do not think that is the message that people should be receiving.

On behalf of the churches and the Winnipeg Social Planning Council that I represent, we would urge the reconsideration of this fact. Do not let an injustice seen to be done. Do not let this particular group, which represents all of us, the multicultural society in which we live, be the ones cut loose and

singled out and be perceived as the ones cut loose and singled out.

I think that you have gotten some good recommendations from Mr. Prychitko, you have had good recommendations from other people. I am glad to hear the minister is negotiating for the continuance of the organization, but the reality is this organization is significant, is important, and the members of this organization will keep it going, one way or another, with or without government help. I believe that is the case, and I think they will continue to do that.

The reality is, it has been a partnership, and one of the partners is asking for a divorce. This is a unilateral divorce, and it should not be. The bill should not be passed. If this committee in any way can just not report it in or if the government could consider withdrawing the bill and sitting down and negotiating a better relationship—what I am urging the committee to do, on behalf of the organizations I am here representing, is: Do not give the public the perception that this particular group, the ethnocultural organizations and the people they represent in Manitoba—considering recent census data, we have the most significant population of people not born in Canada living in this province and particularly in this city. The reality is we do not want to send a message to those people. I say “we” because as an ex-politician I am probably giving you the most nonpartisan brief here.

The reality is we, the government, you represent me. You are my government. It happens to be a Conservative government now. If it were an NDP government or a Liberal government, it would still be my government. The reality is we, the government, and the people of Manitoba are sending a message to the people in these organizations that is not a message that they should be receiving and that is we really do not consider you that important. All our statements about multiculturalism and The Multiculturalism Act are not really significant. They are window dressing.

I do not think it is necessary. I do not think that was the intent of doing this. It may have been to save a few bucks. If that is the case, then sit down and negotiate that, but the reality is this bill is sending a message that should not be sent. That is the message I have been asked by the people who have mandated me to come here to tell you is please do not do this. Do not send the message to

the people of Manitoba that the multiculturalism is not a significant factor for this government, because I know that is not true.

I think somehow this government should make it clear that they are not schizophrenic on one hand opening store fronts where multicultural people have access and having bridging programs, and on the other hand getting rid of this particular government-mandated organization while leaving all the other myriad surfeit of other government organizations that are mandated by legislation leaving them all intact.

Thank you very much. That is all I have to say. If there are any questions.

Mr. Chalrperson: Thank you very much, Mr. Dolin.

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Chair, I appreciated your comments and I think you brought a different perspective to the deliberations, one that I have not heard before. I have been assuming that the government knew exactly what it was doing and had not been making a mistake. You are suggesting that some of the government's other actions would suggest that this was an error and they have ways to legislatively see the error of their ways.

What if—and I could not get away with a question like this in the House, but I can in committee—the government does not take your advice and the advice of the Social Planning Council, the Interfaith Immigration Council, and all of the presenters here tonight as well as others? What if they do not take that advice and they do go ahead with the repeal of MIC? What then does that say to you and what kind of message will that give to the Manitoba community?

* (2220)

Mr. Dolin: I thought I had been reasonably clear. The fact of putting in a bill to repeal has given a message already. If that message was an error or if that message was maybe ill-considered, it could be reconsidered. I would like to give the government the benefit of the doubt. I do not believe the intent of the government was to give that message. I believe they had reasons for doing it. Maybe they were financial. Maybe there were disputes internally between the two partners; I mean, husbands and some wives fight, too. Maybe the government and the MIC had some disputes over various issues.

Whatever the reasons were, the message is getting across the way it is and the public will receive it the way the bill is. If the bill is withdrawn, I think—some damage has already been done unfortunately by the mere putting in of the bill and the attempt to repeal. I think that damage will be compounded considerably if the bill were actually to go through. I also think that the government sitting down and discussing with MIC its continuance in another manner, shape or form outside legislated mandate and taking away mandate denigrates and demeans the position which MIC is in now and would be recognized as such. I think that would be very unfortunate and I think the government, also, if they considered carefully would also realize that was very unfortunate. I do not think the government wants to give that message. I do not think my government represented here by the ministers wants to give that message. I do not think the people of Manitoba want to give that message to each other.

Mr. Penner: Mr. Dolin, first of all, I think you do not give yourself enough credit for making a nonpartisan presentation. I certainly did not think that the presentation that you made here today—

Mr. Dolin: Well, some of my former colleagues here may assume I still had some partisan genes.

Mr. Penner: I, quite frankly, am a bit surprised that you did not become more partisan because it is very difficult—

Mr. Dolin: It is not a partisan issue, unfortunately.

Mr. Penner: —for past politicians, especially, to make presentations like you did on behalf of your organization and refrain from the political side. I congratulate you for that.

Second thing is there are, Mr. Dolin, as I think you know, very few groups, especially in agriculture, around that are government funded, that lobby on behalf of their respective groups and/or advise government. I think there are a number of groups that periodically on their own behalf advise governments of their issues—

Mr. Dolin: I remember your visiting our caucus previously, yes.

Mr. Penner: As you well know, and you sat across the table from me many times when I was on the other side of the podium that you now occupy, and I believe that many of those organizations do a good job respecting however that this organization that you now speak for is probably somewhat

different in respect to many other organizations because it is a union of many organizations, if I might put it that way, and therefore is substantially different than many other organizations because it becomes an umbrella organization, speaking for a wide variety. I think we all in government respect that and appreciate that.

I really do not have a question for you. I just want you to know that we understand the role that MIC plays, respect that role and would encourage the continuation of the organization because I think you do serve a very valuable function especially for those smaller minority groups in our society that are sometimes relatively new and need some guiding and assistance in—

Mr. Dollin: Just for clarification, I do not represent MIC. I represent the Interfaith Immigration Council and Winnipeg Social Planning Council.

I would just like to say, the point I am trying to make clear, and a letter has already been sent to the minister who is aware of the position of the Social Planning Council, I am just here to make the fact that the Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council also has the similar point of view.

If funding is an issue negotiated, it is the repealing and divorcing, breaking up of the partnership by the partner with the power to do so, that is giving a very negative message to people like the church groups who are not directly involved with this to Winnipeg Social Planning Council and our concern is to the public at large. We do not think it is a message the government wants to deliver—we hope not—and certainly we do not think it is a message that should be delivered. So if it is a matter of funding then that is another issue. You do not have to repeal the act to do that and we are hoping you would not if it was just funding.

Ms. Barrett: Just one brief question for Mr. Dolin, it is a two-parter. Have you read the Don Blair report, and if you have not, are you aware that there were two major sets of recommendations, one to repeal and the second set that had four or five subcomponents to it was to amend the MIC act to address some of the issues? Are you aware that the minister, without giving much of a statement about why, decided to go with the first when the opportunity was there for amendments?

Mr. Dollin: There are a number of questions there. The first question, did I read the report? Second, am I aware of the two recommendations? Third, is

a little leading and tricky, am I aware that the minister chose to do this or that? To continue with my nonpartisan role, I am not aware the minister did anything particularly.

I am also aware that bills come out of caucus, so the fact is a bill would have had to go through the Conservative caucus and this is a government bill. The fact is the bill is here. I do not want to attribute motives. I think the message being given is an erroneous message being given to the members of MIC, to the ethnocultural community, to the community at large, to the churches, to the people of this province. I do not think it is a message that was really intended and I think it is worthy of reconsideration by the caucus, by the minister and by the government.

Mr. Lamoureux: Certainly an interesting perspective no doubt. Given your background, being a former MLA, and knowing that the government—somewhat feel sorry for the minister in one sense that she is backed into a corner. I do not believe that she is going to repeal or let this particular bill die on the Order Paper or anything of this nature.

I think that you bring up a lot of valid points, but how in your opinion does the Manitoba Intercultural Council organize to try to get something from the government in terms of a Legislative mandate, because I am sure that you realize, like I do, that in fact this bill will pass?

Mr. Dollin: I have given up making political predictions. I am usually wrong. I do not know whether the bill will pass. I think that is up to you. I think that is up to all the members around this table. Number one, the bill does not even have to come out of this committee. There is an option of not reporting it out of committee so it does not even come back to the House. That is up to just the members here, not even the entire House, that you not report the bill.

There are a number of options. I am not going to make predictions. What I am saying is all of you, of all political stripes, consider what message you are sending and is this what is intended.

The government of Manitoba is sending a message saying we do not consider this organization and who it represents significant enough to be worthy of continuing the partnership. That is the message being received, and that is the message that we are concerned about. If somehow

that can be altered to say yes we do recognize the worthiness, the value of these people and the organization and the collectivity that represents them in this society, if somehow that can be done some other way, fine.

The fact is the message being received now is maybe not the one being sent, but the one being received is that the partnership is to be broken because one of the partners deems the other partner inferior.

Mr. McCrae: Thank you to Marty for coming. I do not want to overdo this, but I sat across the aisle from you for a couple of years in the Legislature, and I know your other side.

Mr. Dolin: You mean my nice side.

Mr. McCrae: I just want to say I very much appreciate your approach and the care with which you are bringing your ideas forward this evening.

We talked about this severed partnership, and I guess really only time is going to tell. I am like you, I believe that multiculturalism is what we are, and the whole idea is to make that spirit of multiculturalism as strong as we can because it is a very positive thing. Whatever happens with this bill, I am going to be optimistic about the future of multiculturalism no matter what. I just wanted to thank you for the caring way that you brought your ideas forward tonight.

Mr. Dolin: You are welcome, and I am just saying do not make your job more difficult. I mean if you care about multiculturalism, you know, words do not overcome, usually, actions. This is an action and will be seen as that. Unfortunately it is not seen as a positive action by the people I represent. That can be changed.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I would like to make a few comments and a bit of a statement, but I was wondering if we could take just a five minute recess before and as we go into clause by clause.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you very much, Mr. Dolin, for your presentation this evening.

That completes the public presentations on Bill 28. I will now declare a five-minute recess.

The committee recessed at 10:30 p.m.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 10:39 p.m.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. We will come back to order. We will now move into clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 28. Does the minister have an opening statement?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes, Mr. Chairperson. I listened very intently to the presentations that were made this evening. I want to thank all of those who did make presentations for the work and the time and the effort that they put into putting their comments forward. I do want to thank Mr. LaFreniere especially on the record for reading into the record the remarks that I did make at the last biennial assembly.

I had indicated to him just after his presentation when I had a moment to chat that I have tried to find a way for a long time to put on the record all of the comments that I did make, comments that were made from the heart, I must say, as I addressed the general assembly at the Manitoba Intercultural Council. So I thank him for providing the opportunity to ensure that the comments that I did make and the feelings that I did have about the Manitoba Intercultural Council and indeed about the new partnership that will be developed as a result of the repeal of this legislation and the new start are there for all to read.

* (2240)

I thank Mr. Dolin also for his comments. I think he took a very balanced approach to making a presentation. The only argument I might have is when he talked about divorce and sort of abolishing a partnership. I tend to disagree immensely because there I believe is the ability for a new beginning and a new partnership, a partnership with the Manitoba Intercultural Council Inc. and the government of Manitoba. I think that we can and will continue to achieve and to accomplish much.

I have indicated over the five years that I have been the Minister responsible for Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, and Multiculturalism that I have tried my very best to make some very positive changes in the programming in some of the grants that are available, all of them looking towards intercultural co-operation, co-operation between communities. I think that some of the new programs like the Bridging Cultures Program have attempted to do that.

We all know that governments cannot do everything alone, and when there are partnerships and when there is community support and

especially when there is community support for more than one community working together, I think that is where government plays a role in really assisting in trying to foster and develop those kinds of partnerships. So it is not just partnership of government with one community, but indeed it is partnership of government with many different communities combined.

I think truly the only way we are ever going to have a society that is free from discrimination, free from some of the really nasty and negative things that we have seen happen over the past number of years and I know will continue to happen, hopefully to a lesser degree, but the only way that we can attempt to eradicate or overcome the difficulties and the racism that is experienced is by working together, by trying to understand each other, by working community with community and within communities and also with government as a partnership.

I thoroughly believe that this is a new beginning, that this is the start of a new partnership. When I listened to Mr. Prychitko tonight make his presentation, and I know someone asked a question of whether he thought the Manitoba Intercultural Council would survive in a new format empowered completely by the community by community people and he was a bit hesitant, I was a little concerned mainly because I really feel that the leadership within the Manitoba Intercultural Council has to grab hold of the council and work with every community. I tossed the challenge out to the chairperson and to the executive of the Manitoba Intercultural Council to make the new partnership work. So that is my challenge to you tonight.

You know, we all know that every government of the day makes decisions and some of them are extremely difficult decisions. We have made the decision as a government to start with a fresh new approach with the Manitoba Intercultural Council. I know there has been a lot of work going on.

We have had meetings since the announcement was made with the new executive, with the table officers of the Manitoba Intercultural Council, and we have come to an agreement that rather than presenting the legislation in its present format where the assets would be held with the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) until there was a new incorporated body to take over, we have agreed, and I confirmed to the lawyer for the Manitoba

Intercultural Council and to the executive that indeed we would be very willing to let the Manitoba Intercultural Council go ahead and incorporate, use the name before the legislation was proclaimed or passed by Royal Assent so that in fact there would not need to be a transition period, that the assets and what was there and left in the account for the Manitoba Intercultural Council would continue and would flow immediately to the Manitoba Intercultural Council Inc.

I think that then presents the opportunity for the Manitoba Intercultural Council to continue on with the work they are doing, to liaise and dialogue with government and with all of the communities that they represent to ensure that positive things will happen into the future, and I know they will. I have every confidence that can happen.

I would fully expect that those that are in the leadership positions within the Manitoba Intercultural Council Inc. today will accept the challenge to ensure that they are truly representative and speak for every ethnocultural community, every organization out there that they represent.

So, as I said, sometimes decisions are difficult. I do believe though that out of this difficult decision will come a new partnership where we can all work together and work together with all of those other organizations out there too that believe that we are indeed a multicultural society, that each and every one of us belongs to that society and that if we work co-operatively together, if we try to look at some of the positive things that are happening, if we try to look at ways of overcoming some of the problems that do exist, that we indeed will be able to make progress. We will continue to make progress.

I know I have not made every Manitoban happy with this legislation, that our government has not made every Manitoban happy, but it will be ultimately up to Manitobans to determine whether we have done most of the right things for the right reasons. I think this is an opportunity for us to move ahead and forge onward with a new beginning.

So with those few comments, I am prepared to move clause by clause.

Ms. Barrett: I too will be brief in my comments because I have had a fairly extensive opportunity to put a few well-chosen and in a couple of cases not so well-chosen words on record in this dealing with Bill 28.

It is clear from everything that I have said and from things that my caucus has said and from the votes that we have taken and will continue to take that we do not agree with any element of the bill that is before us with the exception of what I understand will be the amendments that the minister is prepared to bring forward tonight.

The minister has talked about a new partnership and a new beginning and a challenge and her confidence in the multicultural community. I have a great deal of confidence in the multicultural community. I think they have shown what they can do and what a real partnership can mean in the 10 years that the Manitoba Intercultural Council has been in existence. I think time will tell whether this new partnership and this new beginning is a positive thing or a negative thing.

Obviously we feel that the potential for positive outcomes is far outweighed by the loss that the community and the province will feel as a result of the repeal of the MIC act, to say nothing of the loss that the government will feel with the loss, which I think can only be there, of the advisory capacity that MIC has been able to provide to the government, not always listened to by any government, that is for sure, but the advice has been there. The capacity, because of the legislative mandate and the staffing component, has been very large.

Someone made the analogy today between the MIC and the other legislative bodies such as the Manitoba Women's Advisory Council. That is also a legislated, mandated advisory body that has a staff and financial component to it that allows it to provide not a higher but a different calibre of advice and information to the government. This will be lost. The list of reports and presentations that have been made by MIC over its 10-year history will undoubtedly be lost, if not in its entirety, in its large majority, because MIC will not be able to spend the time developing those positions that they have been able to in the past. So it will be new, it will be different.

I am afraid for the future of multiculturalism in the province, and I am afraid that the statement that this government is making, as Mr. Dolin stated, is going to be a statement that it does not really want to make. I am not quite sure why it is making this statement.

* (2250)

My ending will be that I have not, in all of the discussions and all of the speeches and everything that I have heard since the government instituted The Multiculturalism Act, without including MIC, a legitimate, and I use that word advisedly, reason put forward by the minister or any other member of the government for the "difficult decision" that the government has made in repealing MIC.

I cannot see a legitimate reason for the repeal of MIC. For that reason and the reasons put forward by the members of the public today and other members of the various communities in the past, we will be voting against Bill 28. I would hope against hope that the government would see the error of its ways and not report this bill.

Thank you.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, you know, the last presenter made a reference to what it is that the government is doing, and I had decided to ask the one question. I know the member for Brandon West (Mr. McCrae) thought I was not necessarily being sensitive and even implied that maybe I was being a bit patronizing in the question towards the minister.

I think the member for Brandon West should maybe take into consideration some of the frustration of not only members of the Manitoba Intercultural Council, but other individuals, I think myself included as someone that has experienced a great deal of frustration with the minister and the actions that the minister has taken with respect to the Manitoba Intercultural Council.

This is not an issue that has come up in the last four or five months. It has been an issue ever since the government was first elected back in 1988. As the critic for the Liberal Party over the last three years, I have had many opportunities to speak on the Manitoba Intercultural Council, have had a considerable amount of dialogue with the minister inside the Chamber with respect to private members' bills, government bills, the Estimates process, all trying to get some form of a commitment from the minister that the Manitoba Intercultural Council would be able to have some form of a future with respect to legislation.

I go, in particular, to the multicultural act that was introduced last session. I remember the debate very well. I had an opportunity to speak for a few hours on that particular piece of legislation. I remember when the minister brought in the

multicultural act and earlier that day I believe she had the press conference. She said that the Blair Report was being commissioned, and that is the reason why she did not incorporate the MIC into the multicultural act.

I recall her indicating to me in a private member's bill—she will have to forgive the repetition, because I did make reference to some of this this afternoon, but I do believe it bears repeating, and that is the minister criticized myself with the Liberal Party by saying that the Liberals, through the private members' bill, were wanting to do it piecemeal and we do not want to do it piecemeal. We want to have an overall multicultural policy, and the future fate of the Manitoba Intercultural Council would be determined within the multicultural act, that we do not want to do what the member for Inkster is suggesting, even though we agreed to it. We have had a couple of presenters here this evening who made reference to that.

Everyone is in favour of empowering MIC to be able to appoint its own chairperson, to do its own hiring and possibly to put a few more limitations on appointments that the minister can make onto the Manitoba Intercultural Council. I do not think, Mr. Chairperson, anyone would dispute that. We know in fact, with the Blair Report, that there were actually the two recommendations. The first recommendation was to repeal it, but failing that was to make the amendments that would in fact give it that much more power or independence from government.

Now I listened to the arguments that the minister brought forward. Let us say the minister is wanting to do what the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) or the government is telling her to do and that is to save money. If, in fact, the government was wanting to save money, it could have, as one presenter had suggested, negotiated something with Manitoba Intercultural Council and see if in fact they could have come up with some form of agreement, and I know the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) is especially concerned about this, that would have seen monies being saved. MIC even made reference to where they could get the money from. That is the one issue.

The other issue is the minister's concern about giving the Manitoba Intercultural Council more independence from government. I would argue, Mr. Chairperson, that could have in fact been done through the MIC act or amendment act that we had

introduced a couple of years ago into the Chamber, that that would have in fact been achieved.

But we took the minister at her word expecting that in fact she would bring in legislation that would incorporate MIC in a broader picture, whether it was in the multicultural act and failing that, to make the amendments and possibly even coming up with a creative amendment or two that would further foster growth of the Manitoba Intercultural Council.

I believe the MIC, potentially, Mr. Chairperson, could play a very valuable role in the further development of society here in the province of Manitoba. I noticed a couple of presenters actually made reference to a quote that the minister put in the Contact which is a newspaper that is printed through the Manitoba Intercultural Council. I think again, it bears repeating, and a couple of presenters made reference to it.

It says, and this is what the minister says: From our observations, we believe Manitoba Intercultural Council to be the most representative multicultural advisory body in the country. I believe that Manitobans are being well-served by having an elected broadly represented community-based organization to bring multicultural issues to government.

Mr. Chairperson, the minister was right in that particular issue of 1990 then, and she is right today with those comments. I, for the life of me, do not understand why it is that the government has chosen to repeal the Manitoba Intercultural Council legislation, that the government could have achieved, I believe, what it was wanting to do, whether it was the cost, whether it was the empowerment, that free hand, by making the necessary changes to the MIC act, incorporating into the multicultural act and doing and negotiating something to do with the finances.

The minister ended her remarks by challenging the community. She talks about a new beginning, a new partnership, if you will. I have concerns, much like the current chairperson of Manitoba Intercultural Council, and I believe a great number of individuals that are with Manitoba Intercultural Council and have served in MIC in the past share the very same concern, that is, the future of MIC, because of Bill 28, is not all that optimistic, or people are not overly optimistic about it.

* (2300)

Now, whether the minister chooses to acknowledge that or not, I really and sincerely believe that there was no damage to the government by allowing the legislation to continue in an amended form. But the potential for destroying what I believe is an organization that could foster good, co-operative race economic culture or bridging of the different cultures into the future for the province of Manitoba, I believe, is tremendous. I really and truly believe that it had great potential. We have put limitations on that now.

I do not see this new beginning, new partnership blossoming in the way in which it could have blossomed if, in fact, we had the legislation. It was not to be patronizing, and the remarks that I have put on the record with Mr. Dolin. I think that I have a very good understanding in terms of why it is that we have Bill 28, but I do believe that the minister can bring in legislation—and I will wait for the next session—to the multicultural act. I was glad and encouraged to hear that the Manitoba Intercultural Council is, in fact, putting together a package for presentation that will hopefully include why or how MIC could be incorporated into the multicultural act.

I do want to make it clear, as the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) has done, we do not support this bill. We will vote against it. In fact, it was in second reading, and all members of the Chamber were very clear in terms of their position on this particular piece of legislation.

But I would hope that over the summer, and we might not be back in until February, March, who knows when we will be back in. The government House leader (Mr. Manness) says May, June. The Minister of Culture and Heritage (Mrs. Mitchelson) says '95. I think by law, we have to be in here by December of '94. I believe that is the case.

Unfortunately, both opposition parties could not get a commitment from government in terms of coming in, but needless to say, the minister does have some time, and I trust that she will, to meet with the Manitoba Intercultural Council.

She has likely had more correspondence and more conversations with the MIC than I have, and that is not necessarily to say that I am not interested. I am very interested in MIC. I do read the reports. I might even read the reports more than the minister does, who knows? But that is not to say that I do, that I have read it more than the

minister has, but I am saying that I could have. I would like to see the minister meet with the Manitoba Intercultural Council, and in the next session, if, in fact, there is another session between now and the next provincial election, that we do see an amendment to the multicultural act that would incorporate the Manitoba Intercultural Council incorporated.

With those few words, I am prepared to go through Bill 28 and of course everything will go on passed, of course, because as I say here is no clause on this particular bill that I support for the Liberal Party.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you very much. We will now move into clause-by-clause consideration. During the consideration of the bill, the Title and the Preamble are postponed until all clauses have been considered in their proper order by the committee. Since we only have six clauses and some proposed amendments, I would propose to the committee that we consider each clause individually. [agreed]

Shall Clause 1 pass?

Point of Order

Mr. Leonard Evans: Committees that have divisions, or statements on division—we went through this the other night on Bill 37 for five hours—I would request that we have a recorded vote on each one, namely, we put up our hands which does not take very long; that is, we count the hands each time.

Mr. Chairperson: If it is your wish to have a recorded vote on each clause, we will certainly do that.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Well, I believe it is necessary by the rules, that is what I understand, that you could not have it on division in the committee stage. You could not use "on division" as a technique in committee. This is what I have been told by the Clerk's Office.

Madam Clerk: You can do it either way.

Mr. Leonard Evans: We talked about it. Bonnie was insistent we could not say "on division."

It is only a couple of clauses.

Mr. Chairperson: To my knowledge, Mr. Evans, there is no such rule, and we certainly have set the precedent in the last month. We have had any number of—

Mr. Leonard Evans: I refer you to some other staff in the Clerk's Office.

Mr. Chairperson: All I am saying is if you request a recorded vote on each clause, you will certainly get one.

* * *

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, on Clause 1, I would like to move an amendment, but first of all would like to make an explanation. The reason I am moving the amendment in Clause 1 is because of the subsequent amendments that will follow in Clause 3 and Clause 4.

Maybe I should explain the amendment in Clause 3 and Clause 4, and as a result of consultation with the Manitoba Intercultural Council and a letter from their lawyer requesting that we allow the Manitoba Intercultural Council, Inc. to incorporate before the legislation received Royal Assent was so that Clause 3 and Clause 4 that say that the assets will be held in trust by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) until another organization is incorporated would allow—lost my train of thought here. What the amendment will do is will allow the Manitoba Intercultural Council Inc., which will be incorporated by the time this legislation is proclaimed, to continue with the funding that is in place and the assets, rather than having them transferred to the Minister of Finance, so there will be no transition period.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. If I may interrupt, I wonder if it would be more clear if we proceeded with Clause 3 and amended it and then came back.

Mrs. Mitchelson: In order to make that amendment in Clause 3 and Clause 4, what we have to do is amend Clause 1.

I will move

THAT section 1 be amended by striking out the definition "minister."

[French version]

Il est proposé que l'article 1 du projet de loi soit amendé par suppression de la définition de "ministre".

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Chairperson: Clause 1, as amended—pass. Shall Clause 2 pass?

Some Honourable Members: No. Recorded vote.

A COUNTED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 6, Nays 3.

Mr. Chairperson: Clause 2—pass.

Shall Clause 3 pass?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I move, Mr. Chairperson, THAT sections 3 and 4 be struck out and the following substituted:

Assets and liabilities transferred

3 On dissolution of the council

(a) all assets, including money and other assets, in the name of or in trust for the council; and

(b) all obligations and liabilities of the council;

are transferred to and vest in Manitoba Intercultural Council Inc.

And I move that in both English and French.

[French version]

Il est proposé que les articles 3 et 4 du projet de loi soient remplacés par ce qui suit :

Transfert de l'actif et du passif

3 A la dissolution du Conseil, sont transférés et dévolus au "Manitoba Intercultural Council Inc." :

a) l'actif, y compris l'argent et les autres biens, que le Conseil possède ou détient en fiducie;

b) les obligations et les dettes du Conseil.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Chairperson: Shall Clause 5 pass?

An Honourable Member: No.

A COUNTED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 6, Nays 3.

Mr. Chairperson: Clause 5—pass.

Shall Clause 6 pass?

A COUNTED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 6, Nays 3.

Mr. Chairperson: Clause 6—pass.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I move

THAT Legislative Counsel be authorized to change all section numbers and internal references necessary to carry out the amendments adopted by this committee.

In both English and French.

[French version]

Il est proposé que le conseiller législatif soit autorisé à modifier les numéros d'article et les renvois internes de façon à donner effet aux amendements adoptés par le Comité.

Motion agreed to.

* (2310)

Mr. Chairperson: Shall the Preamble pass?**An Honourable Member:** No.**A COUNTED VOTE** was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 6, Nays 3.**Mr. Chairperson:** Preamble—pass.

Shall the Title pass?

An Honourable Member: No.**A COUNTED VOTE** was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 6, Nays 3.**Mr. Chairperson:** Title—pass.

Shall the bill as amended be reported?

Some Honourable Members: No.**A COUNTED VOTE** was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 6, Nays 3.**Mr. Chairperson:** The bill as amended will be reported.

Is it the will of the committee that I report the bill as amended?

Some Honourable Members: No.**A COUNTED VOTE** was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 6; Nays 3.**Mr. Chairperson:** It is agreed that I report the bill as amended.

That completes consideration of Bill 28. Committee rise.

COMMITTEE ROSE AT: 11:12 p.m.**WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS PRESENTED
BUT NOT READ****Re: Bill 28—The Manitoba Intercultural Council Repeat Act**

I would like to submit in writing my objection to the above noted legislation as I will be unable to attend these hearings to join with the many other individuals and organizations in opposition to the repealment of The Manitoba Intercultural Council Act.

According to the discussions I have had with members of the MIC, this bill seems to go against the wishes of the Manitoba ethnocultural

community at large. One must question then why the government of Manitoba would wish to provoke this opposition, instead of continuing to work in co-operation with the council and building on the previously existing good relations between the government, the MIC and the multicultural communities which it represents.

Bill Blaikie, M.P.
Winnipeg-Transcona

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Re: Bill 28—Manitoba Intercultural Council Repeal Act

The League for Human Rights of B'nai Brith would like to take the opportunity of setting out our views with regard to Bill 28 and the future of the Manitoba Intercultural Council (MIC).

MIC is a democratically elected, independent body, that has earned the respect and support of Manitoba's many ethnic groups. MIC is, therefore, uniquely able to effectively and reliably advise the government on multicultural matters, and promote intercultural co-operation, tolerance and understanding.

While no doubt the creation of the new Multiculturalism Secretariat, the Multiculturalism Grants Advisory Council and the Community Access Office, will be of benefit to the community, we feel that there remains an important role for the MIC as an arm's length independent voice for the community.

We therefore urge the government of Manitoba to allow the MIC to continue to serve the community as a voice of our multicultural mosaic.

We also urge the government of Manitoba not to expropriate MIC's funds. We understand the government to have made a commitment to leave MIC's funds with MIC, and we believe that this would serve the best interests of the community in allowing MIC to continue to effectively represent and promote multiculturalism in the province of Manitoba

Michael Lazar, Chairman
League for Human Rights
Midwest Region
B'nai Brith Canada