



Second Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(Hansard)**

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The Honourable Louise M. Dacquay
Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

Name	Constituency	Party
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DACQUAY, Louise, Hon.	Seine River	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary	Concordia	N.D.P.
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	P.C.
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	P.C.
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	N.D.P.
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	P.C.
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	P.C.
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	N.D.P.
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Lib.
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	P.C.
HELWER, Edward	Gimli	P.C.
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
KOWALSKI, Gary	The Maples	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	N.D.P.
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	P.C.
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	P.C.
McGIFFORD, Diane	Osborne	N.D.P.
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	P.C.
MIHYCHUK, MaryAnn	St. James	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	P.C.
NEWMAN, David	Riel	P.C.
PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PITURA, Frank	Morris	P.C.
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
RADCLIFFE, Mike	River Heights	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack, Hon.	Niakwa	P.C.
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	P.C.
ROBINSON, Eric	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
ROCAN, Denis	Gladstone	P.C.
SALE, Tim	Crescentwood	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin	N.D.P.
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	P.C.
TOEWS, Vic, Hon.	Rossmere	P.C.
TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 16, 1996

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Home Care Services

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Kelly Wishnowski, Robert Shawcross, John Bonner and others requesting the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to consider reversing their plans to privatize home care services.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Paola D'Abramo, Anna Giannini, H. Hamilton and others requesting the Premier and the Minister of Health to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Phyllis Spence, Bonnie Neil, James Slade and others requesting the Premier and the Minister of Health to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Jan Mulder, David Pollock, Wendy Tod and others requesting the Premier and the Minister of Health to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Lorna Sanderson, Cindy Allard, Lisa Joblonski and others requesting the Premier and the Minister of Health to consider reversing their plans to privatize home care services.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Home Care Services

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition for the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen). It

complies with rules and practices of the House (by leave). Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT on at least six occasions during the 1995 provincial election, the Premier promised not to cut health services; and

THAT on December 16, 1995, a plan to privatize home care services was presented to Treasury Board; and

THAT this plan calls for the complete divestiture of all service delivery to nongovernment organizations, mainly private for-profit companies as well as the implementation of a user-pay system of home care; and

THAT previous cuts to the Home Care program have resulted in services being cut and people's health being compromised; and

THAT thousands of caring front-line service providers will lose their jobs as a result of this change; and

THAT profit has no place in the provision of vital health services.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

* (1335)

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway). It complies with the rules and the practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT on at least six occasions during the 1995 provincial election, the Premier promised not to cut health services; and

THAT on December 16, 1995, a plan to privatize home care services was presented to Treasury Board; and

THAT this plan calls for the complete divestiture of all service delivery to nongovernment organizations, mainly private for-profit companies as well as the implementation of a user-pay system of home care; and

THAT previous cuts to the Home Care program have resulted in services being cut and people's health being compromised; and

THAT thousands of caring front-line service providers will lose their jobs as a result of this change; and

THAT profit has no place in the provision of vital health services.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Committee of Supply

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Chairperson of Committees): Madam Speaker, the Committee of Supply has adopted certain resolutions, directs me to report the same and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Morris (Mr. Pitura), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

* (1340)

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Madam Speaker, I would

like to table the 1996-97 Supplementary Information for Legislative Review for the Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 45—The Consumer Protection Amendment Act

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews), that leave be given to introduce Bill 45, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection du consommateur, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 46—The Securities Amendment Act

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), that leave be given to introduce Bill 46, The Securities Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les valeurs mobilières, and that the same be now received and read a first time

Motion agreed to.

Bill 47—The Public Schools Amendment Act

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Ernst), that leave be given to introduce Bill 47, The Public Schools Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 48—The University of Manitoba Amendment Act

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Ernst), that leave be given to introduce Bill 48, The University of Manitoba Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur

l'Université du Manitoba, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 49—The Regional Health Authorities and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), that leave be given to introduce Bill 49, The Regional Health Authorities and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi sur les offices régionaux de la santé et apportant des modifications corrélatives), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 50—The Remembrance Day Amendment Act

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Labour): I move, seconded by the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mr. Gilleshammer), that leave be given to introduce Bill 50, The Remembrance Day Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur le jour du souvenir), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 51—The Civil Service Superannuation Amendment, Public Servants Insurance Amendment and Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister charged with the administration of The Civil Service Act): I move, seconded by the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), that leave be given to introduce Bill 51, The Civil Service Superannuation Amendment, Public Servants Insurance Amendment and Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la pension de la fonction publique, la Loi sur l'assurance des employés du gouvernement et la Loi sur la pension de retraite des enseignants), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, having been advised of the contents of this bill, recommends it to the

House. I would like to table the Lieutenant Governor's message as well.

Motion agreed to.

* (1345)

Bill 52—The York Factory First Nation Northern Flood Implementation Agreement Act

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Northern and Native Affairs (Mr. Praznik), I move, seconded by the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh), that leave be given to introduce Bill 52, The York Factory First Nation Northern Flood Implementation Agreement Act (Loi sur l'accord de mise en oeuvre de la première nation de York Factory relatif à la convention sur la submersion de terres du Nord manitobain), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, having been advised of the contents of the bill, recommends it to the House. I would like to take the message from the Lieutenant Governor.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 53—The Nelson House First Nation Northern Flood Implementation Agreement Act

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Northern and Native Affairs (Mr. Praznik), I move, seconded by the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Pallister), that leave be given to introduce Bill 53, The Nelson House First Nation Northern Flood Implementation Agreement Act (Loi sur l'accord de mise en oeuvre de la première nation de Nelson House relatif à la convention sur la submersion de terres du Nord manitobain), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, having been advised of the contents of this bill, recommends it to the

House. I would like to table the message of the Lieutenant Governor.

Motion agreed to.

**Bill 55—The Financial Administration and
Consequential Amendments Act**

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), that leave be given to introduce Bill 55, The Financial Administration and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi concernant la gestion des finances publiques et apportant des modifications corrélatives), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

**Bill 56—The Manitoba Investment Pool
Authority Act**

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), that leave be given to introduce Bill 56, The Manitoba Investment Pool Authority Act (Loi sur l'Office manitobain de mise en commun des placements), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

* (1350)

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the gallery, where we have this afternoon fifty Grade 9 students from Ken Seaford Junior High School. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski).

We have fifty Grade 5 students from Stanley Knowles School under the direction of Ms. Claretta Shefrin. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux).

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you this afternoon.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

**Correctional Facilities
Temporary Absence Policy**

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

Regrettably, a person convicted of assault and convicted of resisting arrest was on temporary absence and is alleged to have committed a murder in our province. I would like to ask the Acting Premier, in light of this very, very serious situation, what is the government policy on temporary absences from our jails, and were there any changes in government policies based on the riot that took place at the Headingley Correctional Institution?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, I do not want to speak about any case specifically. I think that may jeopardize the case; however, I am very happy to speak about the policies of this government in relation to the temporary absences.

First of all, in Manitoba, public safety is our main concern. That is why in Manitoba our inmates serve approximately twice as long as they do in any other province in this country before they are eligible for temporary absences. That is the first criterion.

Madam Speaker, following that—and that change, by the way, was made by this government by regulation over a year ago, in 1995, so that is the first point. Then, following the serving of a sentence, approximately twice as long as is required in other provinces, there is then a criterion and a risk assessment which is done by the qualified correctional officers. That risk assessment is one which includes issues such as the current offence, any past offences and employment.

Mr. Doer: The minister did not answer the question. I do not know how the minister could say she is happy on today's occasion. I think it is a very sad situation, and I am very disappointed in the answer of the Minister of Justice. In fact, members of this side of the House and

the public are getting used to words from this minister that do not fit the reality of what is going on in our justice system day after day.

I asked the question about whether the policy changed based on the riot at Headingley Correctional Institution, and I would like to ask the Acting Premier, in light of the fact that the Minister of Justice, like so many other words she has issued in the public, had stated on June 22, 1995, that "inmates with violent records certainly will have to have increased consideration for any temporary absences."

I would like to ask the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey), in light of the fact this individual was already charged with assault and resisting arrest, did the policy of Corrections, was it followed through in the release of this inmate, and did the riot at Headingley play any part in this decision?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Speaker, I am happy to now complete my response. As you had indicated, my time was up.

To complete my response, there were not any special criteria given to the release of inmates under temporary absence, and in fact this government has strengthened temporary absences. According to the corrections and reformatories act, inmates would be eligible for temporary absences at about one-sixth of the sentence. In Manitoba, not referring to any specific case whatsoever, we changed our regulations and they are required to serve approximately one-half of the sentence before they are eligible for a temporary absence. So, Madam Speaker, in Manitoba we have changed the regulations, and in fact now most inmates who are not charged with a violent offence must serve at least one-third of their sentence. The criterion in other provinces, to my knowledge, is approximately one-sixth of the sentence.

* (1355)

Mr. Doer: The minister still did not answer the question. I asked a specific question about whether the temporary absence policies of this government were changed after the Headingley riot and during the Headingley riot. That is a very specific question that I asked on two occasions.

I would like to ask the Acting Premier: In light of the fact that we had this in-your-face statement from the Minister of Justice released in the House that made no mention of the changing criteria of temporary absences based on the Headingley riot, can the Acting Premier please inform Manitobans, was the policy changed on the basis of the riot, how many inmates were released from our correctional institution based on the riot, and what criteria were used to allow people who obviously had violent records or charges of a violent nature to be released into our Manitoba communities? Very specific questions. Please answer them.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Speaker, I will answer the question again for the member because he does not seem to have heard the answer. This government strengthened our policies of rigorous confinement for temporary absences in February 1995. They were changed by way of regulation. Any inmates who were released following the riot at Headingley were inmates—

Mr. Doer: This is another cover-up.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Speaker, I resent the accusation being screamed across the House by the Leader of the Opposition. I am answering the question openly. The Leader of the Opposition knows very well that I am not able to speak about any background of a case currently before the court.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Doer: A point of order, Madam Speaker. The minister is rambling on a question I did not pose. I posed the question about the policy which is completely within the jurisdiction of the government and within the jurisdiction of the Minister of Justice. She should know that and answer the question for the people of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker: The honourable Leader of the official opposition does not have a point of order. The honourable minister was attempting, in my opinion, to respond to the question asked.

* * *

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Justice, to complete her response.

Mrs. Vodrey: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. The member across the way has asked when there was a change in our policy around temporary absences, and the change in policy around temporary absences occurred in 1995, as I said in an earlier answer, as well. Any inmates who were released following the Headingley riot were those inmates who qualified under the temporary absence provision that was changed in 1995. That is the information that I have been given from my department.

Correctional Facilities Temporary Absence Policy

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

Could the minister explain, while she talks about a new rigorous confinement policy and says, and I quote from June in the Hansard: "Inmates with violent records certainly will have to have increased consideration for any temporary absences" and says: "No temporary absences will be granted unless there is a low risk to the community", why is a riot now a criterion for a temporary absence and why was one granted to Mr. Rouire excusing him from weekend prison for four weeks in the face of an already, I would suggest, lenient sentence for a vicious, vicious assault and resisting arrest? What rigorous confinement is that?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): The member criticizes the sentence given by the judge which he knows this government has no part in. The members across the way, I am sure nothing would please them more than to have a comment on a specific case, but I have made it clear in my comments today, I am not able to comment on any specific case raised by members opposite if that case happens to be before the court.

However, Madam Speaker, what I can do on behalf of the people of Manitoba for the people of Manitoba is to explain to them the changes that were made in the area of temporary absences, and I have explained that. Changes were made in 1995 to increase the length of time that an inmate must serve in order to qualify for consideration for a temporary absence. Following time served, it is

professional correctional officers who then apply a criterion to that eligible pool of individuals to determine if those eligible individuals may in fact receive a temporary absence.

Mr. Mackintosh: Since the minister is now down the path of blaming a judge, is she prepared to put on the record that her department, her staff, her attorneys did not plea bargain or agree to the sentence in this matter, because we have seen over and over again inappropriately weak and, indeed, perhaps dangerous plea bargains from her department?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Speaker, as the member very well knows, as Attorney General I am not able to comment at all on any case in which a charge has been laid and is before the court. The member always comes very dangerously close himself to putting forward information: whether or not that is correct I am not able to comment on and will not comment on.

* (1400)

Mr. Mackintosh: A final supplementary: Would the minister at least tell us what message does her granting TAs solely because of a riot give—solely because of a riot, not public safety—what message does it give both to the violent criminal and to the community about the seriousness of violent offences and about the authority of the justice system and indeed this minister?

Mrs. Vodrey: The member is making an accusation around why temporary absences were granted. Madam Speaker, what has happened is there is a pool of individuals who may be eligible for temporary absences but that pool of individuals are part of a group in which there are strengthened criteria already in place, strengthened by this government to deal with temporary absences. There is then a criterion that professional correctional officers use.

The member makes statements about individuals being released into the community. I cannot comment on a specific case. I have made that clear. However, there is a strict criterion which is adhered to in the matter of rigorous confinement which, by the way, this government put in place, was never considered by members across the way.

Mr. Mackintosh: In the questioning of the Minister of Justice yesterday, the minister undertook to make inquiries of her department and report back to the House on information regarding the temporary absences. At that time she said that she was aware that individuals have been released from Headingley and perhaps from other institutions because of the riot, at least she said, when they had two weeks or less left to serve in their sentence.

My question for the minister, and further to the question from the Leader of the Opposition, will she now tell Manitobans how many prisoners have indeed been released because of the riot at Headingley and what sentences are involved? Has she assured herself, can she assure Manitobans, that none of those released took part in the riot?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yesterday I undertook to gather information about those who qualified after the riot for temporary absences. It was only those individuals who qualified for temporary absences. Those absences may be granted on medical grounds, on humanitarian grounds and on rehabilitative grounds.

Madam Speaker, there were some inmates discharged from Headingley. I am informed by my department that they were not inmates who took part in the riot. I am informed that these inmates, by and large, were located or housed outside of the main building, that they in fact did not participate, that they were all eligible for temporary absences according to the length of time served, that they were assessed by a team of four professional correctional officers for their temporary absence.

Mr. Mackintosh: Madam Speaker, a very serious issue is arising here. The minister said in answer to questions earlier that none have been released because of the riot. She now has just said that individuals were indeed released because of the riot. Would the minister stop this flip-flop justice that we are suffering?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Speaker, let me clarify. The question was, earlier, was there a change to the temporary absence procedure as a result of the riot? That was the question that was put by the Leader of the Opposition. My answer to him was no. The criterion established for the release of inmates was established in 1995, February 1995, and it was exactly that same criterion that was applied to inmates who were eligible for temporary absence following the riot.

Mr. Mackintosh: Can the minister explain her contradiction on the record in this House, so Manitobans and people in this Legislature can understand? Would she also explain the contradiction when the individual who is in question here today, after serving for 60 days, or in the course of a 60-day sentence on weekends is all of a sudden given a temporary absence? When? On the day following the riot. What does that say? Will the minister come clean on this issue?

Mrs. Vodrey: As I said, again, in earlier answers to the member, I am not able to speak about the specific case that he continues to raise in this House. That is obviously very difficult because he has in the past put forward information not always correct. However, I am not able to comment on that case.

What I am able to comment on, however, Madam Speaker, is a process for the granting of temporary absences which includes two parts: length of time served in Manitoba is required to be greater than most other provinces in the country and then a criterion or risk assessment.

Each of the individuals who was released had an assessment upon entry to the institution, a risk assessment upon leaving the institution, and I ordered a risk assessment on individuals released on temporary absences last evening. They are released, Madam Speaker, with conditions and with supervision, into the community.

Home Care Program Privatization

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, on February 27 this year when we revealed and released the fact that the government was going to privatize 100 percent of home care, the minister said, and I quote, on February 27, I would like to see the whole program subject to the opportunity for bids, and, further, the minister said, in quotations, that they were going to be setting up the company, the Crown corporation to look after the 100 percent privatization.

Madam Speaker, now that the government is being forced to back off its 100 percent plan to privatize, will the minister today table in the House the new government plans to privatize, and will the minister outline to this

House what the government plans are, and, hopefully, he will listen to arguments not to privatize anything?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Whatever the term in the collective agreement after ratification, Madam Speaker, for that particular term whatever is done will be consistent and in accordance with the collective agreement.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, can the minister explain how they intend to privatize a portion of service, be it geographic or based on areas of the city or based on types of clients, and still offer clients a choice about whether they want the government service or the new-fangled government privatization plan that may come into being?

Mr. McCrae: If I may offer the honourable member a little bit of advice, it might be good if he respected the process of collective bargaining and allowed the workers involved to have their say on the tentative agreement before we go any further.

Home Care Program Privatization—Public Hearings

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, if I can offer the minister a bit of advice, perhaps. Will the minister consider submitting the government plans to privatize to the public, hold public hearings, allow the citizens of Manitoba to have a say in that ridiculous scheme, and will they allow Manitobans to have a say prior to them embarking on that ridiculous scheme to privatize?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): What we will do, Madam Speaker, is we will honour the terms of the collective agreement and be guided by the collective agreement.

Gaming Commission Establishment

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Lotteries.

Last year, the government, in an attempt to hide behind the issue of gambling, had Mr. Desjardins head a commission, and that commission did have a report that was tabled. If you read the chairman's remarks, and I

would like to quote from the report, and that is: As the chairman of the Lottery Policy Review Working Group, my name is bound to be very closely associated with this document. I do not wish it to be assumed that I favour every recommendation included in this report.

Madam Speaker, the chairperson's remarks reinforce that this whole entire gambling report is nothing but a whitewash of what this government's attempts to do in gambling are.

My question for the minister is that the major recommendation that came out of it was the establishment of a gaming commission which would act as a decoy to deflect criticism away from the government. The question specifically is: How can we expect this commission to represent the best interests of Manitobans when it is likely to be no more than a cheerleading squad for the government's gaming policies?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Lotteries Corporation Act): Madam Speaker, what a totally ridiculous comment by the member for Inkster. He knows that review committee had 14 individuals, 14 Manitobans, from all walks of life who brought forward a series of very serious and important recommendations to our government. I have indicated to this House, and to him before, we will be acting on all of those recommendations in terms of which ones will be implemented, over what time frames and so on.

One of the most important that I believe has the support of members opposite, has the support of most Manitobans, if not all Manitobans, is the establishment of an independent gaming commission. We have indicated that we are acting on that issue, and I expect to be tabling legislation very shortly clearly outlining all of the aspects of that gaming commission and what role it will play on behalf of gaming and on behalf of Manitobans here in this province.

* (1410)

Reporting Process

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, it seems absurd to set up a commission on gaming to formulate policy and report to the Legislature.

My question to the minister is: Why can the Legislature not—which is accountable to the people of Manitoba—formulate the policy and have Lotteries report to this Assembly on a more frequent basis, like every six months at the very least?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Lotteries Corporation Act): Madam Speaker, what the member seems to miss is a major part often of formulating policy is gathering data, gathering information, consulting with Manitobans, going out and meeting with Manitobans as this Lottery Policy Review Committee did, and that is not uncommon for any initiative of any government or this Legislature to have resources able to accomplish and to do that on behalf of the Legislature and on behalf of government.

That is exactly one of the functions that the commission will in fact be performing, along with many others, in terms of licensing, regulation, auditing, surveillance and supervision. So there is a series of initiatives and obviously they will have the resources and deal with the expertise that helps formulate proper policy for government and for this Legislature.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, can the Minister of Finance then explain to us how he expects that the Premier's (Mr. Filmon) friends are going to be able to hold Manitoba Lotteries more accountable than this Legislature?

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, I am more than a little bewildered by where the member for Inkster is coming from with his entire line of questioning. He can look at the list of the 14 Manitobans who served on the Lottery Policy Review Committee, people of all walks of life, I believe of various political backgrounds. Certainly, the chair of the committee represented one other political party other than our government here in this Legislature. So people are coming from all political backgrounds, all walks of life, and their objective is to deal with this issue in a very informed and important manner, not in a political sense the way the member for Inkster is attempting to do here today.

Education System Student Transportation

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Madam Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Education.

The minister will be aware that the required years of school bus use in Manitoba has been pushed over 15 years in the last few years of this government. We are aware of the contrast between this delaying strategy of her government for school buses when compared to their three-year replacement cycle for their own provincial government vehicles.

Will the minister tell the House how her department's additional cutback of \$5 per pupil in the student transportation entitlement, along with a 2-cent per kilometre decrease and the loaded kilometre rates will impact on the quality and safety of school bus transportation, especially in light, Madam Speaker, of the increased costs of operating the buses with the recent extraordinarily high increases to fuel costs?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, there were several parts to that question. I am not sure how often government vehicles rotate. I do know that my first car was the Leader of the Opposition's (Mr. Doer) used car—and he took very good care of it and it was in good shape—so I do not know how they recycle them. I do know that we get each other's cars by virtue of the fact that I got the car the Leader of the Opposition was tired of driving.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Education, to complete her response.

Mrs. McIntosh: Madam Speaker, as I said, a two-part question and I am not familiar with the government policy of how they switch cars except to say that the Leader of the official opposition took very good care of his car, because when I got it after he was tired of it, it was still in good shape.

In terms of the school buses, school buses are on a continuous safety check program. School divisions are not allowed to have buses on the road after 15 years even if they are still deemed roadworthy and school buses will be removed from the road under 15 years if they are proven not to be roadworthy in our inspections of them.

Ms. Mihychuk: Madam Speaker, my question to the minister is, in light of the budget document which actually cut the rates to school buses for support and

maintenance and the kilometre rate, will the department be monitoring the increased cost of fuel with the possibility of restoring the kilometre rate cutback if prices do not come down in the near future?

Mrs. McIntosh: Madam Speaker, we are constantly reviewing those types of questions. That is an ongoing part of our work. Fuel prices—as she knows—fluctuate. The gasoline price for 1985 was not far off the gasoline price that we had just recently, so fuel prices do vary and, of course, it is always one factor that we consider as we make determinations about transportation grants.

Ms. Mihychuk: Madam Speaker, it is not very often we see gas prices go down.

My final question to the minister. Will the minister indicate whether her department will be extending the replacement cycle for school buses again this year and, if so, for how many years?

Mrs. McIntosh: Madam Speaker, I, first of all, believe we do have opportunity to address both the preamble and the question if both are there. In her third supplementary on her preamble, she indicated that gas prices do not very often come down. I would invite her maybe to consult the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Ernst) and ask to see the charts that show the great fluctuation in gas prices and how frequently they do indeed come down. She might be interested in watching that fluctuation.

Madam Speaker, at this point we have no intention of extending further beyond the 15 years the length of time that school divisions are allowed to own buses, because we feel that that is probably the maximum length of time that a school division should be having a bus on the road even if it still is proving roadworthy.

Education System Physical Education Curriculum

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Madam Speaker, I have a list of 49 studies that outlines the benefits of physical activity not only for the health of children and youth but that it also will enhance academic performance, discipline and concentration. I want to ask the Minister of Education to table any studies her department has that

will show the benefits of her policy to reduce physical education and health education for Manitoba children and what the implications are for Manitoba youth of her policies.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): The member knows, because she has been following the issue that physical education is a very important component of Manitoba schools, we have just put out some scholarships or some money incentives into physical education for teachers in the schools. As well, Madam Speaker, I indicate to her that part of the health curriculum will now include health. I think that is the component she is getting at, but just as she now pointed out to me the importance of my understanding the benefits of physical education, so too we feel that the physical education courses should include health so that students may also benefit from the knowledge she feels it is important for me to have.

Ms. Cerilli: Will the minister not admit the incongruence of taking away physical activity time to teach sedentary classroom activity, and can she explain how that is going to make Manitoba children healthier?

Mrs. McIntosh: The member makes assumptions that all class time that does not involve touching your toes is sedentary, and that is a wrong assumption. I invite her, maybe she would like to accompany me on one of my regular school visits to see how active students are in the regular course of their day, not just in physical education class. Physical education is deemed to be extremely important for all of the reasons she named. Those are reasons we have studied well and are very, very convinced of.

I concur with her statements about the benefit of physical education. We agree departmentally. We also agree internally. I know she does not agree, but we do agree internally that it is very important for students to understand why physical activity is important, why there should be a lifestyle that includes physical activity, what happens to the body when movement occurs with big muscle movements, and so on. That is now called health and it is now part of the physical education curriculum. It does mean that there will now be 25 percent of the physical education course spent on health and 75 percent on physical activity. We feel that is critical. She wants me to know. I want the students to know.

Ms. Cerilli: My final supplementary is for the Minister of Sport. I wonder if the Minister of Sport would explain to the Minister of Education that the sport policy for his government, and I quote, is to recognize the educational system as an integral component of the sport delivery system in Manitoba, encourage educational systems to enhance the role of sport in education and to encourage mandatory physical education from kindergarten to Grade 12. Can he explain how the government's policy rationalizes with this?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister responsible for Sport): Okay.

* (1420)

McLeod School Closure

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Education.

Yesterday, the Minister of Education refused to take any responsibility for the proposed closing of McLeod School, despite the fact that since 1991-92 her government appears to have cut the funding to a school division by over \$3 million. Both the parents and the superintendent are clear that this closure is caused by provincial funding cuts.

I want to ask the minister, why is it that she is the last person in Manitoba to recognize that funding does count.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): This morning in Estimates the question was raised about property taxes, and it came up that the property taxes in Manitoba raise about \$556 million a year, almost the amount that we have to spend in interest on the debt left us annually by the members opposite.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Education, to complete her response.

Mrs. McIntosh: For 20 years across this nation, the federal government and provincial governments of every political stripe felt that the way to solve problems and address issues was to throw money at them.

Overborrowing and overspending were the order of the day, and overborrowing and overspending have resulted in a situation where the federal government now feels it has to cut hundreds of millions of dollars in transfer payments to this province and that the province has also been left with a debt that is extremely hard. It is our fourth largest department.

Throwing more money at education has not helped solve some of the problems. I would think she would be the last person to talk about why there is no money available to do all of the things that we would like to be able to do.

Educational Facilities Closures

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Will the minister tell the House how many other schools in Manitoba are facing closure decisions, and would she tell us whether she has prepared any new policies to protect the concerns of parents, both for their schools and for their communities?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): I, first of all, do not accept any of the member's preamble and premise. The member has indicated in her first question and again has implied in her second that the school is closing because there was a 2 percent overall funding cut to education in Manitoba. I say to her, first of all, my understanding is a school is not closing per se, it is that some students are moving out to a different school and others are moving in. This has been happening in Manitoba for many years.

This has been happening since 1980, since I became involved in education as a decision maker. In 1980 there were many schools closed in Manitoba. That was double-digit revenues being given to school divisions. There have been schools—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

BFI Landfill Site Environmental Licensing

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Madam Speaker, members of the current government have repeatedly stated that the City of Winnipeg has refused to meet with other capital region municipalities to discuss the issues of

solid waste management. In light of the reality that the City of Winnipeg has had a formal policy of co-operation with municipalities in place since July 24, 1994, and has actually met with several capital region municipalities, will the Minister of Environment now reverse the decision on BFI so that all municipalities in the capital region can have time to work out an effective solid waste management strategy?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): I believe I was the one who pointed out to the member for Wellington that in fact it was a 1994 initiative that the city had begun to consult with its surrounding municipalities.

Ms. Barrett: Why does the Minister of Environment feel that he has to put the BFI decision on the fast track when the development of a regional waste management plan, which the city has repeatedly stated it is willing to undertake, was a major undertaking of the August 1995 Clean Environment Commission hearings, hearings that should have been listened to before the BFI licensing hearings were undertaken? Why the fast track?

Mr. Cummings: Madam Speaker, it seems to me that when a hearing takes four years from beginning until a licence is issued, that is far from being on the fast track.

Independent Schools—Religious Funding

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Madam Speaker, in our constituency we have a number of institutions that operate schools, and many of these schools are operated by faith-based organizations. I would like to ask a question of the Minister of Education, whether she is aware of any authorities who support the constitutional basis for the funding of independent faith-based schools in Manitoba.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, this came up in Estimates the other day and actually I have four, I think—some of which the House will be familiar with—I did indicate Roland Penner's indication, as Minister of Education for the NDP, that the political solution was the best way to avoid an unwelcome court settlement should the constitutional question proceed.

As well, of course, we have the other statements: Ed Schreyer's signing of the declaration of social and cultural rights which said that we must have respect for the liberty of parents to choose their children's schools, other than those established by the state, to ensure their religious and moral education in conformity with their own convictions and his statement that he would enact legislation if necessary to accomplish that.

As well, there is a letter from the previous Leader of the Liberal Party, Sharon Carstairs, who indicated that independent schools have legal and moral rights for that kind of funding. There is an authority I have not read in this Chamber and that is Dr. Gerald Friesen who wrote a book called, *The Canadian Prairies: A History*. Dr. Friesen said to question the rights of Roman Catholics to a public-supported school system was tantamount to challenging the very basis of Confederation.

Education System Home Economics Curriculum

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, because of the government's decision to cut back on education funding and because of timetabling disruptions, home economics courses will no longer be offered in many schools for Grades 7 and 8 students. The minister, in Estimates, indicated that 4-H clubs could replace the skills for students that are offered in these classes.

I want to ask the Minister of Education whether she has checked whether there are 4-H clubs in many of these communities where there are no longer home ec classes offered.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, the member would do well to read Hansard, and I invite her again to try to be accurate. When the members opposite quote people, to quote accurately and to quote in context; to do otherwise is to mislead.

I would say to the member that how the conversation actually went was—it was with regard to home economics in schools—my statement was: We believe in parental choice for some of these things. It is the case—and I quoted—that in certain communities in Manitoba, not all, in certain communities where the parents have indicated

that they have other alternatives, in some cases where parents have simply an extremely active 4-H club that does a lot of these things, could we not use our school time for something more academic? We have said we want them to have that choice. In no way did I say that 4-H would replace home ec.

I mean, the member is misquoting me in a very irresponsible and unfortunate manner.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Time for Oral Questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Conference Board of Canada Provincial Forecast

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): The Conference Board of Canada, one of the largest and most widely respected economic forecasting organizations in this country, released the latest provincial forecast.

That forecast had some interesting and encouraging things to say about Manitoba's economic performance. The Conference Board's latest look at Manitoba's economy reported that Manitoba's rate of real economic growth is expected to outperform the national average in 1996 for the second year in a row. The real GDP growth in 1996 is forecast at 2.3 percent, third highest in the country and well above Canada's forecast expansion of 1.9 percent, and particularly the forecast cites a robust manufacturing sector as one of the key engines for Manitoba growth in this year.

There is plenty of other evidence to support the optimism. Just this morning, Stats Canada reported that shipments by Manitoba manufacturing firms were up 7.9 percent in the first quarter of 1996. That is compared to the first quarter of 1995, which had a very dramatic increase. That is the strongest second growth rate in the country. Over the same time period, shipments at the national level fell by half a percent.

Stats Canada also reported last week that Manitoba manufacturing firms added an average of 5,000 new jobs during the first four months of this year, compared to the same four good months last year.

The Conference Board goes on to note that 1995 was also a very good year for Manitoba. They report that Manitoba significantly outperformed the national average in 1995 with real growth of 3 percent. The Conference Board cites robust investment, export gains, job growth as the prime engines of growth in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, I think this is clearly an indication that our economic policies that we have adhered to in the last eight years are now coming to drive the economic engine of this province and to create jobs in this province.

* (1430)

Statistics Canada Job Survey Report

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Madam Speaker, you know, from the opposite side we always get next-year country. We always get a forecast, but when we look at what has happened, we get a different story.

Madam Speaker, the latest Statistics Canada job survey report shows that only 523,000 persons were working on a seasonally adjusted basis in April, which was down 2,000 jobs from last month, March 1996. So we are down 2,000 jobs from March to April. Furthermore, and this is the more significant point I would make, Statistics Canada reports that there were 7,000 fewer people working in Manitoba in April of this year than in April of 1990. In other words, after six years we have 7,000 fewer jobs in Manitoba, and as of April of this year if you look at how many people were working in Manitoba compared to the whole country, it was only 3.8 percent, whereas six years ago, April 1990, we had 4 percent working. In other words, we have got Manitoba declining as a percentage of the national job picture in this country, and that is very unfortunate.

If we look at the first four months of the year, the job growth rate was only .3 percent compared to 1.4 percent for the nation as a whole, and at this rate this province is going to continue to decline relative to the rest of the employed workforce in Canada.

Madam Speaker, it is obvious that the economic policies of the present Conservative government have not provided the number of jobs needed in Manitoba to prevent the exodus of people to Alberta and British

Columbia. Despite the public relations statements opposite, the fact remains that the opportunities are not being realized, and there is no way that the members opposite can deny the fact that we have fewer people working today than we did six years ago—7,000 fewer jobs.

Victoria Day

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): We are planning to celebrate a very important day in the history of our province and, by extension, our wonderful land of Canada. On Monday, May 20, our nation will set aside most orders of business to collectively participate in Victoria Day. Victoria Day recognizes the birth of Queen Victoria who was actually born on May 24, 1819, but tradition saw fit to celebrate her birthday not on the 24th but on the Monday which preceded it. As a result, we will not convene in this House on Monday but will, instead, celebrate Victoria Day.

In 1901, during the Ninth Parliament, May 24 was established as a public holiday. I believe that it is important to celebrate this event as it is a building block in the history of Canada which, after all, is part of the Commonwealth. When the legislation for Victoria Day was passed 95 years ago, Canada's population was just over five million and that of the province of Manitoba was 255,000. We have come a long way since then and our country has been blessed with growth, both from within and through immigration.

We are reminded of Queen Victoria through various distinctions which surround us to this day. The Victoria Cross is the highest military declaration of the Commonwealth and it was first awarded for valour by Queen Victoria in 1856. Among the recipients are Winnipeg's own Andrew Mynarski who was also honoured by having a school named after him. The Victorian Order of Nurses or the VON is our country's oldest national nursing organization and it was founded in 1897. The VON was named to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee and was modelled on the Queen's Jubilee nurses.

I would hope that all members of this House take this upcoming long weekend to reflect upon how our country has flourished throughout the century. We not only live in the greatest country in the world, but as Manitobans,

we know that we are Canada's greatest asset. Thank you, Madam Speaker, and to all I say happy Victoria Day.

Home Care

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, as we hear through different media outlets and so forth some of the content of the tentative agreement that has been agreed to between management and the union executive, one of the things that is becoming somewhat clear is that it appears as if the government did not give in on the concession of a 12-month moratorium. We find that, in fact, is most unfortunate. The 12-month moratorium, I think, was something that was reasonable.

One of the things that we have found is that the government, throughout the hours of Estimates, has failed to be able to demonstrate that they have done their homework in terms of any valid arguments whatsoever as to why the province of Manitoba should be moving towards privatization for profit. They have failed that. They have failed miserably. We have asked time and time again in order to try to understand why the government has chosen to go in that direction. We are greatly disappointed they have done that.

Ultimately, whatever the tentative agreement comes down to, we hope and trust that the government will at least open its mind somewhat and allow for public input, in particular input from the clients, input from the home care workers, input from other interested Manitobans in terms of including them in part of the process that would allow them to make sure that the government is going to make a good decision, a good solid decision that is based on information, not based on a philosophical or an ideological point of view. That is clearly the only reason why this government has chosen to move towards privatization for profit.

So we ask still for the government to give serious consideration, Madam Speaker, to allow for that public feedback, which is absolutely critical, no matter what is in the tentative agreement. Thank you.

National Mining Week

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Madam Speaker, today I rise to recognize National Mining Week. Manitoba's mining heritage has been one of the building

blocks of our economy since before Manitoba became a province. Our mining heritage, particularly in the North, was shaped by pioneering explorers, prospectors, geologists and mine makers.

Across Canada, over one million Canadians live in 150 communities whose economic lifeblood is mining. The metals and minerals sector employs 80,000 people directly and another 300,000 jobs indirectly. In Manitoba, mining employs over 3,000 people. Although we may be impressed with the number of jobs related to mining, let us not forget that we have still lost over 1,000 jobs in this sector since 1989. In Manitoba, mining's economic benefits are second only to agriculture. In 1994, mining value production was \$700 million and we are still aware that the all-time high was in 1989 at \$1.8 billion. We realize over the past decade capital investment in the mining sector has declined by over 50 percent. While spending on exploration is expected to be some \$40 million this year, it is still less than that spent in 1988.

At a national level, reserves and production in Canada are in serious decline. We see more mines closing than opening. In Canada during the period of '92-93, 44 mines closed while only 24 opened. Reserves for copper and nickel are down 33 percent, zinc is down 40 percent and lead is down 50 percent.

I am encouraged by the mines that are opening and reopened in the past year if it is an indication that northern Manitoba is once again becoming a major contributor to the province's economy. I am also pleased that the proposed mine at Cross Lake is proceeding.

I also want to congratulate the Mining Association for inviting members of the House to join the mining industry in a celebration tonight.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

House Business

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, once again, the Estimates order is being changed to accommodate my colleagues from across the way. In committee, Room 255, upon the completion of the Estimates of the Department of Education and

Training, we will conduct the Estimates of the Department of Family Services instead of Agriculture.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave for the Estimates sequence change? [agreed]

Mr. Ernst: I move, seconded by the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh), that Madam Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Motion agreed to, and the House resolved itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty with the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) in the Chair for the Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship; the honourable member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson) in the Chair for the Department of Education and Training and the Department of Family Services; and the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) in the Chair for the Department of Labour.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

Report

Mr. Ben Sveinson (Deputy Chairperson of Committees): Mr. Chairperson, I rise to report that at the last sitting of the section of the Committee of Supply, meeting in Room 255, during consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training, a formal vote was requested on item 1.(a) Minister's Salary \$25,200.

The request for the formal vote was made immediately prior to the hour that the committee was to rise, therefore this is my first opportunity to report the request.

Formal Vote

Mr. Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau): A formal vote has been requested. Call in the members.

* (1440)

All sections in Chamber for formal vote.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. The question before the committee is item 1.(a) of the Estimates of the Department of Education.

A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 25, Nays 22.

Mr. Chairperson: The item is carried.

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): Mr. Chairperson, I was paired with the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine). If I would have voted, I would have voted for the quality of education for Manitoba.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. The sections of committee will now revert back to their sections. The Department of Labour is in here, and we would like to wish the member for Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans), happy birthday, for 39 years.

* (1540)

CULTURE, HERITAGE AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Chairperson (Jack Penner): Will the committee come to order.

The honourable member for Point Douglas, to continue his opening statements as we left off on Thursday

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): Mr. Chair, when I left off, I was talking about the immigration into Canada, and I was making reference to some of the statements made by a couple of members of Parliament. I strongly feel that could do a lot of damage to the possibility of our whole immigration program of people taking a different view of Canada as a friendly place to live. So I was referring, and I had mentioned at that time, and I would like to re-emphasize that I hope that our minister in Manitoba had written a letter or made some form of communication contact with Bob Ringma and David Chatters and Preston Manning and the Reform Party.

When we talk about immigration from other countries I really feel that we have to look at the whole family class. When we look at our own families and our families that are here in Canada, and we look at new citizens that come to Canada and have a difficult time, now anyway, have a real difficult time of bringing their

families over from their initial country, I do not think that helps portray us as friendly Canada.

When I say that, all I have to do is just go back to when I was growing up as a youth and I remember, and I am sure we all have these kinds of memories, where at one time or another our grandparents gave us some very good, sound advice and taught us many, many things that today make us who we are and I am sure that we value very much. So when a person comes from another country to make Canada their home, I feel that they should have the right, and they should have the opportunity to bring their extended families because without family it is very lonely, and I do not think that it is right.

I was really pleased when the minister had mentioned that he was involved in negotiating immigration policies. Manitoba with the federal government, and I hope in those negotiations that he asked the federal Liberal government to rescind their awful head tax and the incredible immigration fees that are charged to individuals that want to make Canada their new home. You look at the exorbitant cost, and I have heard from many, many people that said that the costs are so high that it really, in some cases, is next to impossible to bring family members or other people to move to Canada because, like I mentioned earlier, Canada was really built on immigration.

The other thing, with those fees and the head tax that are imposed, what happens to poorer regions of the world that might see the golden opportunity to advance in their careers, in their lives, and they choose Canada as their new home? What happens to those individuals? Because all we have to do is look at our past immigration policies and all it is doing is just encouraging immigration from richer western countries. They will have more opportunities to immigrate because of the cost, and also because of the emphasis and importance that this government has placed on the ability to speak English. That is why we have English as a Second Language programs, so that way all people in the world could be treated, hopefully, on an equal basis upon wanting to make Canada their new home.

These policies are putting obstacles, I think needless obstacles, to new immigrants. Also it puts a tremendous economic obstacle when you move into a new country

and you are trying to get new employment, and a lot of times when your degrees or your accreditations are not or do not meet Canada's standards and you have to upgrade yourself, and you have to get into education opportunities to better your own opportunities and the opportunities for your family. You are trying to get an education, trying to hold down jobs, and a lot of times those jobs are minimum wage jobs. You are trying to make a new life, feed your family, house your family, pay your education opportunities plus trying to pay the money that you had to pay for the fees and the head tax, because in a lot of cases I am sure they have had to borrow it from families or friends or other means.

I have talked to different people, and a lot of people have said to me that these new policies are racist policies. They feel very strongly about that, they say, because what it does is it is designed to keep the poor and people of colour from immigrating to Canada. All that it is doing is encouraging emigration from the western regions, from Europe, and it is discriminating against people from poorer regions of the world.

Also, when the minister was making some of his comments, I was very encouraged when he mentioned that they are negotiating bringing in, I think the figure he mentioned was 200 sewing jobs. I hope when the minister negotiates those jobs with the federal government that there will be in place training opportunities, language training opportunities, and adjustment assistance to these individuals, because I think we are giving some people a tremendous opportunity. Also, when negotiating those 200 sewing positions and negotiating with the government, I hope that the minister will also try to include some kind of a clause to help these new immigrants to Canada to assist them, if they choose, with the family reunification. There should be a package in there. I feel very strongly about that because I emphasize about the strengths of family and the importance of family.

* (1550)

I will be asking some questions a little later about the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council. I will be asking later who was on that council and what roles each individual is playing in there. Then I would like to ask some questions later about the whole provincial accreditation program, because I think that has to be one

of the most important aspects of immigration. If there is an accreditation board or an organization that would view new immigrants to Manitoba, look at the accreditation of each individual and not just throw them out the window and say, I am sorry but we cannot recognize your degree or the accreditation that you have received from your country, but to look at breaking it down and compare it to our standards that each individual has to meet.

In a lot of cases, the individual and governments will spend extra money putting people through, say, a four-year program or a seven-year program for a doctorate degree or whatever, instead of looking at coming up with personalized adult education training programs. I have seen it work in different programs in Manitoba. New Careers was a good example where you did the task analysis and you took an individual's personal qualifications or certification programs, and then you designed your program to accommodate the individuals of that group.

I think it would help a lot of people, and I think it would help Manitoba. When I say that, for an example, an engineer or a doctor or a lawyer from another country, they might not have to go through the whole seven years. There might be a program where they could take for three to four years and then challenge our Manitoba standard. Meanwhile, there should be assistance provided where there is money set aside for individuals to be funded throughout that three to four years or in some cases it might be two years, and training allowances given for individuals to have the proper time to spend with their family, to do their studying. Then, upon graduation, you could look at the repayment of the cost of that degree or accreditation, whichever is needed, when a person is making a good salary in whatever career that they are qualified in.

The other opportunity that we have, and we could be very innovative here in Manitoba, is to look at some of our very high-skilled needs areas in Manitoba. As you are aware that in the North and some of our rural communities, it is hard to get doctors, or some communities need lawyers or some need engineers or some need electricians or some need plumbers. I think we should seriously, really take a serious look at that.

If a person is willing to relocate, say, three years or five years to one of those highly—and a lot of times when a

person relocates to a lot of our wonderful places in Manitoba, they end up staying there anyway, but if we could look at the opportunity of a forgivable loan of the education costs, if they stay, say, three years or five years. If they choose to work in Winnipeg, fine. People have that choice, and then if they do stay in a bigger centre, then they can repay the cost of the education when they are gainfully employed in their career, instead of trying to hold down two jobs trying to feed a family, trying to pay your mortgage, trying to pay your education costs, and, on top of that, trying to find time to study. We are, I think, placing people in very difficult situations, and I know some succeed, but a lot of people who could succeed do not even have the opportunity to even attempt that.

I think those are some of the examples that I hope the government will look at. It would probably save us a lot of money because it would be a wise investment. It would be an investment in people who have chosen to call Manitoba their home.

The other area that I would like to touch a bit on is the Manitoba Intercultural Council. I have been at some meetings. I have been in contact with the membership there, and I see a lot of work they are doing. It is a wonderful organization, and it is an organization that is made up of various organizations throughout Manitoba, even throughout the city. Wade Williams is the president. I know that there are Portuguese associated, Filipino, Chinese, East Indian; all different members of each organization are part of that, I guess it would be, umbrella organization. So that is a strong voice and an easy way of communicating with the community.

I wish the government would look at assisting that organization and working closely with that organization because it would benefit the government, and it would—[interjection] Well, dollars or whatever commitment that the government can give, too, because I know that they try to fund-raise. You go to events and they always have an excellent turnout. I think it is a very strong organization that warrants support of the government because it has the support of a lot of the people from the city and from Manitoba.

So those are just some of the comments I want to put on record, and then I would like to go into some of the

questions I have pertaining to this year's budget. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: I have been asked by one of the members of the committee whether there would be leave, whether she would also be able to put a few comments on the record. Is there leave from the committee? [agreed]

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Mr. Chair, I am sorry to have missed the minister's opening address. I am particularly sorry to have missed his remarks because I understand, among other issues, he discussed films and libraries. So I look forward to reading his remarks in Hansard.

I am very concerned about libraries. They are very important to me, both as instruments for community development and instruments for education. I will be asking some questions later about libraries, particularly about the Future of Public Libraries in Manitoba, the 1994 publication.

I also understand that the minister mentioned at least two films, *For the Moment* and *My Life as a Dog*. I want to say that I enjoyed both of them. For the Moment, I particularly enjoyed the historical and cultural elements. Of course, it is always touching to see a film that is set in our province and where one can recognize particular geographical locations, so I certainly enjoyed it. Also, at least one of the installments of *My Life as a Dog* was filmed in my constituency and I was observing the filming as I walked by with my dog, so I am proud of my constituency for having the filming.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the contribution that film does make to our economy. I know that the minister shares this with me.

Second, I want to agree with the suggestion made by the honourable member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickey) concerning the insulting remarks of Bob Ringma and Dave Chatters. I agree with the member for Point Douglas that a letter of censure is in order, and I hope that will be delivered.

Last year in Estimates, most of the questions I asked were about publishing and film classification, although I did ask a lot of questions about boards, especially the

Manitoba Arts Council. This year my questions will be more wide ranging.

Later on we may be joined by the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) who wishes to ask some questions about Fitness. We see that Fitness is now part of this ministry. My caucus is particularly concerned about the decreasing hours of phys ed in schools and what the impact will be on the already sagging physical fitness of Manitobans. We are disturbed, too, that despite the poor physical fitness of women and girls in Manitoba, physical education programs in Manitoba generally encourage competitiveness, competitive sports, rather than physical fitness and well-being, but I am sure the member for Radisson will take this issue up when she comes in, if indeed she is able to.

* (1600)

Having read the minister's news release on the discussion of new privacy legislation regarding the protection of personal records and health records and balancing this with the right to access of information, it certainly seems to me that the legislation is needed, but I think what I would like to put on the record is that it is needed because the government created the need by privatizing government records. I am referring to steps like the SmartHealth card, like the sale of Manitoba Data Services and the privatization of phone records through Faneuil. So certainly protections are needed, and we compliment the minister's initiative in repairing the damage caused by other areas of his government.

On a more salubrious note, I want to congratulate the winners of the Prix Awards, and I will be passing along my personal messages of congratulations when I receive the addresses of the recipients. I am very sorry to have missed the evening. There was a conflict with the YWCA's Women of Distinction Awards and I attended that event.

In conclusion, I want to say that I think the minister and I are both extremely fortunate to work with culture and heritage. These are aspects of our civilization which exalt the human spirit and honour human achievements both past and present. I am sure the minister shares this perspective. I look forward to working with him and his staff in helping to provide a supportive environment, the kind of environment which is of course necessary if art is

to flourish and if heritage is to be honoured and celebrated.

I thank the committee for giving me leave to make these few introductory remarks.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Chairperson, I would seek leave just to give some brief opening remarks.

Mr. Chairperson: Is it the will of the committee to grant leave? [agreed]

Mr. Lamoureux: Thank you, Mr. Chairperson and committee members, for allowing me the opportunity to be able to say a few words.

In the past, I had been the critic for Culture, Heritage and Citizenship. I tend to give a lot of focus on the multicultural side or the citizenship side of this particular side of the Estimates, and it is only due to time. I recognize the importance of the whole department, and it is not to underestimate how important a role the whole department has to play in terms of the development of Manitoba's society and having some sort of influence in terms of preservation of heritage, whether it is through museums, films, whatever else is out there or in addition to whatever else is out there.

What I wanted to focus my few remarks on is the whole issue of immigration, and the reason why it is immigration is because it is a very important issue not only for me personally but also for my constituency. This is an issue which I ultimately believe the provincial government is playing a larger role in as the federal government has chosen to allow the provinces to become more involved in immigration.

What we believe in the provincial Liberal Party as a positive thing that the federal government did was the creation of the provincial nominee classification. That ultimately was used to be able to garner the sewing machine operators, along with co-operation in terms of enhancing that to 200 as opposed to 100, and I think potentially is a tool in the future that this is something that Manitoba could benefit from tremendously.

The member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) points out what the New Democrats classify as a head tax. Even

though we disagree with the federal Liberal government in terms of instituting a \$975 fee, we do not perceive it as a head tax. Head tax does imply a lot more than what is actually being instituted. I have really yet to hear the arguments that clearly demonstrate that this is a racial action by the government. But having said that, Mr. Chairperson, ultimately we would like to see some change in that area.

More importantly from a provincial perspective anyway at this time is the immigration bilateral agreement which is still under negotiation. I have argued in the past and would argue today that what is in Manitoba's best interests is quite unique than what is in other provinces' best interests, in particular the whole idea of family reunification. What we have found is that through family reunification, Manitoba has been successful in terms of attracting immigrants to the province and retaining those immigrants in the province of Manitoba. They have also contributed in many different ways within the economy and the social fabric of our society. Ultimately, any bilateral agreement that is achieved should take that into consideration.

The other thing that we believe that has to be taken into consideration is that quite often the government plus the New Democratic Party here fall into a bit of a trap. That trap is that if Canada receives, just using round figures, let us say 100,000 immigrants in any given year, many would argue that we should get 3.7 percent. I have put on the record in the past what our position is, and that is that we should not be arguing for 3.7 percent. What we should be arguing for is what would be the optimum number of immigrants in the different classifications and how they would complement each other for the province of Manitoba, in essence saying that if Manitoba can receive in any given year somewhere, let us say, between the range of 8,000 to 11,500 immigrants, then that is, in fact, what we should be attempting to negotiate with Ottawa.

I have met with the former Minister of Immigration, and I have full intentions of meeting with the new Minister of Immigration at some point in time in the not-too-distant future hopefully, whenever time allows for it, to emphasize that point primarily because, as has been illustrated in the past by the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) and the Minister of Culture and Heritage (Mr. Gilleshammer), Manitoba has benefited

tremendously through immigration. In Manitoba, I believe the elected officials of all three political parties have recognized the role that immigration has played in the past, and its future role is so vitally important not only to the economy but also, as I have indicated in the past, to the social fabric of our society.

There are many, many different agenda items that need to be addressed with the government of the day, and this has to rank as one of the top priorities, because Manitoba really and truly has not done well through immigration in terms of numbers in the past. We need to be more aggressive, and in some areas it means providing constructive criticism of the federal government and some of the things it might be doing. In other areas, it means working in a very co-operative fashion in order to achieve what is in Manitoba's best interest.

I think that we have a golden opportunity in the sense that Dr. Rey Pagtakhan, who represents a north-end Winnipeg riding, was appointed the parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minister of Canada. This is an individual that, I believe, and the minister has paid compliments to Mr. Pagtakhan in the past, does carry a tremendous amount of clout in Ottawa, and the minister brought an editorial with respect to Dr. Rey here today.

* (1610)

But Mr. Chairperson, the point is what we have to do is we have to maximize whatever communication links we have to ensure that Manitoba is getting more immigrants to the province, because, ultimately, we will be a better society if we are successful in achieving that. I bring up Dr. Pagtakhan because I know his commitment to the issues of immigration, and I feel that he would be a very strong ally with the provincial Legislatures of all political parties to work in co-operation, as many members from all the different ethnic groups have made representation to this particular individual. I know I have, and other MLAs have done just that.

Another important provincial issue is the whole area of immigration consultants. I have sponsored a private members' bill suggesting that what we need to do is to have some form of registration of immigrant consultants. Whether it is a certificate, something ultimately has to be done in that area, Mr. Chairperson, and I look to the provincial government in terms of just to what degree

they are prepared to act on that very important issue, because as the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) and the minister are fully well aware, in the current system that is in place, there is a heavy reliance on seeking and getting immigration advice. That advice could quite often be dealt with through a local member of Parliament or even possibly an MLA. I know a significant percentage of my caseload is dealing with immigration, but there are a number of different areas; same thing with David Walker.

The availability of this sort of a profession is important in ensuring that those individuals who claim to be immigration consultants—and anyone can say they are an immigration consultant. It is important for us to ensure that people who might use these immigration consultants can feel at least somewhat comfortable that the province has granted some sort of a certificate, at least indicating that maybe a test was written, that certain standards, a basic understanding of immigration law, some sort of experience, has been taken into account, maybe a notary public, that something is there to indicate that this individual can give advice, especially if they are going to charge.

That would be the key. If they are going to charge a fee as an immigration consultant, there should be something put into place to ensure that this fee that is surrendered is, in fact, getting something back of value in return, especially because, and just given the number of cases that I have dealt with, these are people in most part who want in a very desperate way to get something resolved and are very reluctant to pass on anything that might enhance their likelihood of being successful, whether it is an immigration appeal or a sponsorship of someone else.

Having said that, Mr. Chairperson, there is no doubt a number of questions that I could ultimately go through this whole department, not only in multiculturalism and immigration issues but, in essence, the whole department. Unfortunately, I am not going to have the time this go around, but, hopefully, individuals will not interpret a lack of sincerity on my not being able to do that. It is only because I have other responsibilities in other committee rooms.

Having said those few words, I appreciate the members providing me leave to say those few comments. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Does anybody else seek leave to make an opening statement? No? I will grant leave if there is a wish to.

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

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

We will be starting with the area of Citizenship, Section 14.4 of the Estimates.

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): I am pleased to introduce the staff who are joining me. Roxy Freedman, the Deputy Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, recently joined us. The Deputy Minister of Citizenship, Doris Mae Oulton, and the person in charge of Administration and Finance Division, Dave Paton.

I look forward to your questions, and I hope that some of the comments that you put on the record in your opening statements will find their way into questions so that we can deal with those in some detail. If not, I will find some time to respond to them before we finish the proceedings.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Minister. We welcome your staff.

Mr. Hickes: I welcome the opportunity to ask some questions on citizenship and immigration policies. When I made the reference to head tax, that has been a term used by many citizens of Manitoba and Canada. When I say that it is an unfair fee paid to individuals who choose Canada as their new home, all we have to do is look at the \$975 fee plus the processing fees and the exorbitant costs for people who want to make Canada their home.

All we have to do is look at the Asian countries, look at the wage structure of the Asian communities and compare it to the European countries and the wage structure from the European communities. It does not

take a rocket scientist to figure out that the people from the European communities would have an easier time to come up with the funds to immigrate to Canada.

Also, if you compare the Asian countries to the European countries, I am sure a lot more people would have the ability to speak English than a person who is in one of the Asian communities. That is why I think we are headed the wrong way. We are forgetting about families of people who are already living in our province and in Canada who wish to bring their extended families closer to them.

All I have to do is look at, for an example, in the Chinese community and in the Philippine community and look at the extended families from those great countries. If you look at the wage structure and the cost compared to Europeans and if you look at the ability to speak English, well, who is going to be given the best opportunity? I do not think that is too hard to figure out.

So making those clarifications, I would like to ask the minister, how far are we in negotiations of a Canada-Manitoba immigration policy and has he made some of those concerns that I raised to the federal government?

* (1620)

Mr. Gilleshammer: Mr. Chairman, I would be pleased to answer those questions and comments that the honourable member for Point Douglas has made. Certainly, we have opposed the putting in place of a number of different forms of fees to enable the federal government to cost recover some of the expenses of that department. I have spoken to both Minister Marchi and the new minister Minister Robillard to that effect, to indicate that Manitoba has been a tremendous net benefactor from immigration and that we, like some other parts of the country, welcome immigration to Manitoba and see the cultural diversity that we have in this province as a real strength and we, in fact, need more immigration.

I know the honourable member recognizes that it is the federal government and the federal government alone that makes those rules, puts in place those fees and truly is the gatekeeper. I know as he weaved his way through the opening statements and comments that sometimes, I am sure it was not deliberately, but that was lost, that

Manitoba does not have the ability nor the interest in putting those roadblocks in the way, which slows down or speeds up immigration to Canada.

Our role is to make sure that people around the world who want to immigrate to this country recognize and realize that Manitoba is a good place to come to, that there are opportunities here and that they have a correct impression of what we have to offer.

So both in writing, in a number of speeches I have made in the House and other places and in direct meetings with the former minister and the current minister, we have put forward Manitoba's viewpoint on that, and while they have to set national policy and they may have some difficult issues to wrestle with in Toronto and southern Ontario and other places, that national policy cannot be put in place to penalize jurisdictions like Manitoba.

So I want to put his mind to rest about that, that we have made that known and I believe other ministers have also made that known with their colleagues at the federal level.

I am pleased that the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), for instance, mentioned that a member of Parliament from Manitoba is now the parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minister, truly a lofty position and a great honour for Mr. Pagtakhan, who I think has been a tremendous supporter of emigration from all lands to Manitoba. The expectation is that he is going to take on this fight, and he is going to deliver for Manitoba a level playing field. We certainly look forward to hearing about the work that he is going to do with the Prime Minister and the federal cabinet to modify the impact of these fees and have the federal government truly take a second look at this to see that even though they are looking for additional sources of income, this has a detrimental effect on Canada and on Manitoba.

The fees certainly will slow down the family reunification and the family class immigrants that Manitoba has benefited from in the past, and on every occasion we make that point with the federal minister to have them rethink that policy and look at it.

The member also talked about the ability to speak English and sort of deliberately or inadvertently left the

impression that Manitoba somehow was becoming the place where certain immigrants perhaps were not coming or were not feeling comfortable or that immigration was being targeted to people who spoke English, and I know in his comments this morning he went much, much further than that, and I will maybe deal with those after I see them in print, but I would like to read into the record the source countries that Manitoba has relied upon for immigration, and I think that perhaps he will understand that the comments he put on the record this morning and again today are not accurate.

Mr. Chairman, 1993 was the last full year that we have immigration numbers to Manitoba that have been finalized. The top source country was the Philippines and, in fact, in a six-year period of source countries that I have listed, the Philippines has been the top source country each and every year. In 1993, India was the second highest. We had the second highest number of immigrants from that particular country. The third place was Hong Kong, the fourth place was Vietnam and the fifth place was the United States.

I do not think those countries that provide immigrants to Manitoba necessarily would fit in with the view that the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) was enunciating. In 1992, the top five were the Philippines, Hong Kong, Poland, Vietnam and India. In 1991, it was the Philippines, Poland, India, Vietnam and the People's Republic of China, and the same in 1990. In 1994, although figures are not fully completed, these are preliminary, again it was the Philippines that provided 22 percent of our immigrants, Hong Kong 12 percent, People's Republic of China was 8.2 percent, Bosnia-Herzegovina was 6.4 percent and India 6 percent.

So if the member feels that only English-speaking people and people trained within English schools are coming to Manitoba, the statistics do not back that up, and I would be pleased to go into more detail at any point with the member to show that his concerns there are simply not warranted.

I think the question revolved around the agreement with the federal government. I indicated in my opening remarks that we are still in negotiations with the federal government. We feel that there has been sort of a more positive environment in Ottawa since the change in the ministry there from Minister Marchi to Minister

Robillard. As well as changing the ministers, it would seem that they changed the deputies, as well, and many of the senior staff, and there has been a much more receptive attitude until recently in terms of negotiating immigrants and an immigrant agreement for Manitoba. The member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) had mentioned the fact that the provincial nominee class is a new avenue.

We have been able to achieve some things even without an immigration agreement. We are still going to work very, very hard, but the sewing machine operators are being recruited and allowed to come into the country based on that new category, the provincial nominee class. We have also been working very hard on a special movement from the Ukraine. So I think even without an agreement signed we are doing some very positive business with the federal government under the new minister.

What is complicating negotiations at the present time is this whole issue of what the federal government is going to be in the future, and many, many departments are looking at areas of overlap and duplication, and the federal Immigration Department is asking the question, do we need to be in the settlement business, that we think maybe the province should take this over entirely. We are saying that we have some interest in that as long as the federal government recognizes that they have an ongoing and enduring role to pay costs for settlement programming.

So that has been sort of levered into the discussion on an immigration agreement and it has kind of complicated things, but we will continue to soldier on and attempt to bring an agreement about hopefully in the near future.

So I trust that that would give the member some more insight into that. I can assure him again that we have put forward our concerns about any of the roadblocks that are being put there by federal immigration officials that are a detriment to Manitoba.

Mr. Hickes: I think when I made the example of Asian countries versus European countries, that the minister would understand that immigration in the future, because of the extra costs for people to come to Canada, that it will be much easier for people to emigrate from the European countries versus the Asian countries.

Also, in your opening statement, you mentioned about recruiting, I think it was 200 sewers for the sewing industry—I think it was 200?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes.

Mr. Hickes: Was not one of the criteria of recruiting the ability to speak English, in your opening statement?

* (1630)

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, I am pleased the member has clarified that his concerns are not over immigration patterns in the past but immigration on into the future. Time will tell whether the member is correct or not. We will certainly be watching that, and I know the federal government will be watching that, too. The pattern has been that the Asian countries have been by far a greater source of immigration in the past to Canada and certainly to Manitoba.

I guess Canadians can take pride in the fact that we have opened our borders to people from all over the world. The member talked about that this morning, and many of us who sit in this House are sons and daughters of immigrants, or grandsons and granddaughters, and we know of the importance of immigration and what it has done for our country.

I think we are going to have to rely upon people like Mr. Pagtakhan to be sure that the Prime Minister and the federal cabinet are aware of these things. I know from talking to the federal government that to a large extent, while they are interested in cost recovery, they are not sure where they are going. Some of the policy ideas they have floated have been withdrawn; some of them have been put in place on a temporary basis. But I think we would all be wise to be vigilant as this unfolds to see that the country as a whole and Manitoba in particular is not adversely impacted by national policies. At the moment, we feel very strongly that we will be, particularly because many, many business-class immigrants who come here with a truck full of money are going to be going to the three cities that they prefer to go to, that is, Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal.

I am sure that as these policies take effect, we are going to have to be sure that our federal members, particularly since in Manitoba, I think, out of our 14 federal

members, 12 of them belong to the governing party, that the federal Liberals and the provincial Liberals take an active role in monitoring this. Federal officials are telling us that it should not have a detrimental effect. We can already see by our numbers that it has affected us, and we will continue to press them to change their policies.

My comment on the sewing machine operators, most of the interest and most of the applications we have had are from Asian countries. Some of those families here in the city of Winnipeg, in particular, are ultimately going to have to sponsor these families because this was one of the ways we were able to convince the federal government that these people would not be a drain on the federal government, is that we had families here who were prepared to take responsibility to sponsor these immigrants, and if the sponsorship broke down, rather than that cost and the responsibility falling back on the federal government, the families that are already here would take that responsibility. We think that will certainly work in Manitoba's favour.

I have to say that the federal government is still the gatekeeper, they still will allow people in by their criteria, not Manitoba's criteria. It is a national criteria that is put there for all jurisdictions. One of the criteria that they have always had in their point system is the ability to speak English, and this has been there for a long, long time. To achieve that magic 70 points, they look at things like financial resources, they look at the educational levels, they look at the ability to speak English, and that point system that has been in place for so long has not changed. So it is one of the measures that they use.

By the same token, the member will know, and so do I and I think all committee members know that people who came from all parts of the world who have immigrated to Canada where they needed assistance in settlement, they needed assistance in education, they needed assistance in training and assistance to get jobs, those settlement support services are still there.

If the member wants to see a change in the point system and the criteria, then, again, I would urge him to talk to Rey Pagtakhan, and perhaps he could take the member's concerns directly to the Prime Minister since he is the parliamentary secretary there.

So that has not changed. Even though these financial barriers have been put in place, I believe that will continue to be one of the criteria that the federal government uses as they evaluate and analyze people from other parts of the world who want to come to Canada.

Mr. Hickes: When I raised those concerns, I was trying to draw a picture for everyone in this room, that if we follow the policies that are in place today, it will be a lot more difficult for people from Asian countries to come to Canada versus people from European countries. I think I heard the minister verify that. I am not sure. The stats he was quoting were from 1993, but if we follow the immigration policies we have in place today and look ahead five years from now to see if your stats would still be the same, would they still stay the same, I do not think so.

That is what I am worried about because we have a lot of people who have immigrated before these changes and exorbitant fees were put into place who want to have their families close to them who will have a much harder time to get their families over now, but when we require, and we always do every year, immigration from other countries, it will be much easier for people in the western part of the world to immigrate here.

The other thing is, because one of the priorities is the ability to speak English or French to immigrate to Canada, then if we happen to lose the funding for English as a Second Language or if, say, the requirement is lowered, then what happens to some of the people that we will have immigrating here? That I am also concerned about.

I understand that the responsibility is a federal responsibility, but you are the Minister of Citizenship in Manitoba, and what I am referring to is immigration moving to Manitoba. You as the minister, I hope you will or that you have spoken to the minister in Ottawa and said, hey, look, what is happening here? Are we only going to be bringing in immigration from English-speaking countries or from European countries that can pay your high fee? From what I have heard, I do not think you agree with those new charges that are put in place for people, from your statements. I hope you will clear that up, because that is a very high fee for people from Asian countries and plus the priority for English and

French, if they are going to maximize it, that is going to be very difficult.

On that note, when we talk about sewing machine operators, and you were saying you are recruiting from the Philippines, which is great, but I hope that you have looked at the opportunity of the 200 that were coming to Canada the possibility of somehow encouraging family reunification for those individuals. Also I am sure some will need English training programs. So I will just leave that with the minister. After the minister responds, my colleague has a couple of questions that she has asked if she could ask, so she will be asking the next, but it will be in the sewing machine operator area.

* (1640)

Mr. Gilleshammer: I am not sure what part of my answer the member was not clear on. I have indicated that I have spoken to the federal minister in person, face to face and over the telephone. I have in my speeches many times and in a letter to the federal minister indicated our thorough unhappiness with the fees that have been put in place, so I think we are on the same side on this, that we think that all of those fees, whether it is a bond, whether it is the right-of-landing fee, whether it is a processing fee, medical charges that have to be paid every few months, those things do not work in favour of Manitoba.

I have stated that and I guess I do not know how I can make it more clear. My other colleagues around the table I think are fully understanding this, that we have said that time and time again.

The Premier (Mr. Filmon) has stated in the House, we are not happy. We feel that those policies have been put in place by a federal government dominated by central Canada to solve a problem in Toronto that really is not a problem here in Manitoba. We know that our immigration numbers have been going down and that the federal government again is the only gatekeeper. They are the ones that can tinker with the formula. They are the ones who are putting those roadblocks in place.

The history of immigration to Manitoba certainly shows that the majority of our immigration has come from Asia over the past number of years, and I suspect it will continue to be that way for some time basically

because of crowded conditions there, the opportunities for a better life in America. Again, the federal government sets that criteria. They set the test, and I am sure that there will always be points in there for a level of education that potential immigrants have, for the ability to speak English or French, for the training they have had, for the financial resources they have. Again, I do not anticipate that formula that has been used for such a long time is going to be changed.

In Manitoba, our Citizenship Branch is responsible for settlement. We will continue to be responsible for that. It is a joint responsibility with the federal government. The feds have shown some inclination to change that with all governments across this land. They want to divest themselves of settlement responsibilities.

I trust and hope my honourable friends in the official opposition will join with us and be sure to pressure federal members to see that they have an ongoing, enduring responsibility for settlement. They simply cannot take that responsibility and give it to the provinces or give it to the private sector and say, well, we will be with you for a few years and then our money is out of here. We have to be sure that they are committed to the settlement issues for a long time.

Basically, I do not think we are disagreeing on very much as far as the recent policies of the federal government on immigration are concerned. I appreciate if in the activities that honourable members are involved in they can raise that within their communities and with federal members. I know Mr. Pagtakhan has spoken out on that. We are relying to a great degree on him to be sure the Prime Minister understands Manitoba's point of view.

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, just a brief comment, I think I can speak for the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickey) and members of my caucus and assure the minister that we will indeed lobby our members of Parliament to accept their responsibilities for resettlement. We do honour and believe in a level playing field and pluralism and multiculturalism.

What I really wanted to ask the minister was a question related to the garment industry, in which I have taken an interest because of my status as the critic for women. The minister has spoken about recruiting 200 workers for the

garment industry, and I believe he identified the main countries from which these workers would be recruited as being the Philippines and the Ukraine. I understand that a lot of Filipino women do speak—I guess the workers would not necessarily be women but there would be that tendency. Anyway, I understand that many Filipino people speak English, and this is probably true of the Ukraine.

My information is that the garment industry has no room for employment, that the garment industry has moved towards seasonal employment in short runs with layoffs in between. The layoffs in between used to be times when uniforms were made, but this is no longer the case. I am not sure this is the type of employment that we want for immigrants. We probably do not want to bring them into an uncertain market where families will become responsible. I wonder if the minister could comment, or am I asking the wrong person these questions?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I can comment and the member already apologized for not being here this morning, but I want to read again part of my comments this morning about this particular initiative. As we have been able to announce it and make the information available within Manitoba, and, in fact, throughout the world, there have been 700 sponsorship packages which have identified 850 potential candidates abroad in 32 different countries.

So when we enter into an initiative like this, it is not country-specific. I guess we need to get that information out worldwide, but, certainly, the families who are in Winnipeg now, in Manitoba now, who are involved in the industry and have relatives who wish to perhaps have an opportunity to immigrate to Manitoba using this vehicle are the ones who are, I think, helping to identify relatives in those countries to see if they are interested in that opportunity to be here.

The industry working with other departments have indicated that there are anywhere from 1,500 to 2,000 jobs available in that industry. The long-term solution, as I indicated this morning, is to train Manitobans. If, in fact, a variety of jobs are there, even though it is nearly the lowest unemployment rate in Canada, we still have somewhere around 7 percent unemployment, which is not acceptable. I mean, strides have to be taken through I, T and T and Education and Family Services to identify

some of those people who might want to find employment in the garment industry.

This is an extremely important industry in Manitoba. Very high quality garments are made that are sold around the world. It is a booming industry which at the present time is looking for more sites. I know quite recently, the Fashion Institute people have been in rural Manitoba in communities like Virden, Melita, Reston and the Brandon area, talking about the opportunities that exist there. There are factories now in St. Malo and in Steinbach.

It is a booming industry. The product is good. There are job opportunities there. I think we were certainly convinced by the work that was done by many departments that, in fact, there was a labour market shortage and that part of this problem could be addressed through immigration. It took a long time to get a number of federal departments onside to examine just what type of workforce was available, people who were on social assistance or on unemployment insurance, how many of those we could train. Again, we kept coming back to part of the solution being immigration, and we are pleased that in recent weeks that was achieved.

The member raises an issue about the labour market sometimes having a slowdown. This is certainly true. There have been times because of lack of product or other reasons when some of these factories have had a short-term layoff, but people who are professionals in the Department of I, T and T, Education and Family Services, as well as our own department at the provincial level, as well as staff from the federal Immigration department and the federal Human Resources department, examined this for many, many months and did come to the conclusion that part of the solution can be immigration.

So we are pleased that we have finally achieved that. There are some tight time lines in there that give us some cause for concern, but it is going to be an opportunity for immigrants wanting to come to Canada to achieve that through this particular side agreement that we have with the federal government and the fashion industry.

* (1650)

Ms. McGifford: I thank the minister for his remarks. Unfortunately, I do not have my notes here on the

garment industry. Again, the minister may not be the appropriate person to ask these questions of, but what I understand about the industry is that there are a couple of very intensive periods of work where, yes, more people are needed, but then they get laid off in the intervening periods and then become either a community responsibility or, I suppose, a family responsibility.

I do have questions about people coming as immigrants to a market that is as insecure as this. I know that workers were laid off at at least one of the Nygard factories during March. I think that the number of jobs available is at least disputable. I have heard some very different information from what the minister is presenting. I know that since NAFTA many of the garment jobs have moved offshore.

I just want to put those remarks on the record. If the minister wants to respond, I would appreciate it.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, I would just comment that in talking to people that I have known for a long time who immigrated to Canada that the leaving of one's home and one's homeland and one's country and friends and relatives has always historically been sort of an insecure future, an uncertain future.

In many cases, they are leaving because of conditions within their own country, whether it was from war or famine or overcrowding. I think, given the numbers of people who want to come to Canada from all over the world, Canada is seen as a bright spot and, of course, recognized by the United Nations two of the last three years as the finest country in the world to live.

The uncertainty is always going to be there, and the insecurity is always going to be there, as people leave and often leave conditions that are very, very unpleasant. They come with hope. They come with the idea that there will be work for them. I know from talking to people who were born and raised in Manitoba and who have been through the school system who are wondering where this world is going and where they are going to end up, there is uncertainty there, but I think we will always welcome these immigrants, and they will always see Manitoba, and Canada in particular, as a wonderful place to come.

Mr. Hickes: I was just going through the material here, and it says here, it is under Expected Results: Co-

ordination of the Interdepartmental Working Group on immigration related issues.

When you refer to Interdepartmental Working Group, could the minister tell me who is on that, or who makes up the working group?

Mr. Gilleshammer: At the federal level, I indicated there was the Department of Immigration and the Human Resources department who certainly took the lead from that level. Provincially, the Department of I, T and T, the Department of Family Services, the Department of Education, as well as this department were involved, and there were times when Rural Development was brought in for economic activity outside of Winnipeg. As well, we talked to departments like Health and Agriculture.

So this was a broad-based group of people brought together to examine this issue from many different aspects to try and understand what impact this would have on our province, and it truly is a fine example of government departments and government bureaucracy working together.

Mr. Hickes: Also on the same page, it says, placement of 25 newcomers in permanent employment in their respective fields. How are you achieving this? Is this through training or employment opportunities subsidized by government?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, there are many partnerships that develop within the community where we are able to assess credentials and place them in particular fields of endeavour where there are openings and vacancies within the province. Again, it is a matter of our Citizenship Branch working with other departments who are in the labour market area, whether it is the Department of Labour, Rural Development or I, T and T and trying to match skilled immigrants with actual positions that are out there.

Mr. Hickes: Just to go to the next one, it says, provision of a minimum of 400 immigrants with accreditation and employment counselling and referral annually. Do you meet that every year, of accreditation to 400 immigrants?

Mr. Gilleshammer: That is a target that we have within the department that is met some years and not others. Last year, it was 300-plus that we were able to provide

referrals and counselling for, but that is a target based on historical numbers and based on our ability to deliver those services.

Mr. Hickes: When you say, like you said, some years it is being met and others it is not, are you going government fiscal year to government fiscal year on this program? If that is the case, how many do you have that are in the possibility of getting their accreditations for this year? How many do you have on apprenticeship programs?

Mr. Gilleshammer: That question would be better asked in the Department of Education. That has the responsibility for training and apprenticeship.

* (1700)

Mr. Hickes: I guess what I was looking at was, if you are looking at 400 getting their accreditation or counselling or referrals annually and stuff like that, who does their referral and where is it handled out of?

Mr. Gilleshammer: The responsibility for that is the labour market credentials branch within Citizenship who make referrals to other agencies and other departments of government.

Mr. Hickes: I would just like to move down to—it says, Expected Results, delivering of five antiracism and Respectful Workplace training sessions to the public sector and the community and continued follow-up with those training sessions already initiated.

That is the target for this year. What was last year, or was it the same? If it was the same, was the target met?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Mr. Chairman, I am told that that target was met and surpassed, but it does give me the opportunity to talk a little bit about the code for a Respectful Workplace.

We found over the last few years where we at one time had a program called Bridging Cultures, where a lot of the activity within that particular line in the budget was designated for antiracism activities and to help combat some of the more unseemly things that happen in our society, we were not happy with the results that we were getting there, so within the branch, this code for a

Respectful Workplace was developed and has been put in place within the Citizenship Branch. It has also been shared with the Civil Service Commission and with some of the other departments of government.

I know from talking to the people who have been monitoring this program that they feel it has been very, very successful. Maybe I can just give you a little background on it. There is a statement of principle that has been put in place within the department where we strive for a respectful workplace, one where we believe and are reminded that we are important contributors to the harmony of our work environment, where we feel respected as individuals and know that diversity is treated as an asset. Collectively, we support each other and do not tolerate any behaviour that is or is perceived to be inappropriate or disrespectful. We are committed as individuals by being active participants and not merely bystanders.

This has been a very positive policy within our branch that has been shared with the rest of the department and with other departments of government. We have, I think, been asked by the Civil Service Commission for the details on it and believe that through this very proactive type of program, we can truly not only talk about what we are doing but sort of live this within the department and be an example of a model workplace that can be emulated by other departments of government, other levels of government, and, in fact, the private sector.

I am told that this workshop has been given in the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, the Department of Justice, for the City of Thompson, for the Delta Hotel chain, for the Human Rights Commission, for the City of Winnipeg and for a number of others.

So we think that we are taking a very proactive role in this particular approach and one that I suppose started as a bit of an experiment to try and promote a society that does have respect for other people and tolerance for other people. We look forward to this code being adopted by other departments, other jurisdictions and, in fact, having a very positive impact on the workplace, not only within government but also within society. I would be pleased to provide my honourable friends with a copy of this, so that they get a better understanding of it.

Mr. Hickes: I appreciate the opportunity to see a copy of the program because I would be interested in seeing

how long those programs are. Are they one-day training programs, or are they a week long or two weeks long, and who delivers these programs? Are they through colleges or outside consultants or who?

Mr. Gilleshammer: The program has been developed by staff within the Citizenship Branch, and I think it is fair to say that it is a growing activity as other people find out about the positive aspects of it.

Some of the workshops are two-day workshops and some are longer. I think the important aspect of it is to buy into it in principle and believe that this is the appropriate way to go, so that after a thorough introduction to it that this becomes an ongoing activity within a department or within a branch of government and that the very many positive sides to this are appreciated, so that if, in fact, it can be achieved in a two-day workshop and be reinforced by further consultation later, it can have a very positive result. I think, also, we are prepared to train people in these other departments who can go back and sort of widen the circle of people who are interested in this.

Mr. Hickes: Is there any training of this nature going on in the civil service of Manitoba within the different departments and different branches as new people are being hired on? You know, it would be good.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes, I am told the Civil Service Commission offers this on an ongoing basis to interested parties.

Mr. Hickes: Would the minister recommend to his colleague, whoever is in charge of the Civil Service branch or the government, that new employees take this kind of training program, because I think it would be very important.

If there are new employees coming on and if it is a one- or two-day course, I think it would benefit everyone. I think it would be an excellent training program, and I think it would be very educational for a lot of people.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Again, I think we are in agreement that this is a wonderful program delivered by the branch. The Civil Service Commission obviously feels the same way and have bought into it. It tends to be offered probably on a group basis as opposed to an individual

basis, but I am sure that literature is available for newcomers. Part of any branch would be an orientation into the job and the branch, and we would encourage the Civil Service Commission to continue to support this.

Mr. Hickes: I would like to move on to the bottom of 62. It says, co-ordination and development of three new curricula and curriculum support materials plus two editions of Prairie Reader.

I have never seen the Prairie Reader. Who puts these editions out and who gets a copy of them?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I am told that this is provided through the branch to people in the ESL program, and we would be pleased to provide a copy of it for the member.

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, what is the purpose of the Prairie Reader then? Is it used by students in ESL programs? Which authors are published in the Prairie Reader? Is this material from immigrant people?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I am told that it is produced by our staff to be part of the training program for ESL, and they will attempt to find subjects of interest to people who are in the program who are attempting to learn the language. I am told one of the most recent ones was on fire safety, and it was developed probably through the Fire Commissioner's office and some of the staff there.

So, again, I think the previous time we met the member told me about her teaching background, and you would know that you constantly look for reading material that would be of interest but still serve the purpose of being able to be part of a language program, as well, so that the vocabulary would have to be appropriate and the material would have to be of a certain interest.

So this is an ongoing challenge, and I think perhaps if we share a copy of that with the member, you will have a better understanding of it.

* (1710)

Ms. McGifford: It is not then a literary publication as such? It is to facilitate the learning of language, and that is its goal.

Mr. Gilleshammer: That is correct. I guess the literary value is secondary to its role as a curriculum base to assist with the teaching of English.

Mr. Hickes: I have one more question, and that has to do with an accreditation program. I mentioned earlier in my opening comments about the possibility of looking at setting up an accreditation board or tying in individuals' accreditations from another country, to look at the possibility of assisting people to get their accreditations.

Through your department, could you see your government pursuing that further, to assist individuals to set up as a group, not just one training program for one individual, but you group the individuals who have the same need and set up training classes, instead of going through the whole seven years or four years or whatever, that you could look at training specific needs and then prepare people to challenge for their Manitoba degree or accreditation?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, this in my mind is not out of line with what we do, that we assist people in upgrading their skills and meeting accreditation, but often that accreditation is done by another body. If it is medical doctors who have come to Manitoba and want to be able to practise medicine, they have to get their accreditation from the provincial government and the College of Physicians. I know we all want to be sure that when we go under the knife, that we have somebody that understands medicine and is truly accredited. One of the difficulties, of course, in some countries, people who have some background in medicine, you know, are considered highly skilled and highly qualified in their particular jurisdiction and perhaps would even be referred to as doctor. We owe it to the people of Manitoba to be sure that, in fact, they do have those skills.

I sometimes remember my parents and friends of my parents talking about all these people that came from Europe who are engineers, and I thought, well, they must be training an awful lot of engineers in Europe. Then I found out that anybody that had any training in technology was referred to as an engineer, and not all of them could build bridges and tall buildings. It was simply a reference to technological training.

So I think that the Canadian government and the Manitoba government have a responsibility to check out credentials, to assist where someone needs a little bit of support and help to take that next step to be accredited, and that is part of what we do within our department and within the Department of Education.

Mr. Chairperson: Item 14.4, 4.(a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,369,200—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$467,400—pass; (c) Grant Assistance \$1,391,600—pass.

Resolution 14.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,228,200 for Culture, Heritage and Citizenship for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1997.

Now we will move to Multiculturalism, 14.5, 5.(a) Multiculturalism Secretariat (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$87,300—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$66,800.

Mr. Hickes: I have a few questions dealing with multiculturalism. I do not have that many questions. I am just looking at the dollar figures, and I guess what really surprises me when I looked at the figures was under Salaries where we had in '95-96 Professional/Technical, you had three staff, and in '96-97 you have two staff, and the dollar amount goes from \$140,800 down to \$50,000, which is a difference of \$90,800 for one staff salary. I would like to know what that position was and who was in that position.

Mr. Gilleshammer: The fact of the matter is there were a couple of staff positions there. One of them was vacant and had been vacant for some time.

One of the things we are doing within the department is moving the Multiculturalism Secretariat and the Citizenship Branch a little closer together, not only physically moving them but also having them work more in consultation and conjunction with one other. In the next short while, that office will be relocating to 213 Notre Dame. Some of the activities and expenses will be shown within the Citizenship Branch. We anticipate that the activities will continue very much the way they have in the past. The vacant position was one that, as I indicated, had been vacant for some time and we have given up. We now have three people showing in that particular part of the expenditures.

Mr. Hickes: You said one was vacant and the other position obviously someone went somewhere, so who is the individual who either got transferred or moved?

Mr. Gilleshammer: There is a two-SY reduction there. One was a Professional/Technical, and it was the vacant

SY. The other was admin support. That work is being covered off through the amalgamation of the Multiculturalism Secretariat and the community access office. I am told the person was Joanne Prefontaine who is going to Regional Services.

Mr. Hickes: Under the same allocation in my figures here, you had five staff in '95-96, and in '96-97 you have three staff, and one is administrative support that will be running the whole Multiculturalism Secretariat. Is that to be?

Mr. Gilleshammer: That is the one support staff secretarial position, and there are two Professional/Technical staff years there.

Mr. Hickes: So you will be running the Multiculturalism Secretariat with a total number of three staff from five?

* (1720)

Mr. Gilleshammer: That is correct. That is part of our amalgamation that will exist between the Multiculturalism Secretariat and the Citizenship Branch.

Mr. Hickes: So who will be providing services to the individuals? Who will be picking up the extra work that is lost by the reduction in staff?

Mr. Gilleshammer: As I have indicated, there is an amalgamation there between the Multiculturalism Secretariat and the Citizenship Branch. Some of the programming that was of interest to both the secretariat and the branch would be something like the Respectful Workplace. We saw this as an area where additional co-ordination would be required and beneficial.

The work of the secretariat then will be done by the three people designated under that line, but, also, part of the responsibilities will be picked up by staff within the Citizenship Branch.

Mr. Hickes: I am looking at this chart here, and I see under Multiculturalism Secretariat, I presume it would be the director, David Langtry, and underneath you have different divisions, public libraries, Arts Branch. Do all these different divisions report to Mr. Langtry?

Mr. Gilleshammer: No, that is not correct. They report to the Deputy Minister of Culture, Heritage, and that is the deputy minister in charge of the Programs branch who is Lou-Anne Buhr, who is seated in the room. So the Arts Branch, the Public Library Services, Historic Resources, Recreation and Wellness Promotion, Regional Services throughout the province all report to her.

Mr. Hickes: So who reports to Mr. Langtry?

Mr. Gilleshammer: He has responsibilities in a number of areas. The Multiculturalism Affairs Committee of Cabinet, he is a part of that. Also the interdepartmental committee on multicultural affairs and staff within the Multiculturalism Secretariat report to Mr. Langtry who, in turn, reports to the minister.

Mr. Hickes: So who are these two staff who are listed as Professional/Technical under Multiculturalism Secretariat?

Mr. Gilleshammer: One is L. Fernandez. The other is M. Share.

Mr. Hickes: The roles and functions of these two staff, has it increased, decreased, or is it the same as from last year?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, we have found within the secretariat that there is a fairly consistent workload. As I have indicated, some of their functions and responsibilities are going to be more closely tied to the Citizenship Branch. We expect that there will be enough work for them.

Mr. Hickes: The reason I asked is because I was just looking at the number of staff in the past and the number now, and I look at multiculturalism right across the province in Manitoba, and I have heard many people speak, and they speak about the importance of multiculturalism to our communities and that we all need to support it, we all need to do this and that. I look at the total figure at the bottom, and the Multiculturalism Secretariat has almost been reduced financially by very close to 50 percent.

I do not know how that could be a strong commitment to multiculturalism for Manitobans when there is such a decrease in funding. If there is a decrease in funding,

there has to be a decrease in activities. I cannot see how anything else can happen because you are going to have fewer programs, you have fewer people promoting the programs.

I hope the minister is committed to multiculturalism in Manitoba, and I hope he will explain why there is such a deep, deep cut.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I would certainly be more than pleased to explain it. I think I share the member's fondness for multiculturalism. I know I speak out on it often, that this is an extremely multicultural province and in many ways the envy of other provinces across Canada.

The multicultural activities within Manitoba have certainly not decreased in the last few years and probably increased. I think that the member needs to be aware that there are other lines within the budget of the department where multicultural grants are located and that we continue to support the many groups across the province who want to gather and celebrate their uniqueness, whether it is in northern Manitoba or rural Manitoba or the city of Winnipeg.

I can say that one of the real strengths of our province is the many different multicultural groups that not only come out at the time of Folklorama but, in fact, provide entertainment and education to Manitobans throughout the entire year. I am always proud when many of these groups come out to western Manitoba, whether it is to Brandon or Minnedosa or other communities to share their food, their colourful costumes, their dance, their language and all of the wonderful aspects there are to multiculturalism which leads to a greater understanding of who they are and allows us to join in celebrating their particular culture.

We have not changed. We have passed a multicultural act, we have done many things over the last number of years to make the various cultural groups within Manitoba feel not only comfortable but welcome and very much a contributing part of our society. I do not think the member needs to feel that there is any downgrading of the significance this government puts on multiculturalism.

I have tried to explain a shift and a closer tie-in between multiculturalism and the Citizenship Branch,

because many of their activities have been quite similar in many ways that they have working with the same client base. We felt that there were some advantages to having these two particular groups work more closely with one another. The support is certainly there from our government and some of the responsibilities will be shifting, but we expect to continue to work with the multicultural community.

I recall just this week going to a wonderful folkloric ballet put on by the Chilean community as part of the lead-up to the Pan-Am Games. I do not know whether honourable members had the good fortune to attend that at the Pantages Theatre, but I can tell you the hall was full that night of Manitobans who were there to enjoy the dance of a group that was brought in from another country. One only had to be there to talk to the participants and the people who were enjoying the evening to understand what a rich part of our province this is and that our government fully endorses and supports them.

Mr. Chairperson: The hour being 5:30 p.m, committee rise.

* (1540)

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Ben Sveinson): Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. When the committee last sat, it had been considering the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training. The last item of business before the committee is Resolution 16.1.

Resolution 16.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,755,100 for Education and Training, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1997.

This completes the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training.

As previously agreed in the House, the committee will now proceed to continuing with the consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Family Services. Did the committee wish to take a brief recess to allow the minister, his staff and critic time to come to the table? [agreed]

FAMILY SERVICES

Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Ben Sveinson): Order, please. When the committee was last considering the Estimates of the Department of Family Services, it was on line 1.(c)(1) on page 51 of the main Estimates book. Shall the item pass?

The minister has some staff at the table here. Perhaps she would like to introduce them?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): Absolutely, Mr. Chairperson. My Deputy Minister Tannis Mindell; Associate Deputy Minister Doug Sexsmith; Bev Ann Murray, who is the director of compliance in the Child and Family Support branch; Ron Fenwick, who is the executive director of Regional Operations; and Jim Bakken, who is the assistant deputy minister of the Child and Family Support branch.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Thank you.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Chairperson, I would like to continue asking questions about the annual reports of the Children's Advocate. I guess I will concentrate on the '94-95 annual report. The first grouping of recommendations have to do with the Children's Advocate and the legislation. I think I probably will not have any questions on this section because there will be a review of the role and the function of office of the Children's Advocate.

Under (b), recommendations concerning the Child and Family Support branch and the act, we have the minister's response in front of us. There are some things that the minister chose to respond to and some the minister did not respond to. For example, the recommendation by the Advocate that less energy be spent on serving political and bureaucratic requirements, there is no comment on that recommendation. I am wondering then if the minister can tell us if that recommendation has been acted on?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, I fully recognize that the Children's Advocate has made a recommendation, but I think it is very important for my honourable friend to recognize that on a daily basis the issues surrounding children that need support and

protection come to the attention of my office and to the department and to staff.

If we can look at the number of issues that do make the headlines in the newspapers on a regular basis, there are a lot of issues around the support and the protection of children and families, and I make absolutely no excuses for being brought up to speed on difficult circumstances and situations in families or when children have been removed from families. I want all of the information that can be provided to me in order to make the right decisions on behalf of children. So I would rather err on the side of caution and ensure that I am fully informed around the circumstances and situations around individual children and families. Of course, I do want to be up to speed when my honourable friend does ask questions, when we are in session, so that I can speak with some confidence around the direction that we are taking to support families and children.

Mr. Martindale: Could the minister then tell me what it is that the Family Support does, in addition to preparing the minister for Question Period, that the Children's Advocate considers serving political and bureaucratic requirements?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, the exact interpretation by the Children's Advocate. I cannot completely speak on his behalf. What I do want to indicate to my honourable friend is that there are many different mandated agencies and many nonmandated agencies throughout the width and depth of this province that do provide support and services to vulnerable families and children.

I know that the support branch works on a day-to-day basis, meets with the agencies, mandated and nonmandated, and the regions of the province that directly deliver the service and provide support in that manner. They, can I say, put in a full day's work in trying to ensure that we are dealing in a sensitive fashion with families and children. I can get some more detail from my department on some of the activities that they do undertake.

I know that right now one of the major issues that we are having to deal with are some of the issues around the native agencies, the desire by the federal government and our aboriginal community around the dismantling of the

Department of Indian Affairs. Of course, child welfare is one of the issues that is high on the minds of the leadership of the aboriginal communities. We have been meeting on a regular basis with the leadership at AMC, with some of the native leadership, to try to determine what the issues are around child welfare and how we can best work together to ensure that children are being protected in their communities. You also know that there have been some tragedies in our province where children have been abused and actually died while in the care of Child and Family Services.

* (1550)

There are many issues that the department has to deal with on a day-to-day basis. We work with agencies on a regular basis to try to understand how case planning is done and how children are best served. There is a lot of activity that is ongoing, and I believe that staff are working extremely hard to try to deal with the issues that face us on a day-to-day basis.

Mr. Martindale: Under Section C. Recommendations concerning funding, I believe that this is an area that not only the Children's Advocate has commented on but also the Provincial Auditor. My concern here is that I believe both the Provincial Auditor and the Children's Advocate have suggested that the funding has been inadequate in the past to meet the needs of Child and Family Services agencies and have been critical of the government for not providing adequate funding, for not providing realistic funding.

Maybe we will get into this again in Child and Family Services, but I suppose it would also be appropriate now. It seems to me that increases in subsequent years may have actually been used to pay off the deficit of the preceding year rather than doing it the other way round, and that is having a realistic budget so that there is not a deficit at the end of the year.

I wonder if the minister could tell us if she thinks the recommendations regarding adequate funding have been met.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I guess it would be very difficult for my honourable friend or me to determine exactly what would be the right amount of money to ensure safety, security and protection of all children. I am not

thoroughly convinced that more money necessarily means better service. We have put \$13 million more into the Winnipeg agency over the last five years.

Do we have better service today? Are our children being protected or served better as a result of that very significant increase in funding. I do not have the answer to that question; I wish I did. I am not sure that my honourable friend could speak with any authority and give me any indication of what amount he thinks is the right amount and how, with that dollar figure that is allocated, he could assure Manitobans that every child would be safe and protected in the province. I am trying to come to grips with the issues of how we better serve children. I do not think we have a system that is good enough at this point in time, but I cannot say with all confidence that more money is going to mean better service for children.

We are presently with the Winnipeg agency undertaking an operational review to determine what we are funding, where that funding is going and how it is meeting the needs of children. If you look at the last several months, we all know that there have been some tragedies in our child welfare system. Would more money have meant that those would have been prevented? I do not believe it was a money or a funding issue. I think that we have to look at the system in some detail—the system that we have in place today—and we have to try to determine whether it is working in the very best manner possible to ensure safety, security and protection of children.

I think rather than saying, you know, another \$5 million or another \$10 million could ensure safety, I cannot say that with any confidence. Maybe my honourable friend has more information than I might have on what exactly the right amount would be and whether he would say that would be adequate, that would be sufficient, that would be the right amount of money that could guarantee safety, security, protection of all children. I have no hesitation in saying the system that we have in place is not meeting the needs of every child in our Manitoba community, but I cannot say with any confidence that more money or in what area more money would provide that better protection and that better service.

Mr. Martindale: Well, I believe that there are some connections between funding and caseload, for example, and I do not pretend to be the ultimate authority on the adequacy of funding. However, I think that the minister does get requests from agencies as to what they think a realistic budget is so I would like to begin by saying, is that observation accurate? Does, for example, Winnipeg Child and Family Services submit a budget to the department which the minister either meets or provides more or less than what their budget request is?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, the process for funding of agencies is determining or establishing what service we expect the agency to deliver within and there is certain criteria around how much funding goes—it is a fairly detailed process. But, in fact, there are certain amounts of money allocated to agencies for certain services that they provide and the budget is based on the last year's funding and what our expectations are for service delivery for each individual agency. So it is a process of purchase of service from agencies for delivery of that service to families and to children.

The one area that we have placed an emphasis on is the Family Support Innovations Fund. There has been \$2.5 million provided to agencies and to organizations throughout the province that are testing new models of delivery to try to keep families together and provide that support in the home or in the community so that they do not have to be removed from their family circumstance or situation if in fact there is not a serious protection issue surrounding those children. I mean, I believe that wherever possible, if a child is not at risk of need of protection, that we try to work within families and communities and put the supports in place to keep families together and to build healthier families.

You know, I guess I go back again to saying, how much money is going to ensure perfect service for protection of children. I think our focus needs to be on ensuring that the service is delivered in the most appropriate fashion to meet the needs of the children.

Mr. Martindale: Would it not be true to say that the agency, to use Winnipeg as an example, Winnipeg Child and Family Services have felt that the funding they got from your department was inadequate?

* (1600)

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, I guess you can look right across all of the services that government provides funding for, whether it be health, education, family services, highways, communities. You look at every department within government and everyone would like more money.

I guess the key issue for me and what I am trying to determine right now is what is the money that we are providing for the service doing to ensure the protection and the safety of children. If I had an absolute answer, I would give that answer. I do not. I do not pretend to have all of the answers, but I believe we need to know what we are purchasing, for what dollar and what the outcomes and what the results are. Are the dollars going into the right place to do the appropriate things?

If you look at funding right across government and not only funding to the mandated agencies but to all of the agencies that we provide funding to as a Department of Family Services—the Department of Health, Department of Education, Department of Justice, all provide support in many, many ways to families—I believe that we need to look at what service we are purchasing from all different departments and look to see whether we are delivering service to families and children in a comprehensive way or whether we have fragmented services throughout different departments that are dealing with pieces of children and pieces of families.

You know, if we take a look at the dollars that are going to many of the nonmandated agencies, you take a look at the dollars that are going through the Department of Education, through the Department of Health, through the Department of Justice for children, are the dollars that we are spending, significant dollars that we are spending over and above the funding that we provide to Child and Family Services agencies, are those dollars going to organizations, to families in a co-ordinated fashion? That is one of the reasons—and I know we will get into that in the Estimates debate a little later on in my Estimates—we have looked at setting up the Children and Youth Secretariat, to try to find a more co-ordinated way of delivering the service, trying to determine how much actually we are spending across departments and determining whether those dollars are going in a co-

ordinated fashion, in the best fashion possible to serve the needs of families and children.

Mr. Martindale: I notice the minister is now asking questions. Maybe she would like to be the critic and give me a chance of being the minister.

Who is in a better position to determine the need in the community? I would think that the agency who have frontline staff in people's homes and who are dealing with children on a daily basis would have a much more realistic idea of what a realistic budget would be, and I think the minister should listen to those people. Another tack I would like to take is it seems to me that the minister is really acknowledging the inadequacy of their budgets and of her budgeting process when she makes up their deficit. Now, I have heard that this minister has gone to the board of Winnipeg Child and Family Services and said we are not going to cover your deficit and then the next year the minister provides more money, some of which I presume goes to pay off the deficit in the previous year. Is that not what has actually been happening?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, I think if you look right across government we have made very clear statements that we will not cover deficit funding in many areas and you will see that governments across the country have asked those that receive funding from government to live within the budget that is allocated to them. There are very difficult decisions to make, just like we as a government have made a commitment to the taxpayers of Manitoba that we will have a balanced budget, we will not run a deficit. We will not burden our children and our grandchildren with the debts and the deficits that successive governments, regardless of political stripe right across this country, have run up.

We know that we are paying \$600 million in interest on our debt in the province of Manitoba every year and that is \$600 million that cannot go into services for children, whether it be through the Department of Health, the Department of Education, the Department of Family Services, and those who are in vulnerable positions in the province of Manitoba cannot have the access to those dollars that go on interest alone on the debt. So we have made a commitment to the taxpayers of Manitoba today and to our children, to our grandchildren and to successive generations, that we will no longer burden

them with the debt and hamstringing their ability into the future to provide the services that may be needed at the appropriate time in the appropriate fashion.

So I make absolutely no excuses for being able to set a budget which in the city of Winnipeg through the Child and Family Services agency is \$13 million more today than it was five years ago. There are not many areas within government that have received that kind of increased support, and it is because we care about the children and we care about the services that need to be provided. All we are asking of agencies and those that we fund with precious, hard-earned tax dollars is to manage that money in the most efficient and effective way possible and ensure that the maximum amount of support and resource goes into the families and children who need it. I do not think that is too much to ask. We are trying to work in a co-operative fashion to ensure that the dollars we provide and the significant increase in financial resource that we provide is directed in the most efficient and effective manner to ensure that children can be protected, can be safe and secure in their environments.

Mr. Martindale: Of course, there are some significant exceptions to what the minister is saying. For example, the operating-loss agreement for the Winnipeg Jets which is going to cost the taxpayers of Manitoba something in the order of \$57 million to \$60 million, a rather significant exception to covering debt. Also, this minister and this government's policies of increasing poverty means that there is going to be more child abuse which means that there is going to be a greater cost to Child and Family Services agencies and to government and society because we know that there is a link between poverty and abuse.

I would like to ask the minister, how much of this year's budget of Winnipeg Child and Family Services will be used to cover last year's deficit?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, we provided supplementary funding to cover their deficit last year and we have increased their base accordingly.

Mr. Martindale: So what I was alleging earlier is actually true. This government's budgeting is not realistic, it is not adequate as observed by the Auditor's department and by the Children's Advocate. The government does not give them enough money, at the end

of a year they have a deficit, and then this minister covers the deficit in the subsequent year. How do we know that this is not going to happen with this year's budget for '96-97?

Mrs. Mitchelson: That is exactly why we are undertaking an operational review in conjunction with the agency in the city of Winnipeg to determine what we are funding, how we are funding it and what is the appropriate level of funding for service for children in the city of Winnipeg. There is a steering committee that is working on that from both the agency and our department to go through that evaluation and make a determination on what the appropriate level of funding is to provide the service that is mandated by the agency.

* (1610)

Mr. Martindale: So then I take it from the minister's response that there will not be people who need service such as 16- and 17-year-olds being denied service because this minister is suggesting that the funding is more realistic this year, so then I should not have to raise questions next year in Estimates about individuals who are denied service because of the inadequacy of funding. Is that correct?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, there is no one who is denied service if they are prepared to co-operate with the service plan that has been developed by the agency and by the community. If, in fact, someone does not want to be involved in any kind of a plan to be served, I believe that is not a terribly great use of taxpayers' dollars and that the dollars should go to those who are there who want the service and can be helped through the provision of that service.

Mr. Martindale: Well, perhaps we will get into this area again in the future.

The next set of recommendations from the Children's Advocate has to do with service to children and families, and one of the very serious concerns is about children who are in foster homes and experience abuse in foster homes. I see that the minister has responded to all the recommendations in that section. Does the minister consider that she has adequately responded to all of the recommendations in that section?

Mrs. Mitchelson: No, I do not consider they have been adequately responded to as yet, but we are in the process of developing plans to respond to the recommendations.

Mr. Martindale: Could the minister elaborate on the plans that are still being worked on, particularly regarding the safety of children in foster care?

Mrs. Mitchelson: One of the things that has already been undertaken is in fact the restructure of the branch and an increased focus on compliance with standards, and that will be the new focus on the new director of compliance and that part of the branch.

The other is the development of a training module for foster parents that has been developed, and we will be starting implementation of that shortly. We are right now in the process of looking at how we can structure an independent panel for investigation of allegations of abuse in care.

Mr. Martindale: Is the independent panel the only initiative in terms of making improvements to the foster care system?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I think I also indicated that we had developed a training manual for foster parents that is in the process of being implemented and that the case audits and the case studies and the quality assurance program will in a more comprehensive way monitor care in foster homes.

Mr. Martindale: Those are the only two initiatives then?

Mrs. Mitchelson: The branch is in the process of doing major audits and reviews of foster homes, and we are checking for compliance and I guess providing the additional support when that support is needed.

Mr. Martindale: The Children's Advocate recommended the establishment of an aboriginal program directorate. I do not see that that has been addressed in the minister's response in the second annual report. Could the minister tell us if she has looked at that recommendation and rejected it or is it still being studied? What does the minister think of that recommendation?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, that was a recommendation that was made by the First Nations Task Force report. It was one of the key recommendations, but it also followed from a recommendation that said the federal government should establish child welfare legislation, national legislation. We have not received any word from the federal government around—that was the first and primary recommendation and we indicated support for a native directorate as a result of the federal government putting in place national child welfare legislation.

My honourable friend does know the issues surrounding the offload of significant support by the federal government for aboriginals off reserve. I think in my opening comments I talked about the total dollar figure that Manitobans have had to absorb in welfare and child welfare, around \$94 million over the last five years, a significant amount of offload. When you say Manitoba has not put any more money into or is not funding to an adequate level, we certainly have increased and maintained that support that the federal government has offloaded. So there has been significantly more contribution by Manitobans to child welfare and to welfare.

I do want to indicate that the issue just is not quite as simple as setting up a directorate. We have a large aboriginal population in the city of Winnipeg. We have many band-based or, not band-based, but aboriginal mandated agencies outside of the city of Winnipeg. There are differing opinions in the aboriginal community around what a directorate would look like, who would have responsibility. The aboriginal community in the city of Winnipeg does not believe that the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs represents them or their constituency in Winnipeg, so it is not a cut-and-dried issue. I think we want to be sensitive to the aboriginal issues in child welfare, but it is not a simple matter to resolve.

We have stated that in the absence of federal legislation, it would be very difficult for us to set up an aboriginal directorate when we, as a Manitoba government, have responsibility for all people with all different cultural backgrounds. Is it precedent setting to set up without federal legislation recognizing the federal financial and moral responsibility and constitutional responsibility to aboriginal people an aboriginal directorate and not set up a directorate for every other cultural group in the province of Manitoba? We have

responsibility for children of all backgrounds, all cultural backgrounds, in the province of Manitoba. So there are a lot of issues that need to be thought through very carefully.

I am not sure that one aboriginal directorate would satisfy those aboriginals in the city of Winnipeg that would not agree that a directorate that was mandated under the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs would meet the needs of the children in Winnipeg.

Mr. Martindale: Under the recommendations in regard to the Suche report, I see that there is a working group and a number of subcommittees and recommendations are being prioritized and some things have been implemented. There has been a long-standing recommendation and need for a residential care worker's training course at Red River College. The minister's response says that there has been a submission to have such a course. My understanding is that we are really waiting for the province, either Family Services or Education, to decide whether to fund it or not. People have been advocating for this for some time. There is certainly a need for this kind of training. It is a very difficult area of work, and I am wondering why we have not seen this government fund this program at Red River College yet.

* (1620)

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, we are committed and supportive of and I am sure we will see in the not too distant future a program at Red River Community College.

Mr. Martindale: Could the minister tell us when that is going to happen? My understanding is that this proposal has been there for at least two or three years and there have been promises in the past that it is going to be funded and nothing happens. Will we see a course beginning for residential care workers training in September of this year, for example?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, we are working toward that end.

Mr. Martindale: It sort of reminds me of the minister saying that the Vulnerable Persons Act would be proclaimed soon when we were in Estimates last year.

Going on to recommendations specific to agencies and workers, could the minister tell us if she believes that all of these recommendations have been implemented since she responded to all of them?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, the competency based training initiative is well underway and plans are there for continuation of that program. The quality assurance program has been expanded to residential care facilities and there are 22 reviews that have been undertaken.

Mr. Martindale: I would like to go back to recommendations in regard to the Suche report and ask what the minister's plans are for Seven Oaks Centre. I have been getting phone calls. People are very concerned. They are afraid that this government is going to close the centre and sell off the land so it is causing some turmoil and concern amongst the staff there. I am also told that there is no alternative facility for the kinds of adolescents who are located there. So I wonder if the minister can tell us what her plans are for the Seven Oaks Centre.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, I think we are getting a little off track here. We are discussing the Child Advocate's report and this is an issue that should be dealt with either through the Child and Family Support branch line or when I have staff from the Child and Youth Secretariat because there has been a lot of interdepartmental work that has gone into discussion around the Seven Oaks and the future of Seven Oaks Centre.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 1.(c)(1).

Mr. Martindale: I guess a similar question would have to do with the first recommendation under other recommendations so maybe I will ask that under a more appropriate line.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: 1.(c) Children's Advocate (1) Salaries and Other Employee Benefits—\$213,800—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$94,400—pass.

1.(d) Social Services Advisory Committee (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$192,600.

Mr. Martindale: Could the minister tell us how many appeals there were in 1995-96, if it is not too early after the end of the fiscal year?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, there are 1,120.

Mr. Martindale: How many of those were successful?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, 68 appeals were allowed, 448 were dismissed, 450 were withdrawn, 78 did not appear, and 36 were outside of the scope of the committee. There are 40 still pending.

Mr. Martindale: I think the minister earlier said there were 1,120 appeals. Of those, only 68 were allowed. Does that mean that only 68 individuals appeared before the Social Services Advisory Committee?

* (1630)

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, I guess maybe I need to clarify that. There were 1,120 appeals received, and those would have all been heard. Okay.

Mr. Martindale: Okay.

Mrs. Mitchelson: But 78 did not appear to be heard; 36 were outside of the jurisdiction of the committee; 450 were withdrawn. When I said 450 were withdrawn, they were withdrawn before the appeal process took place or at the time of appeal. They voluntarily withdrew the appeal. Mr. Chairperson, 448 were heard and were not successful, and 68 were heard and were successful.

Mr. Martindale: Could the minister, since I am sure she has number crunchers at the table, tell us what percentage 68 is of 448 to give us the number that were successful?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I think our calculations are right, it is 13 percent.

Mr. Martindale: That sounds about right, given what I remember from previous fiscal years. So we know that a very small percentage are successful on appeal.

Since the Canada Assistance Plan has been repealed, can the minister tell us if she plans to keep the Social Services Advisory Committee in place in Manitoba?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, yes.

Mr. Martindale: The Estimates book says that the committee acts in an advisory capacity to the minister, so could the minister tell us what advice she has been getting from the Social Services Advisory Committee?

Mrs. Mitchelson: The one very significant piece of advice that I have received from that committee is advice that I think we have followed through on. It was information that many single parents who have been on social allowances since the time of the birth of their first child till the time their youngest child turned 18 and became independent—and I have talked about this many times in the Legislature and outside to different groups and organizations that I have met with—are women who had no education, no self-esteem and, all of a sudden, become employable at the age of 35, 40, 45 years old when their youngest child turned the age of 18 and found that they were not employable and would very often apply for social allowances based on medical inadmissibility or whatever the word is, the terminology. They would go to try to get a doctor's certificate to indicate that they were not medically fit to work because they had no ability. They were not marketable as people, as human beings.

So that was an issue that the Social Services Advisory Committee brought to me and indicated that we had to as a government look at a way of trying to ensure that these women did not end up in that circumstance or situation where they were in fact unemployable with absolutely no skills and no self-esteem and, all of a sudden, were turned out there into the world to say, go out and get a job.

That is exactly one of the reasons that we have changed our Social Allowances Program to ensure that we do not create that kind of dependency on our Social Allowances Program. That was one very concrete piece of advice that they provided to me, and that would have been as a result of hearing and seeing those circumstances and caring very much about those women who just had lost all hope of ever being independent and productive members of society. I think that is a very sad situation.

I will say again that that was one of the reasons we took a very serious look at our program and the dependency that we had created on committing single women to a life of poverty on welfare. In many instances, there just would not be the ability for them to turn their lives around. So that was one of the reasons we looked at putting in place an employability focus on those single parents whose children were in school full time, to start the process of leading to a life of independence and not dependent on welfare and a life of poverty as their only hope for the future.

Mr. Martindale: How many single parents are we talking about on provincial Income Security?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, around 12,400.

Mr. Martindale: How many does this department plan to find work for through programs like Taking Charge!? What is the government's job creation goal for these single parents?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Under all of the interventions that will be taking place as a result of our welfare reform announcement and announcements that happened previously, we believe that over the next year Taking Charge! will see about 1,100 individuals enrolled in their programs. Now, can I say to you all of those people will be employed at the end? I cannot say that, but I will say that they will receive some sort of support and some either training or on-the-job experience. I am confident we will have 1,100 people through that program started off on their road to independence as a result of the initiatives that will be undertaken through Taking Charge!

We know that the Community Services program that is run right now by the City of Winnipeg looks at some short term, some longer term employment opportunities for 800 individuals. The Rural Jobs Project, which has been ongoing for a couple of years, we are anticipating that there will be 50 with short-term or long-term work experience or opportunity. The Conservation Corps that we announced will provide opportunity for a hundred individuals to obtain some work experience. Opportunities Manitoba, which was announced with welfare reform too, is looking at placing 105 people in permanent job opportunities, and the Youth NOW program that was announced by the Minister of

Education and Training (Mrs. McIntosh), we are looking at around 600 individuals, young people who will be into employment.

* (1640)

We do know there are initiatives ongoing with the call centres that will create permanent job opportunities for people. I have indicated there have been a couple of those programs, graduation programs—Taking Charge! We will be working with them, and we will be working with them on direct referrals from our department as we change the focus to employability away from dependency.

We are working with the fashion industry right now, and we know that we have had some success, although small, with direct referral to training and job opportunity in the fashion industry. Based on the number of jobs that are available in that industry we will be working very proactively to try to find employment in that industry for some of our welfare recipients. There is the single parent program for rural and northern Manitoba that our expectations are that there will be 300 people employed or in training through that initiative.

Through the employment development centres in the Department of Education and Training, there is Employment Connections that work with people to place them with job opportunities, and we are looking at around 700 individuals for that program. We know there are several jobs in the trucking industry, and we are developing partnerships with them to try to place people in those jobs. We are working with Pathways, which is the aboriginal employment initiative.

So there are all kinds of opportunities out there for people to become employed. I know that the City of Winnipeg right now is experiencing businesses calling them indicating that there are job opportunities and asking whether they have an inventory of people on welfare that might be possible matches with the job opportunities that are there. So we will continue to work. I do not want to set expectations really high and unachievable but I do want to say that the whole focus of our welfare reform is employment first, and as the job opportunities are there we are going to work extremely proactively with those who are in our social allowance system to help them develop an independence plan and a way out of a life of poverty and welfare.

Mr. Martindale: Well, this minister and this government certainly could not be accused of having job expectation goals that are high and unachievable because there are not any. I asked the minister how many jobs will be created and all I got was a list of the numbers of people that would be in various training programs. None of this had to do with job creation goals. It only had to do with the numbers of people who would be in various training programs.

I would like to ask the minister, why was the director of the Social Services Advisory Committee replaced with an acting director?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, just before we go on to that and before I get the information from my department on that, I do want to comment because, obviously, my honourable friend was not listening. I have to say that most times I believe he listens very carefully to what I have to say, but obviously today when I was putting some numbers and some programs on the record, there very definitely are job opportunities, through the Community Services Projects that we run with the City of Winnipeg, through the Rural Jobs Project, through the Conservation Corps, through Opportunities Manitoba, through Youth NOW, through the call centres, through the fashion industry, through the trucking industry. There are job opportunities and there are vacancies and we have made an absolute commitment to ensure that those that are on social allowance have the opportunity to train and enter those areas of growing demand as a result of the economic initiatives that our government has put into place.

So I hope I have made myself clear and I am sure my honourable friend has heard now that yes, in some instances, people will need to be in training programs in order to obtain employment, but there are many employment opportunities there now, and we are hopeful that many of those opportunities will be on-the-job training that leads to successful full-time employment.

From time to time within the department people are given new opportunities and new challenges and it was an opportunity for a new job for the person that was in that position and an opportunity for—the person that moved into the acting position was a person that had

been employed in that area and was given an advancement opportunity.

(Mr. Frank Pitura, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

Mr. Martindale: In a previous answer, I distinctly heard the minister say that there is no guarantee that people would get jobs when they graduated from programs like Taking Charge! and I appreciate the minister being candid because certainly there are no guarantees. However, only about 20 percent of the 12,400 single parents will be even in a training program. So next year, I am going to ask the minister in Family Services Estimates how many of those 2,100 people actually got jobs.

What is really going on here is that this is the Manitoba version of workfare whereby the budget of the single parents was cut by 2.7 percent, and that was only the minister's figures or spin on this particular cut because that figure was based on the total budget of these individuals, whereas in fact their cut was approximately 5 percent of the items that were affected, food, clothing, personal needs, household needs, so that the cut was much larger than what was actually announced. What this minister and this government is doing is putting incredible pressure on individuals to get a job when the jobs are not there, because the job creation efforts of this government are pathetic.

I see that there are the same number of SYs for the Social Services Advisory Committee, but does the minister not expect there will be an increase in appeals due to her welfare cuts and daycare cuts?

* (1650)

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, the staff support should be adequate to look at any increase in appeals. It is actually the panel members that are involved in the hearing process, and I have every confidence that they will be able to meet any increased demand.

Mr. Martindale: I would hope that a lot more people would appeal because these budget cuts are going to have a great effect on many, many individuals. Has the minister ever considered changing the appeal process so that people could appeal to the courts on a matter of legality?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, the whole process is set up to try to expedite the hearing of cases of individuals who feel they have a concern or an issue around the support they are being provided. Here I go back to asking a question again, but I would like to ask my honourable friend whether he feels that money for legal fees is the best use of taxpayers' dollars in this process. I would venture to guess that more money would go into the hands of lawyers and the court process than would go into the hands of the individuals who are seeking clarification of the amount of resource that they receive.

Mr. Martindale: Once again, the minister is not answering questions; she is asking them. I think she wants to be the critic instead of the minister.

I notice in the annual report for 1994-95 that 9.(1) (d) is missing. I find 1.(a), 1.(b), 1.(c), 1.(e) and I cannot find 1.(d). I am wondering if it is on a different page.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, it is on page 95.

Mr. Martindale: Thank you.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Pitura): Section 1. (d) Social Services Advisory Committee (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$192,600. Shall the item pass?

An Honourable Member: No, just a second.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Pitura): The item is accordingly passed.

Mrs. Mitchelson: No, he has a question. Do we want to take a five-minute break?

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Pitura): Is it agreed that we take a five-minute recess?

An Honourable Member: All right.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Pitura): Agreed.

The committee recessed at 4:53 p.m.

After Recess

The House resumed at 5:04 p.m.

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. I was told that 1.(d)(1) was about to be passed. Item 1.(d) Social Services Advisory Committee (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$192,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$157,900—pass.

1.(e) Management Services (1) Financial and Administrative Services (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,789,900.

Mr. Martindale: Could the minister tell us if there have been any changes recently in health benefits to social assistance recipients?

Mrs. Mitchelson: No.

Mr. Martindale: Are there any changes in drug, dental or optical benefits?

Mrs. Mitchelson: No.

Mr. Martindale: Have there been any drugs that have been delisted recently for social assistance recipients?

Mrs. Mitchelson: No.

Mr. Martindale: Could the minister provide me with a list of grants to external agencies at this point?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, we can get that and provide it on Tuesday.

Mr. Martindale: And could we get a copy for the Liberal critic as well?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, absolutely.

Mr. Martindale: Would it be appropriate to ask questions on this line about the role of the department in funding external agencies?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, if I might make a suggestion that once the grants listing is provided, unless there is a specific grant under this area, and I am not sure that there is, but I would be prepared to answer any questions on any external grants at the time the list is provided. Even if we have passed the line, I will make

the commitment to answer any questions once the list is—unless there is a specific external agency that my honourable friend thinks relates to this line.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable member for Burrows asked that a list of grants be supplied for himself and for the Liberal critic. What member is that? If the honourable member for Burrows would—

Mr. Martindale: Well, I will try to ascertain that.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I did not mean to crack a joke. I was trying to get some clarification.

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Chairperson, the reason I thought it might be appropriate under this line is that I see in the annual report under Financial and Administrative Services that program budgeting and reporting approves external agency contracts, and I had some policy questions and questions about one particular agency.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, program budgeting and reporting, as outlined in the Estimates book, under the new structure no longer exists, and it has devolved to the different branches and divisions within the department. That is part of the new structure that was not in place when the Estimates book was printed, so you will find those grants throughout, but I have made a commitment to answer any questions on any grants to external agencies. [interjection] Well, I suppose it all depends on whether it is applicable to income assistance or not. If not, it would be in each division, and I will answer those questions at a later time.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: 1.(e) Management Services (1) Financial and Administrative Services (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,789,900—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$646,800—pass.

1.(e)(2) Human Resource Services (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$767,800—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$97,700.

Mr. Martindale: Could the minister tell us what progress is being made in terms of affirmative action, beginning, first of all, with women being promoted to senior management positions?.

* (1710)

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, in response to the first part of the question, the number of women employed in the department is at almost 70 percent, 69.79 percent, and the government target is 50 percent in that area. Aboriginal is 7.58 percent, and the target is 10 percent. So we are a little bit on the low side there. For the physically disabled, we are at 3.8 percent, and the government target is 7 percent. So we are a little on the low side there. For visible minorities, we are at 2.25 percent. Government target is six. So we are on the low side there, too.

As far as women in senior management positions, 34 percent are women. Last year, it was 28 percent. So we have had a fairly significant increase.

Mr. Martindale: I would like to thank the minister for providing the percentages in each category. I presume that very little hiring is being done and that probably, through attrition, there may even be fewer employees in this department, which means that it is difficult to hire new employees in these categories. Would that be correct?

Mrs. Mitchelson: My honourable friend is quite right. There is not a lot of new hiring. We do not have more employees in the Department of Family Services, and it does make it somewhat more difficult. Still, when we look at the percentages, there has been a slight increase in the percentage of female, aboriginal and visible minorities. So, although our percentages may be low in some of the categories, there has been an increase percentage in the number of employees in those categories.

Mr. Martindale: In the physically disabled category, is the percentage the same as last year or lower?

Mrs. Mitchelson: It was 3.92 percent last year, and it is 3.79 percent this year, which might translate into one person less.

Mr. Martindale: Are there affirmative action goals for promoting people within the department, for example, from middle management to senior management. for example?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes, there is a conscious effort within the department, and just as seen with the most recent reorganization, there were four or five women who were promoted through that process into more senior positions.

Mr. Martindale: Where hiring is taking place, is the minister's department trying to achieve their affirmative action goals by hiring people from these categories?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Every branch and division within the department has an Affirmative Action Plan. We try our very best to increase our component.

Mr. Chairperson: Item 1.(e) Management Services (2) Human Resource Services (b) Other Expenditures \$97,700—pass.

1.(e) Management Services (3) Information Systems (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,492,400.

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Chairperson, it is my understanding that the City of Winnipeg Social Services Department has their own computer system. I assume that Income Security of the Province of Manitoba has its own computer system. What is going to happen when these two departments are amalgamated? Will there be a new computer system or will just one of the current systems be used?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Both the system at the province and the system at the city are somewhat outdated, antiquated, and with part of the whole process of putting in place a business plan, there will be consideration given to building a new system that is more updated and certainly more user friendly.

Mr. Martindale: I assume that this will be rather costly if there is a new system. Can the minister tell us if they anticipate that this will be a major expenditure then?

Mrs. Mitchelson: It is a little premature at this point to determine what the cost or, in fact, what type of system might be required, but I think we need a system that brings us into the '90s and beyond and provides us with the information that is most useful for us in order to deliver the programs.

It is a little premature to determine exactly what that system might look like or what the cost might be, but I think it is important that we have a system that works and

provides the kind of information we need on a timely basis to deliver the program.

Mr. Martindale: On this page, I see that Supplies and Services increased from \$91,000 to \$271,000, which is a huge increase. The footnote says the increase is primarily related to the information systems outsourcing agreement. Would the word "outsourcing" refer to contracting out?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, this is part of a new initiative in the department called Partners in Progress, where it is a partnership with IBM, Online Business Systems and ISM to provide a single point of contact, help desk for our computer systems throughout the department.

Mr. Martindale: Was a tendered contract involved here?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes.

Mr. Martindale: Why is this department spending a lot more money on presumably advice and management of their computer system when I have just been told there is going to be a new computer system when the two welfare departments are amalgamated?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, it is my understanding that this is helping us to become much more efficient. What has happened in the past is that computer systems have been built division by division where there is not the ability for one division or one branch to talk to or be on the same—well, I see my honourable friend roll his eyes. I guess that is what happens, is technology moves ahead in leaps and bounds. So it is important, I think, for us to have an efficient system where all branches that are providing services to families have the ability to co-ordinate their energies and their efforts and ensure that we have the most efficient and effective system possible to deliver the service that is needed to our clients.

* (1720)

Mr. Martindale: I am glad to hear that provincial Income Security is making progress in this area because certainly they have been lagging behind departments of the City of Winnipeg, at least in the past. So maybe they

are just catching up now. I have a suggestion, since individuals are going to be able to network with people in the same computer system. Would the staff at Income Security, particularly those who approve rent payments, communicate with the City of Winnipeg department of environmental health and not pay the rent on premises where there are outstanding work orders or inspection orders?

Mrs. Mitchelson: We would love to be more efficient in that respect, and I thank my honourable friend for the suggestion. I think we have a system in place that does not pay rent to very derelict accommodation, but I think there is more work that can be done and more improvement that can be made. So I thank him for his suggestion, and we will continue to work to try to improve our ability to do that.

Mr. Martindale: I thank the minister for following up on that suggestion.

Not very long ago I went with a client to make application or enroll in income security. It was quite an interesting experience especially since the intake worker had a computer at their workplace but it was not used. The enrollment was done manually. It is my understanding that after everything is written down with pen and paper that then it goes to somebody who does data entry. When I asked why, I was told that it was thought to be too impersonal to actually type on a computer while a client was sitting there being enrolled.

That kind of surprised me because everywhere you go, whether it is a bank or any other institution, the staff have a computer on their desk, and they type right in front of you. In fact, usually they turn the screen so you can see what they are typing. I do not understand why we cannot do that in Income Security. Surely it would be a lot more efficient and effective, which this minister and this government like to talk about all the time.

Mrs. Mitchelson: That is exactly the kind of improvement we would like to make. That is one of the reasons we have gone into a partnership with Partners in Progress to bring all staff up to speed on the most recent technology and our ability to deliver services in a more efficient fashion to those clients that we serve that need our service.

Mr. Martindale: Well, I sure hope this department is not spending almost \$200,000 to get that kind of basic advice from IBM.

I would like to ask the minister about something that is mentioned in the annual report, that Information Systems completed a feasibility study which investigated technical alternatives for the daycare subsidy program. What was the result of that feasibility study?

Mrs. Mitchelson: The results of that study said that we needed a new system, and we are in the process now. I guess government sometimes moves a little more slowly than the private sector does. We do have a very outdated system in child daycare that needs some substantial work, and obviously again there needs to be some financial commitment.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 1.(e) Management Services (3)(a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,492,400—pass; (3)(b) Other Expenditures \$297,200—pass.

Item (4) Policy and Planning (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$704,700.

Mr. Martindale: Could the minister tell me what the staff in this part of her department will be doing in the absence of the Canada Assistance Plan since some of them used to prepare and negotiate Manitoba's cost-sharing claims under CAP?

Mrs. Mitchelson: They are winding down, but there still is an awful lot of work to do because we are always a year to two years behind in ensuring that we have claimed everything and are in receipt of payment from the federal government. So there still is work to do but it is winding down.

Mr. Martindale: What programs are being evaluated by Policy & Planning currently?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, some of the evaluations that are ongoing right now are the evaluation of the pilot project for the disabled, In the Company of Friends, the evaluation process for Taking Charge!—we are involved in a committee on that along with the federal government—and the Community Services projects that we have partnered with the City of Winnipeg on our

Welfare to Work initiatives. Those are some examples of the ongoing activity in that area.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The time being 5:30 p.m., committee rise.

* (1540)

LABOUR

Mr. Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau): Order, please. The committee will come to order. We are dealing with item 11.2. Labour Programs (f) Workplace Safety and Health (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits. Shall the item pass?

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Chairperson, I was just giving a moment for the minister's staff to enter the Chamber, but I will ask my question in the meantime. When we left off with questioning this morning, we were in Workplace Safety and Health, and I asked the minister if he could provide for us information relating to the number of days lost due to workplace injuries in the province of Manitoba and also with respect to the more serious cases dealing with workplace injuries where the minister's department would be, I would imagine, putting forward a recommendation to the minister to the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey) to proceed with court action where warranted. I wanted the minister to tell me how many cases he had recommended to the Minister of Justice, how many had proceeded to the courts, and how many convictions were secured as a result of that action, if any, and the amount of the fines by individual cases.

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Labour): I assume the question is the prosecution cases that were recommended by the Department of Labour in the last year, and, if that is what the question is, I can indicate that presently there are a number of cases before the court. I cannot get into the specifics because these are issues still actively before the court, but certainly it is a matter of public record that there are at least eight cases presently before the courts. I can indicate that the names of these eight corporations are available, and I am wondering whether the member for Transcona wishes me to read the names of these accused into the record.

Mr. Reid: I think, Mr. Chairperson, that if the minister would provide us with a list of that information, that would be sufficient.

Mr. Toews: Yes, I can provide them with a list of people or corporations currently before the courts.

Mr. Reid: The minister references this information, Mr. Chairperson, indicating that it is current action being taken. Part of my question had dealt with a number of cases in the preceding year and the number of convictions and any fines that may have been levied as a result of those convictions.

Mr. Toews: I can list from the latest convictions going down. In January of 1996, Lansard Bros. Roofing was convicted under Section 26 of Manitoba Regulation 189/85 and was fined \$750.00 plus costs. In the same month, Kansteel Manufacturing was also fined \$1,000 and costs of \$70 in respect of a general charge of failure to provide a workplace that was safe. In October 1995, Buchanan Printers Ltd. was convicted under Section 54(c) of The Workplace Safety and Health Act for a fine of \$250 plus costs of \$4. In the same month, Westeel, a division of Jannock, was convicted under Section 4(2)(a) of The Workplace Safety and Health Act for a fine of \$1,000 and costs. In July of 1995, Silco Ltd. was fined under Section 203(2) of Manitoba Regulation 189/85 and Section 26 and Section 54(c) of The Workplace Safety and Health Act for total penalties of \$6,000 plus \$1,920 in costs. In June of 1995, the City of Brandon was convicted of two counts under Section 4(2)(a) and (b) of The Workplace Safety and Health Act for a total of \$2,000 at \$1,000 per count. In April of 1995, an individual by the name of Daniel Trudeau was convicted under Section 135(3) of Manitoba Regulation 189/85 and Section 112 of Manitoba Regulation 189/85. That individual received a conditional discharge and \$150—I assume that was on a separate count—plus costs of \$48. In the same month Jim Higgs, Jr. [phonetic] was convicted of Section 135(3) of Manitoba Regulation 189/85, was fined \$150 plus costs. In the same month, the Rural Municipality of St. Francois Xavier was convicted of violations of Section 4(2) and Section 54 of The Workplace Safety and Health Act, was fined \$500 plus costs of \$160.

* (1550)

Now, I might just indicate that the other charges—those are certainly the convictions that occurred either during the time that I was Minister responsible for Workplace Safety and Health or shortly before that time. In addition,

my staff advises me that in February of 1996 a company by the name of Alert Steel Erectors Ltd. was convicted under Sections 179(1)(d) and 181 of Manitoba Regulation 189/85 for total penalties of \$2,500. A worker by the name of Ben Arsenault [phonetic] was convicted under Section 135(3) of Manitoba Regulation 189/85 \$100 plus \$32 in costs. Finally, Buchanan Printers Ltd. was convicted under two counts of Section 54 (c) of The Workplace Safety and Health Act for which they received a reprimand.

Mr. Reid: Well, if my addition is correct here, then we have some 12 businesses that have had sanctions applied by the courts, and that we have had some 35,000 to 40,000 workplace injuries in the province of Manitoba in the last year, and that the only action that is taken here is against 12 persons, including companies. In the minister's mind, in his opinion, does he feel that the fines that have been levied are in any way acting as a deterrent and a method of encouraging, as the minister likes to talk about, firms to act in a more responsible manner to ensure the health and safety of the employees working for those particular firms? Is the minister contemplating making any changes to the maximum fines provided under the act, wherein now the maximum fine is some \$15,000? Is the minister contemplating making those changes to increase those fines, and can he tell us?

Mr. Toews: I would indicate, Mr. Chairman, that the maximum fine available under The Workplace Safety and Health Act is \$30,000, and not \$15,000, as indicated by the member. But in respect of a prosecution generally, I think it is very important to remember, as I stated earlier this morning, the philosophy behind the act that the previous NDP government brought in and that we continue to administer. The architect, if I could call him that, of that legislation, Mr. Rabinovich [phonetic], said that while the division received new powers of enforcement and while they were higher than prior penalties, the principal goal of the legislation brought in by the NDP government, and which legislation is still in effect, is not litigation but co-operation. He stated, the main objective is to prevent accident and diseases, not to collect fines through the courts from offenders. Now, clearly, if one looks at the legislation and the prosecutions under the legislation and says, if a measurement of success is the number of fines that we get, then one might fall into the argument that the member has raised, and one might fall into accepting an

argument that somehow the act is not effective. One could say the same thing, that there are other mechanisms under the act that in fact encourage companies, individuals, to obey the law.

I think the greatest impact in this area is education, and, while I would argue that education is not necessarily a mechanism which can be used successfully in all types of crime prevention, I think this is an area where education, co-operation, working together is an area where accidents are reduced. We can look at the statistics that have been provided by the Workers Compensation Board, and, going back to 1980 we can examine both the time loss claims per 1,000 workers and the average days per time loss claim, that is, the severity of claims, and determine whether or not this legislation has had an impact. So, if we start in 1980, we will see that the legislation or the time loss claims per 1,000 workers at that time was 45 accidents per 1,000 workers. During the NDP years, it dipped to about 41 accidents per 1,000 workers, and then started climbing in the course of the NDP years. So in 1986 it was at 46 accidents per 1,000 workers. After 1986, the climb began to go down—that is, the time loss claims per 1,000 workers began to decline quite dramatically, so in 1988 we were at about 43 or 44 claims per 1,000 workers, in '89 at about 42, '90 at about 43 again. Then in '91 it was at 37; in '92, it was 36. I might remind the member that this is claims per 1,000 workers. It has nothing to do with how many people were working; this is per 1,000 workers. So we have that, for every 1,000 workers working, the claims are dropping. In 1992, it is at 36; in 1993, it is at 33 or 32; in 1994, it is at 35; and in 1995 it is at 35 again.

In respect of the average days per time loss, my statistics go back to '89, and they have been relatively stable throughout, if one looks at the figure from '89-95. I would point out that in '91 there was an increase from about 15 days in '89 to about 17 or 18 days in '91, excuse me, in '88 it was 15 days, then '91 it was at about 18, 17 days, and then has continued to go down to a point at about 15 days. So, looking at the time loss claims per 1,000 workers and the average days per time loss claim, it would appear that the legislation is successful. Frankly, I do not rate success by how much money you can extract by way of fines. I think it is much more important to understand and to see how many workers are being injured, for how long their injuries have occurred,

and whether that rate is going down, and that clearly is going down.

* (1600)

Now this is consistent with the philosophy of the act that was passed by the NDP government, that was drafted by Mr. Rabinovich [phonetic], and it was legislation that I had a long history of involvement with during the 1980s, the drafting of codes of practice, the drafting of regulations, the setting up of workplace safety and health committees, the development and strengthening of the internal responsibility system.

One can say, well, let us take a look at the number of inspections and inspectors. Again, I could have staff go out and double the number of inspections overnight—to what end? So that statistics demonstrate that inspections are being carried out. I have indicated earlier, Mr. Chair, that Saskatchewan doubled, very recently, their number of inspectors, and yet their inspections have been halved. What the Saskatchewan NDP realizes, as we realize here, is that the internal responsibility system is what is going to prevent serious injuries and address systemic problems. That is what we are working to do, by focusing on problem areas and bringing those injuries down in those problem areas.

Mr. Reid: Mr. Chairperson, well, the minister will take a look at his own numbers here going back, because he likes to go back, to '89-90. In '89-90, we had 52 professional technical people, that is your field officers that go out and do workplace inspections, and today we are at 32, by your own numbers, your own department Estimates, your own numbers. We are still continuing to see people killed on the job, a high level of workplace injuries, and you think that the department would learn that you cannot have enforcement and people to be expected to act reasonably unless you have some enforcement mechanism there in having people go out and do that inspection. That is what causes us concern, is you have reduced the number of field inspectors from 52 down to 32 over that period of time, your own departmental Estimates numbers out of your documents.

So I do not understand how the department can inspect the number of worksites that we have in this province with 32 field officers. How does the minister expect 32 people to inspect—what is it? How many thousand

worksites do we have in the province? We have a very, very large number. I forget the exact number. I have it in files downstairs. But I do not understand how the minister can say that 32 people in his field inspection people in his department can inspect those industries and ensure that we have adequate workplace safety inspections in place and to ensure that we have functioning committees, workplace safety and health committees, if we do not have those field officers to go and do that necessary work. How does the minister justify that reduction, from 52 down to 32 people?

Mr. Toews: Well, first of all, I think this gives me a wonderful opportunity to compliment my field inspectors, very, very competent individuals, very proud of the work that they have been doing. They are very highly trained, competent individuals, and they have demonstrated to me, over the short period of time that I have been the minister, that these are very, very professional people and can do a very good job at a quick moment's notice. I think their recent involvement in the Headingley situation has, in my mind, demonstrated their worth, their capability, their professionalism, and I think that must be recognized.

In respect of the actual numbers, there has been a redivision of the inspectors in the Workplace Safety and Health Division so that in fact the field inspectors are essentially the same number as the 52 that the member points out in 1990. The Mines Branch has been separated out, and in fact we have brought people who used to be in Computer Services into inspection areas where that type of thing was appropriate. But very generally we have approximately the same number, and that is, give or take one position, of people doing field inspections. But I think, Mr. Chair, it is very important here to note that the member speaks of an enforcement system that is top down that I think is outmoded, that in many ways is draconian and is in many ways ineffective.

I was at a conference in Montreal some time ago where a professor from a university—and his name just escapes me, but I will think of it—wrote a very significant book on work councils, and this person would not be generally described as a regressive thinker in terms of workplace safety and health. Indeed, he was a very progressive thinker. He dealt with this issue of how many inspectors you need in workplaces. He stated that in the United States, and I am not drawing on that as a model, but he

stated that in the United States, given the number of workplaces and given the number of inspectors, it would take approximately—there would be one inspection of every workplace in every 189 years. Clearly not an acceptable process if one thinks that is the way to enforce legislation. Clearly, if enforcement through the court system, through prosecutions, is the only way to proceed, one would have to double, triple, in fact, probably station a Workplace Safety and Health officer in every workplace in this province. I do not think that is the appropriate way to deal with workplace safety and health.

* (1610)

As indicated earlier, education and the support that the Workplace Safety and Health Branch gives to workplace safety and health committees through publications and other mechanisms, personal involvement, is, in fact, the approach to take. This is in fact what is strengthening our workplace safety and health record. As for the issue of prosecutions, the member says, let us raise the fines, and I do not have a philosophical problem with that. If the member wants to have a higher fine, perhaps he can propose what a suitable fine is, and I would be willing to consider that. I have no problem in raising the fines in the act. I have no problem with that. But, if the member thinks that by raising the fines in a piece of legislation, there are suddenly going to be fewer workplace safety and health accidents, I think he is mistaken. When one looks at the jurisdictions that have in fact adopted that philosophy—and I think it is a very short-term philosophy, raise the fines and prosecute—you will see what is happening is that, instead of having Workplace Safety and Health officers in the field assisting people, ensuring that accidents do not happen, what in fact happens is that as soon as they lay charges, because of the substantive fines involved, this system gets bogged down in the courts very, very quickly. So you have police officers, medical people, Workplace Safety and Health officers sitting in court day after day listening to lawyers harangue about the technicalities.

Mr. Reid: Darn lawyers.

Mr. Toews: The issue may be darn lawyers, as the member from Transcona says, but once you get into the legal system and especially into the prosecutions area, which I have some familiarity with, having been a former prosecutor, this is an incredibly inefficient waste of

government resources. I say that, not because saving lives and preventing accidents is a waste; I say there are many better ways of doing it. Having said that, I want to, Mr. Chair, make sure that the member realizes that I do believe there is an appropriate case in which one goes to prosecutions. It is important that that statement be made, where there are workers or employers or unions who do not co-operate, but rather—and having said that, I would like to take this opportunity to state there is a very important group of people in our workforce that has a tremendous influence on workplace safety and health, and that is the unions. The unions are there to protect workers, they are there to protect workers, and those unions have a very legitimate and strong role to play in workplace safety and health matters.

I know I have met a number of times with union officials who state that they are aware of cases where accidents are not reported. They are personally aware of those situations, yet when you ask these individuals to bring the records forward, to bring the cases, to report it to the workplace safety and health committee or to the inspector anonymously or otherwise, those reports are not forthcoming. So what I am trying to say is not to discourage the unions from what I consider their very important role but to encourage them, to let them know that this department views them as a very important partner in terms of reducing workplace safety and health accidents, because the union, unlike the government inspectors, is in every workplace that is unionized whenever people are on the job.

If there are dangerous practices, let the union bring those forward under whatever form that they wish, and when those complaints in respect of workplace safety and health are brought to our branch, we will investigate, and we will take the appropriate steps. We have been doing that, and I think to the extent that unions have been co-operating in this respect and individual employees have been co-operating in this respect, this has significantly influenced the downward trend of accidents today. Yes, I have said that we have approximately the same number of field inspectors, but I think what we have to realize is there is a much bigger picture out there. There are all kinds of people who are capable of assisting in matters of safety. Safety begins with the individual at work.

Mr. Reid: Mr. Chairperson, it is interesting that the minister here is attempting to say that unions have a place

or a role to play, and yet he is doing so much as the Minister of Labour to undermine unions and to take away the ability of unions to function as a representative of their members, looking at the legislation that the minister is in the process or has tabled in this House. So I do not think it is really fair of him to say that he thinks that the unions have a strong role to play and yet at the same time attempt to undermine their activities.

The minister also forgets to reference the fact that there are many nonunionized workplaces in this province for which we also have concern, because the employees of those operations themselves do not have the opportunity to have an independent voice for them, a voice that can go and represent the concerns to the employer relating to workplace safety and health conditions. That is where the minister's staff, the inspection people that are in the field, have the role to play to go into those sites to protect the health and the safety of those people working in unionized plants, yes, but also in nonunionized workplace sites. That is the role of the department to provide the level of security for all people.

The minister referenced that there has been no reduction, or maybe one person reduction, in his department. Well, I have taken the liberty of doing some calculations here, Mr. Chairperson. If you add the Workplace Safety and Health Branch, the Occupational Health Branch and the Mines safety branch of the minister's department, lo and behold, the numbers add up to 42.26 professional/technical people. Yet, now, here we are today, when you compare that to the staff, and I have got the book here in front of me, the Estimates, the Adjusted Vote for '87-88 we had 58 technical/professional people. So if you add up the numbers that we have in all of those categories, Workplace Safety and Health, Occupational Health and Mines safety, we are still 16 positions short on the field officer inspection side of worksites in the province of Manitoba. Your numbers, your books, not mine. So we have a reduction of 16 positions, not one that the minister is talking about here, and for some 14,000 worksites that we have in the province—I think that is the number—that we have a reduction in the number of people doing the field inspections. I do not see how we can protect the people in both unionized and nonunionized worksites with a reduction of that number in those worksites in the province.

I want to ask the minister, because he has not answered the question yet about the number of lost days. He has given a comparison by averages, but he has not given me the total number of lost days due to workplace accidents in the province for the last year. I want to ask the minister also what process he has through Workplace Safety and Health for monitoring the workplace safety and health committees in the various worksites in the province of Manitoba. What process do you have, what policy do you have, for ensuring that those committees are functioning properly and that the concerns that are raised are being addressed in a timely fashion?

Mr. Toews: I understand the member's concern, and I think perhaps it comes out of his background where everyone has a very, very clear job function, job description. If your job description is to pick up a hammer and hammer, that is what you do. I think we have moved in government beyond those types of very narrow job descriptions. I am advised by my staff that we stand by the statement that in terms of total people committed to field inspections, that number remains unchanged, no matter what category one wishes to classify that in. So we have a difference of opinion there.

Our staff advises that the functions of the field inspectors may also include other functions or other staff not in that category, in fact, carries out inspection functions, and that the numbers referred to in the earlier years were many people who operated in a support position and never went out into the field. For example, I understand there were people in a policy branch in Labour who were classified as inspectors, yet never were outside in the field—[interjection]

* (1620)

Well, what I have said to the member, Mr. Chair, is that the number of people who, in terms of staff years, are carrying out field inspections and inspections related to safety issues and matters related to safety issues have remained essentially unchanged since 1990. So I think I have to come back to the broader issue of how one defines functions of people. If one looks at very, very narrow definitions and excludes people who may have both functions, perhaps there would be some legitimacy in the member's argument, but in fact what you are finding more and more in government is people who are

doing many tasks when those tasks can be accommodated by their schedule.

Mr. Reid: The minister may have missed the last part, Mr. Chairperson. I asked what process his department has in place for ensuring that the workplace safety and health committees are in place with people in position to perform those functions, both management and employee side, that the committees operate on a regular basis and the concerns that are raised at those committees are dealt with in a timely fashion and they do not drag on for an extended period of time and go unresolved. What process does the department have to ensure that those committees are in place and functioning properly?

Mr. Toews: There are at least three general ways in which this is done, Mr. Chair. Firstly, the committees will forward minutes to the Workplace Safety and Health Division of the various committees outlining their activities, and the staff reviews those minutes to see what types of problems or, in fact, whether there is a workplace safety and health committee functioning. Again, the second is the inspection process. The inspector is not just going to the worksite to look for dangerous conditions; the inspector is going to the workplace to determine whether the workplace safety and health committee is meeting its responsibilities under the act in terms of the internal responsibility system. So again here we see what on the face of it looks like a bureaucratic, if I can use that term, function by inspector, and yet it is a function that is integral to safety in a particular place.

(Mr. David Newman, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

We also have on staff a person who is attempting to facilitate difficult situations where workplace safety and health committees have particular problems, and that person is then attempting to facilitate and bring to a head a lot of the problems with a view to resolving those problems.

I think to look at a very recent example is the issue of the jail at Headingley in terms of Workplace Safety and Health orders. When one looks at the jail situation there, as my staff in fact have over the last number of weeks, one thing that is clear is that there were no orders that were unattended in the sense that they were not being

addressed in the appropriate time frame established for addressing those orders.

There are three types of situations that one could look at. The first is grievances under the collective agreement. There were no workplace safety and health grievances that were unattended in the sense that they were totally ignored, that they were outside of the process. They were in the process of being resolved.

The second source is the Ombudsman, and of all the complaints handled by the Ombudsman's office, again, there were no complaints that were at a dead letter office, so to speak. I understand there were no workplace safety and health complaints insofar as the Ombudsman was concerned, but even all of his complaints were being dealt with insofar as they might incidentally relate to workplace safety and health issues. The third is any outstanding Workplace Safety and Health orders or, even if one wants to get a little broader, Fire Commissioner's orders. This is not to say that there were not orders in effect. What I do want to say, Mr. Chair, is that the orders were being attended to in the time frame allotted, that is, no orders were in breach.

So if one looks at the system that has been established under The Workplace Safety and Health Act and one looks at the administrative support that this department has provided to those workplace safety and health committees—and might I remind the Chair that workplace safety and health committees are present in unionized and nonunionized places; and, even where there are no committees, there are other individuals who are charged with those responsibilities. So there is a system. Someone should be there in almost every workplace, and the way we determine whether or not there is somebody there is through some of the mechanisms that I have indicated to the House.

So this is a much broader system, much more, in many ways, invasive system than simply having an inspector coming to the door on a random basis and see if there are any violations. In effect, we have inspectors there all the time, and the inspectors are the people who work at the worksite who realize whether something is dangerous or not. This includes union officials, this includes nonunionized employees, this includes unionized employees, and it includes management because in many workplaces we have to remember managers work side by

side with the workers. A dangerous working condition is not just a dangerous working condition for the person on the lowest end of that pay scale. It is a dangerous working condition for the manager. That manager goes home to his or her family as well. They have a vested interest.

The member, I think, draws a point that is important. Is there a mechanism by which these people can report and ensure that their concerns are addressed by Workplace Safety and Health? I think there is. It can be done without revealing identity. These reports can be made over the telephone, alert the Workplace Safety and Health Branch, and inspectors can be dispatched. It can be done in a more formal way, but whatever way that is available—and there are many ways under The Workplace Safety and Health Act, and they are spelled out either in codes of practice or in regulations or in other mechanisms—I think, one can see in the way that Workplace Safety and Health orders in Headingley, which is a very, very difficult situation, that the workplace safety and health process is an ongoing process. Provided that the government is there to continue to give that support, provided that the department is there to give that support, we will, in fact, continue on this trend of reducing the time loss and accident rates.

* (1630)

When we talk about inspectors, who are the inspectors? I say that every worker in the workplace is an inspector. The education that this branch provides, the WorkSafe document, for example, that is published, gives workers education to enable them to understand what access they have in enforcing the law. Where an employer does not co-operate, there is the arm of the law that is either through Workplace Safety and Health, Fire Commissioner's office, the general police, because one cannot forget that there are Criminal Code provisions that also deal with workplace safety and health that have tremendous penalties attached to them for criminal conduct.

Mr. Reid: Well, our concern here is that the workplace safety and health committees are in place and are functioning and that the minister references that employees can bring concerns to the attention of the department through the Workplace Safety and Health

Branch. What I need to know is in what level of confidence those reports are kept when field officers may be dispatched to a worksite to investigate a complaint that would be received by the Workplace Safety and Health Branch. Is there a level of confidence with no information provided to the employer about which employee was providing that, for raising that concern, with the branch?

Mr. Toews: Mr. Chair, I have discussed this issue with the executive director, and the policy is that the complaints are absolutely confidential until such time as they can be released.

Now, this is a complex area, and it is not just an issue that is peculiar to Workplace Safety and Health. For example, if a person makes a complaint in the middle of the night and phones up the police, for example, and says, please do not involve me, but there is something going on. The police get to the situation, and they cannot find anything, but they know where the phone call came from. What do the police then do? Do they walk up to the door, knock on the door and say, look, we have received your complaint; we are concerned about it, but we do not know where this is happening or what is happening?

Clearly, by the mere fact of the police walking up to the door, knocking on the door and talking to somebody, that might be a jeopardy of that complainant's confidence. That is a tremendous problem in the area of law enforcement generally. It is certainly something that one realizes in the area of prosecutions and organized crime and those types of things, very, very serious thing.

Similarly, if one looks at Workplace Safety and Health, the policy is to keep these things confidential, but there may well be a point where the confidence, if the integrity of the prosecution or investigation is to be maintained, might have to be revealed. I think the member would admit that when there is a violation of a statute, it is not just a wrong against the person who has been injured or the person who has been endangered, it is a wrong against society. So the Workplace Safety and Health officer, like any police officer, like a fire commissioner, must weigh that very, very carefully.

Of course, one wants to maintain the integrity of a complaint by keeping it confidential as much as possible.

That is our policy, and that is what we strive to do, but then one is met with the difficult task of, do you allow an offender to go free because you want to preserve confidentiality, or do you open that confidentiality because of the greater duty to society to ensure safety generally? That is a problem that we are going to meet everywhere. I think I understand the member's concern. I think it is a valid concern, and that is something that the branch takes into account in every sensitive case where this kind of thing happens.

(Mr. Chairperson in the Chair)

Mr. Reid: There is still one comment that the minister made that concerns me about the confidentiality. He referenced the fact that information brought to the department's attention is kept in confidence until it can be released. I am not sure what he means: until it can be released.

Mr. Toews: For example, if the department goes down—and let us take a very simple example. We have a worker phoning up and saying, my employer is sending me down into an unshored trench. I am just on a coffee break, and, if I want to save my job, I got to go down there. So I am going to go down there, but I want somebody to come there.

Well, the inspector hops into his car, gets down to the site, and they can see the inspector coming a half a mile away. Everybody is out of the trench, and so all of the shoring is removed. The inspector walks over. There is just a big hole in the ground. There is no violation of any act. What does the inspector do, turn his or her back and get back into the car and go downtown and say, well, confidentiality, it is not my concern if the trenches collapse? I think the member would agree that that kind of an attitude would be totally irresponsible.

I would not blame an inspector who, in that kind of situation, approaches the employer, speaks and, in very, very careful circumstances, may well have to indicate that he has evidence that people have been working down in that trench. But again it is very, very difficult to make general statements and then try to enforce them in a practical way once issues of safety are involved because, once a trench collapses on a worker in that trench, it does not just become the concern of that worker who was killed or injured, but it becomes a concern of society.

The cost to society, not to mention the heartache and the grief of somebody dying, but the cost that society is put to because someone deliberately violated the law.

I think an inspector may well have to consider those issues in determining at what time it is appropriate to release information. As much as possible, we try not to release that information. If the prosecution or the offence can be remedied without the release of that, I think it is fine, but I think we have to remember the wrong done is not just to the individual. The wrong is done to society as a whole. This is public legislation; the public has an interest.

Mr. Reid: Well, we could debate this section at considerable length, Mr. Chairperson. I have a few comments, and then I am prepared to pass this section.

The minister referenced Headingley. I have here in my hand information provided to us relating to a December 4, 1995, meeting between corrections management and corrections staff, Headingley Institution, relating to the fact that the corrections staff members were concerned and raised concerns about the removal of the range bars at Headingley. I also have in my file here the fact that the management at Headingley Correctional Institution was going ahead with the removal of the range bars.

I have the letter here that says that they were going ahead, regardless of the concerns that were raised by the corrections officers at Headingley. That puts at risk those people that are performing the necessary functions on behalf of society to protect us, the rest of society, from those that have been convicted of the various lawbreaking acts. So that is why I raised the concerns about how the workplace safety and health committees function when the issues are raised, as this was, and the minutes here clearly indicate it. Yet the management was going ahead.

* (1640)

That is why we need to have people from this department's staff going into those worksites to ensure that the concerns of the people that are working on those sites are addressed, especially in a matter like this where you have a riot that ensued, we think, as a result of the decisions to move the intermediate wall in the range barrier system. I mean, we have already raised this in

Question Period in the House here, but I will leave that with the minister as well. That is why I raised the concerns about the problems with the functioning of the workplace safety and health committees and that the serious concerns that are raised are not being addressed, that management goes ahead, in some cases, unilaterally to make changes that are not in the best interests of the people that are working there, both unionized, nonunionized, and management people, including the inmates as well because they are part of the process. Some of them were injured as well, and some of them perhaps did not take place in the riot activities.

So everybody that was involved there was put at risk because somebody was going to move ahead with decisions that were not done on a consensus basis. That is why the functioning of the workplace safety and health committees is critical.

The problem we have with the level of fines that the minister referenced, he said, it is \$30,000, I stand corrected. My figure was somewhat lower, it was half that. The problem that we see is that businesses in this province, not all businesses because by far the majority of them are responsible business operations with responsible management and responsible owners, but for those that decide, for whatever reasons, they want to skirt the laws of this province, we have to have in place the necessary sanctions to prevent them from endangering their employees and endangering members of the public and endangering the management of that operation from unsafe practices.

If we do not have the necessary sanctions in place, which I think should include perhaps even jail terms for the more serious offences, the businesses that skirt the law look at these level of fines that the minister referenced here were in the range of under a thousand dollars to around the \$2,000 mark, when he referenced the 12 companies out of the 14,000 in this province that had been prosecuted, the level of fines that are being levied as sanctions for workplace safety and health violations, obviously very serious violations. The businesses that skirt the law look at this as just the cost of doing business. I do not think that is the right attitude for those that break the law and skirt the law of this province. That is why we need to take a serious look at revamping the level of sanctions that are available to the

courts to levy in cases where in their estimation and in opinion of the courts that action needs to be taken.

I will leave that with the minister for his consideration, Mr. Chairperson, and I am prepared to move on to the next section.

Mr. Toews: I just think I should respond very, very briefly to the range-bar issue. I would indicate that the range bars were the subject of an order in approximately 1980. At that time, Workplace Safety and Health was involved and said, those range bars are not to be removed, and I am paraphrasing the order here, unless there was an equivalent safety mechanism in place that met with the approval of the Labour Management Committee there. So clearly Workplace Safety and Health had already made an order. That order was still in effect, and in respect of anyone doing anything unilaterally, had they done so, and I do not think they have, they would be in violation of that order. So that is something that has to be looked at.

I am just summarizing the facts very, very quickly because there have been all types of intervening activities which may have allowed some persons to do one thing or another, but clearly Workplace Safety and Health, and that is a perfect example, has been involved in that issue, monitoring that issue, since 1980.

In respect of the fines themselves, we have had a long discussion about that and I agree with the member that fines can be a very important aspect of the enforcement system. Although the act in the words of Victor Rabinovich [phonetic] was that it was to increase the capacity of all persons involved in the workplace to anticipate safety and health problems and to change the conditions which give rise to these problems.

There may well be situations where that type of change is not forthcoming. Perhaps because of employer reluctance, perhaps because employees are not in favour of it, but whatever it is, fines are a necessary element. I would be prepared to discuss with the member what he considers an appropriate fine, and I may well be persuaded to bring a bill if there is time to change that. I do not want to destroy what I **think** we are accomplishing in terms of workplace safety and health, but if the member feels so strongly about that issue, I would be prepared to consider.

If you look at the fines that have been levied, \$1,000 fines, \$500 fines, \$2,000 fines, the issue is not the limit. The limit is up to \$30,000 for cases of second offences. So the court system, for whatever reason, has not been imposing the maximum available. If we changed the fines, let us say, to \$50,000 and courts continue to levy \$1,000 fines, simply raising the level does nothing, and then we are simply frustrated because the efforts that we have expended in one particular case have come to very little. I think the intervention of a Workplace Safety and Health officer in the workplace in the way that they have been doing is a much more effective case. I think, by and large, the employers have been receptive and have been willing to work with Workplace Safety and Health.

Again, my offer remains open to the member opposite. We can deal with the issue of fines if he thinks it is that important.

Mr. Reid: Well, that is something that can be discussed at some length, I guess. It may be more appropriate then to take a look at this issue with respect to sanctions, whether it be fines or jail terms and to pose the question more directly to the Minister of Justice and ask the Minister of Justice what actions the Crown is taking when they represent the people of the province before the courts in cases that have been recommended to them by the Workplace Safety and Health Branch through the Minister of Labour. If the Crown is not doing their job and they are not seeking fines that would more represent the severity of the infractions, then we need to take a look at that side, and perhaps it is the enforcement through the Department of Justice that needs to be addressed more so than through the Department of Labour, Workplace Safety and Health, although I still think that there is some room for a rethinking of the level of sanctions for first-time offences and perhaps for second-time offences or subsequent offences, including jail terms. I will not go into any more comments about that, Mr. Chairperson.

I think we have debated that one quite extensively, and I am prepared to pass this section.

Mr. Chairperson: Item 2.(f) Workplace Safety and Health (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,382,200—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$683,700—pass.

2.(g) Occupational Health (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$214,000.

Mr. Reid: I would like the minister to provide me with some information relating to the activities of his department to establish an occupational disease panel, a permanent panel that would look into the various occupational diseases and to establish some process whereby we could deal with what appears to be a significant number of claims through Workers Compensation Board that deal with occupational disease. What process does he have in place, or is he working on something to establish a permanent panel that would look at making recommendations through his department or through the Workers Compensation Board?

* (1650)

Mr. Toews: Just one matter of clarification in respect to that range bar order. That order was from '87-88, not from 1980, so I do not know if that clarifies anything for the member but I certainly did not mean to mislead him. It was a communication problem here, but the Workplace Safety and Health Branch has been involved in that issue since 1987. I just leave that.

In respect of the occupational disease issue, I would indicate that we do not have a panel here in Manitoba that works with the Workers Compensation Board in the same way, for example, that the occupational disease panel does in Ontario. It is a process that is fraught with some controversy in Ontario. We believe we have a very good system here through our own doctor, Dr. Redekop, who is a medical doctor with various degrees of expertise in occupational disease and works quite closely with the Workers Compensation Board in looking at those types of issues. Dr. Redekop, again, works with outside professionals from time to time to assist him in arriving at conclusions or in providing advice to the Workers Compensation Board. We believe that this is an issue that we are continually monitoring. We believe it is a good system and we have not yet seen any reason why we should be persuaded to move to another type of system.

One thing that we have to remember in Canada is that because we have these 10 different workers compensation boards and various adjunct boards and government departments advising, the advice that is given is often given in public reports. It is shared by boards right across Canada, by government departments, workplace safety and health right across Canada. So in many ways, a smaller province such as Manitoba gets the benefit of

larger provinces' expertise or indeed larger provinces get the benefit of the expertise that we acquire through people like Dr. Redekop, who is well recognized as an expert in his field. So we cannot just look at Manitoba's direct resources, but I think we have to look across the country to look at new ideas, to look at new ways of doing things, and I think that is just another exercise in co-operative federalism.

Mr. Reid: How many other jurisdictions in Canada have occupational disease panels?

Mr. Toews: I can advise that in terms of a formal panel, I am only aware of Ontario, but, if we look at British Columbia and the medical component that is attached to the board, that is British Columbia, it performs many of the same services. Quebec, as well, has a similar medical component that gives advice to the board. Again, we benefit many times from the advice that is given because this advice is shared. Alberta has a system much like ours in that they have an occupational health doctor much like Dr. Redekop here. Saskatchewan, I understand, has nothing in that respect, nor do the Atlantic provinces. Perhaps it is not necessary in Saskatchewan or in the Atlantic provinces. I think we are very fortunate to have someone like Dr. Redekop and the people who advise him, but we are also very fortunate to be able to share some of the findings and advice that some of the larger provinces have been able to provide.

Mr. Reid: I take it then that the minister is content to rely on other jurisdictions, Ontario, B.C. and Quebec, which in one form or another have occupational disease panels, and that his department is intent to rely on the expertise of those people outside of our jurisdiction, content to rely on their willingness and ability to share their information and knowledge with us and that he sees no need for us to have an occupational disease panel inside the province of Manitoba, in our jurisdiction, investigating and looking at the various occupations of the province, which may be in some cases different than other jurisdictions. Is the minister content with that position?

Mr. Toews: I think the member misunderstands my point. The point is that we have different systems. That is the wonderful thing about Canada. Ontario might have one system. British Columbia has another system. Quebec has another system. Those may be more like

panels. Clearly, only Ontario has the panel. We have a very strong medical component that does the research that is relevant to Manitoba. We, in fact, are prepared to share it with other provinces, such as Saskatchewan, that have virtually nothing in that respect.

It is not an issue of political boundaries or even political parties. We want to share with Canadians whatever. If we can reduce injuries and accidents and disease in Manitoba, there is no reason why we cannot take our knowledge and share it with Saskatchewan, which may not have those types of resources that we have available to us or indeed the type of personnel that we have available to us. So I do not want to leave the member with the impression that Manitoba is without resources in that respect. We are very well served by someone like Dr. Redekop and his advisors working with the Workers Compensation, working with Workplace Safety and Health.

Unless the member can demonstrate why a specific panel in the form that Ontario has is necessary, I do not see any need to change a system that seems to be working. But I may stand to be corrected by the member.

Mr. Reid: It seems logical to me that, although I do not know the extent of the resources available to Dr. Redekop, if he has limited resources available to him versus resources that may be available to the panels in the Ontario, B.C., Quebec models, they may be able to undertake more extensive research and activities into determining what constitutes an occupational disease and the necessary corrective steps to prevent those types of diseases from occurring.

* (1700)

That is why I raised this with the minister so that if there are limited resources through Dr. Redekop's office—which I expect there probably would be—and he would be somewhat limited in his abilities to undertake the necessary research in all facets of occupational disease, that a panel may be having greater ability to undertake the necessary research on a permanent basis that would allow for some discovery of the facts and also some ability to undertake corrective measures to prevent those type of diseases from occurring from people who are employed in those particular industries, whether it be mining or other industries. That is why I raised this with the minister that there may be a greater opportunity for us

to have panels to do that type of research, and that is why I raised that question with the minister. Maybe the minister wants to comment on that.

Mr. Toews: I thank the member for those comments. Of course, we try to do the best we can with the resources that we have. We clearly cannot have everything that we would like. I would equate this position much like the position that you see right across Manitoba. There are certain schools, for example, that develop a centre of excellence. There are certain universities in Manitoba that will develop certain expertise. For example, Brandon University has a very good music school, but that is no reason why the University of Winnipeg needs to develop a music school if it does not have one, or, for example, we have a very fine medical school run by the U of M.

What I am trying to say is that in Canada there is very, very much co-operation between governments of all political stripes on issues such as this. There is a growing recognition that we have to pool our resources, pool our talents in order to arrive at satisfactory health conditions for our people and the prevention of disease in the workplace is clearly one of those issues. We have to work smarter with what we have, and it does not make any sense for 10 separate provinces to come to the same conclusion after spending 10 separate amounts of money if we could do the same thing through a co-ordinated effort. I am sure that is what the member is essentially saying, look at your resources, make sure that you are not duplicating, but where you can and where it is necessary spend the money. I think that is what the staff members are trying to do as much as possible and certainly that is my direction to them. I want us to spend smarter.

We know that the federal government keeps on cutting our funding in various areas. They have their own problems, and it is an issue we have to live with. But it is not my job here to throw stones at Liberals or New Democrats, but rather it is to find out how we can co-operate better as a nation. I think, without losing sight of the point that has been raised by the member for Transcona, is that if one listens to what people in Quebec are saying, for example, it is not an issue of, well, let us get a new document. It is respect for each other as a people; it is working together as various provinces. Many of the complaints that the people in Quebec have are echoed by people in Alberta or British Columbia or

Saskatchewan or Manitoba. These are often the difficulties of working in a federal system. We have to learn to work closer together. I think that if we learn to work closer on some of the smaller issues in a broader context, we will learn to get along much better in the larger picture.

Mr. Chairperson: Shall the item pass? The item is accordingly passed. (2) Other Expenditures \$34,500—pass.

2.(h) Mines Inspection (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$568,500.

Mr. Reid: Can the minister explain the reduction in the professional/technical staffing from eight positions in the previous year now having seven positions? The Estimates document indicated that it reflects the elimination of the district mining engineer position. Can the minister tell me what function was performed by the district mining engineer? What were the duties?

Mr. Toews: I thank the member for the question. In the 1996-97 budget process, a Winnipeg-based mining engineer position, this was a Winnipeg-based position, was deleted from the Mines Inspections Branch. This position had been vacant for approximately two years and there was no incumbent in that position. The position—and I can give you a bit of background on that—had historically been used to review occupational hygiene data; that is, measures of airborne exposure of miners to dust and gases produced by the mine's personnel, and the person in that position also reviewed mine ventilation data. This position had been established prior to the creation of the Occupational Health unit and the hiring of the chief occupational medical officer and prior to the Mines Inspections Branch having access to the services of the Occupational Hygiene Unit.

In recent years, both the Occupational Health Branch and the Occupational Hygiene Unit have provided services to Manitoba mines. The presence of the chief occupational medical officer allows for the professional review of chemical exposure and health-based data, while the Occupational Hygiene branch has verified mining company chemical monitoring methods as needed. These services have actually expanded to include verification and professional consultation of the mines' hearing conservation and noise control programs and

ergonomic consultations from the division's—*ergonomist?*—*ergonomist*. I know what they do, I just cannot say it very well.

The current lost-time accident data, I might indicate for the member's information, demonstrate an overall 10-year downward trend, so we know that this position has nothing to do with that. In the 1970s, mining was one of the most dangerous occupations, but it now has a lower lost-time accident rate than construction or manufacturing sectors which also have been going down.

I would point out for the member that in September of 1994, a district mining engineer was established as our northern manager in Flin Flon where the majority of Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting mines are, and this position had been transferred from Thompson. Mines inspectors are at Flin Flon, Snow Lake, and there is one each in those, two at Thompson, two in Winnipeg, along with a branch director who is a mining engineer.

I might point out for the member's information that Saskatchewan, by comparison, has twice the mining sector of Manitoba and only two mines inspectors. So I think, given the number of mining inspectors that we have, the amount of mines and, again, the internal responsibility system, coupled with the creation of the Occupational Health unit and the hiring of the chief occupational medical officer, that allowed us to make this deletion. In fact, these responsibilities are now being more than adequately—in fact, the responsibilities are enhanced in terms of the responsibilities being carried out.

I might just mention—it is always the title that I have the problem with. I just want to introduce the fact that Mr. Kesari Reddy, who is the director of the Mines Inspection Branch, has joined us.

* (1710)

Mr. Reid: Mr. Chairperson, I have raised this with the minister during Question Period, relating to the number of mine deaths in the province. I have had the opportunity to work the better part of my life, before coming to this place, in heavy industry, so I am not a stranger to the conditions that occur in heavy industry. I categorize mining in that area, as well. It is very, very labour intensive, and it has certain conditions that one would not normally find in many other worksites.

One of the things that struck me in touring various mines was the conditions that exist on the worksite, just the general working conditions, the uncleanliness, the hazards that were apparent to me, as someone not having worked in the industry, where you have personnel doors, the small doors that people walk in and out of as employees of the plant, where they were blocked with ice in the wintertime. If you had a major catastrophe in the plant and that door was blocked with ice, you are not going to have the opportunity or the ability for people to exit from the plant in the short time under emergency conditions.

When I raise workplace safety and health conditions and the inspections, whether it be the mines inspectors or the field officers for Workplace Safety and Health, I mean it is the little things that sometimes indicate whether or not there is an adherence or nonadherence to the safe practices of a business operation. It is the little things that tell you so much about an operation. I was concerned when I saw that those personnel doors were blocked by ice and, because mining is a heavy industry, that the personnel could potentially be put at risk if there was, for example, an explosion or some other catastrophe within the plant.

I do not want to dwell too long on that, but I just want to raise that for the minister's information. I do not want to point fingers at any particular mining company because I think, at this point, it would be unfair, but I am just telling the minister of my observations in going to those sites.

I want to ask the minister, because I do not know the information, I only know of the recent numbers where, I believe, we have had six mining fatalities in this province, I think, in the last year and a half to two years. What are the historical numbers with respect to injuries in the mining industry and the number of deaths that have occurred, and what steps are we taking to prevent those injuries and deaths? Have we stepped up the level of inspection?

I see here that the minister has provided me with the list of prosecution cases now before the courts which includes one mining company, and we will not mention that name right now. I need to know what steps are being taken to prevent further deaths in the mining industry, since it is my understanding that this one particular

company had been directed by the field inspection officer to take the necessary corrective steps before a fatality occurred and yet did not take the steps.

Mr. Toews: I have a document in front of me which I am prepared to share with the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid), and I will give that after my comments here on that point. The member is correct that there have been a number of deaths in the last number of years in the mining sector, but I think the historical trend is the one that we should be mindful of. The years in which the accident rates were the highest appear to be somewhat irregular. That is, one year there will be for example 12 or 13 deaths, the next year there will be eight deaths. That will happen. So there will be quite a variance in terms of the number of deaths.

What is clear, for example, I can just briefly note, in 1968, going back as far, there were 12 deaths; '69 there were eight deaths; '70 there were seven deaths. Then in 1971 there were 13 deaths; 1972 there were eight deaths; 1973 there were 11 deaths; '74 it dropped to three, and then '75 there were nine deaths; '77, for example, there were 12 deaths. That number of 12 at that point seems to be the last time that we have had that number of deaths in the mines.

Since 1977, mining fatalities have been steadily climbing down. For example, in '80 there were six deaths, again in '85 there were six deaths. But never since '85 have there been that many deaths. Now in '94 for example there were three deaths I believe. So what we are seeing is a levelling off of this death rate.

Also, what one sees is that the frequency in terms of accidents per 200,000 hours worked has also been declining quite rapidly from a high in 1973 where it was very, very high. It continued very, very high throughout the '70s and throughout the '80s, and for some reason at '88 it started dropping. This is not to do with the amount of workers, it is the amount of accidents per 200,000 hours work. So you have 200,000 hours work, you have a certain frequency, and since '88, for some reason, these statistics just seem to be going down, down, down. So I think, personally, it is some of the work that our mines inspectors have been doing. Mr. Reddy, I think, is a very qualified individual who has been very strong on health safety, workplace safety, and his branch is, no doubt, contributing to much of this.

But I have to go back to the original point that I was making, Mr. Chair, and that is how many inspectors we put onto these mines will not make the difference. Inspectors are necessary, inspections are necessary, but again we have to educate the miners. We have to educate the managers; we have to get them involved. Everybody who walks into that mine has a mandate to promote safety, and I am sure that when the member for Transcona saw that ice against those doors, blocking those doors, and with his knowledge I am sure that what he did was immediately go to a manager and say, that is an unsafe condition. It clearly is part of his responsibility and would be part of my responsibility if I had that kind of trained eye. I might not have that trained eye. I do not have the qualifications that the member opposite does, but clearly he bears that responsibility in walking into a mine.

Every union member who sees that door blocked with ice has a responsibility, and I can attribute I believe in most part to the actions of people like the member or the worker in the mine who go and say there is something wrong with that door, fix it, and that is what makes the real difference. Yes, we have the mines inspectors; yes, we have the power of the law, but when we have responsible citizens like the member for Transcona and other workers or managers at the mine making those specific requests, that is what brings our accident rates down. So by the member pointing that out, showing that iced door and an accident occurring let us say an hour later, the member may well have saved five lives because the member is responsible for ensuring that that ice was not there. So I commend the member for his actions on that day and, hopefully, that all of us who have that kind of knowledge—unfortunately, I do not have that kind of knowledge—but all of us who do have that kind of knowledge and note those types of things right from the lowest paid worker to the highest paid president, they all have that responsibility for safety.

* (1720)

Mr. Reid: The minister is absolutely correct. It is everybody's responsibility and we were conducting the tour of the plant with a mines official and it was pointed out to that individual at that time, and unfortunately I was not there in subsequent days to ensure that that corrective action was taken. I hope it was taken, but that is something that was left in somebody else's hands that is employed in that plant.

I have several questions but for the sake of time, Mr. Chairperson, I am prepared to pass this section.

Mr. Toews: I undertook to provide that document to the member.

Mr. Chairperson: I am just going to revert here for a second.

2.(h) Mines Inspection (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$568,500—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$175,800—pass.

2.(j) Employment Standards (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,874,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$573,600.

Mr. Reid: One question, Mr. Chairperson, in this area. There has been a change in funding, a decrease in funding in program delivery. Can the minister provide me some information on how it was changed in the program delivery and why he has made the change?

Mr. Toews: Just to introduce the staff from the Employment Standards: Kim Riddell, who is the Acting Executive Director, as well as Pat Devonan, the Manager of the Employment Standards branch or division.

In respect of that issue, I just indicate that prior to July of 1995 the provincial Labour Adjustment unit and federal Industrial Adjustment Service cosponsored downsize adjustment committees involving 20 or more affected workers, and the federal government announced that for the '96-97 fiscal year it is cutting 9.5 million from job training. It is the federal government doing that, and re-employment measures in Manitoba representing a 10 percent cut from the previous year.

In a move to reduce duplication of services of federal and provincial programs on July 12, 1995, the Director of Human Resources Development Canada advised the Industrial Adjustment Services—or advised that Industrial Adjustment Services would no longer support human and financial resources for downsize activities, and instead IAS will concentrate on employer-based activity.

This has resulted in restructuring of the Labour Adjustment unit as having primary responsibility to facilitate mitigation activities for all provincial downsize

activities, and this restructuring has resulted in greater flexibility, quicker response time, less administration, compressed time frames, and increased cost effectiveness in the unit's overall program and delivery service. But we no longer provide grants that used to go out in this respect, that is, actual monies going out. We now provide staff to facilitate meetings, to chair meetings, but we no longer provide direct grants in this respect, so that is the difference.

Mr. Chairperson: 2.(k) Worker Advisor Office (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$552,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$120,000—pass.

2.(m) Office of the Fire Commissioner (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits and (2) Other Expenditures—just for information.

Resolution 11.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$12,503,400 for Labour Programs for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1997

We will now revert to the Minister's Salary, Resolution 11.1(a).

Mr. Reid: Mr. Chairperson, I know the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) and I have a few questions under Minister's Salary, and I should have raised this, I guess, but I think the minister will probably know the answers to this anyway—I could leave it with him for the sake of time—in that the Payment of Wages Fund has been eliminated totally. It had been a historical high, I believe, of about over half a million dollars. It was reduced last year to \$225,000, and now it has been totally eliminated. I need to have some indication from the minister why he has eliminated this and what other funds are in place or policy does he have in place to allow for the payment of wages to people that have been shortchanged their earnings and that have filed claims with the department.

Mr. Toews: I can provide the member with some of that information. I have some familiarity involved with the Payment of Wages Fund from years ago. I was involved in a drafting of the regulation that originally set up the fund. The reason that fund was originally set up was to get quick interim payments to workers who had been deprived of money. In fact, because of the legal process, that function is no longer occurring, that workers do not

get their money in time, in that two weeks, because of the legal process. The UIC funding kicks in a lot sooner than the Payment of Wages funding, and therefore the workers are getting their money within the two- or three-week period that it takes to get the UIC funding. Therefore, the Payment of Wages funding is no longer necessary. In fact, it no longer serves the purpose it had been serving. So that is the very general broad explanation. I could get into more details, if you want more.

Mr. Chairperson: Should the item pass? The item is accordingly passed.

Mr. Reid: No, no. It is the Minister's Salary, I believe, Mr. Chairperson, and I think the sitting time for today has expired and whatever questions—

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. The hour now being 5:30, committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Marcel Laurendeau): The hour being 5:30, this House now adjourns and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m., Tuesday next.

Have a good weekend.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 16, 1996

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