



**Fourth Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature**

**of the**

**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**

**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report  
(Hansard)**

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Speaker*



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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Sixth Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
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	Steinbach	P.C.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	P.C.
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	N.D.P.
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
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, Hon.	Riel	P.C.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PITURA, Frank, Hon.	Morris	P.C.
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
RADCLIFFE, Mike, Hon.	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.	Rosmere	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, June 4, 1998

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

## PRESENTING PETITIONS

## Rail Line Abandonment

**Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River):** Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of R. Griffith, B. Watts, C. Cook and others praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the provincial government go on record requesting CN and CPR to not proceed with any discontinuance of lines until the report has been tabled, that being the Estey Grain Transportation Report.

## READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

## Rail Line Abandonment

**Madam Speaker:** I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

**Madam Speaker:** Dispense.

*WHEREAS affordable transportation is a critical component of grain production; and*

*WHEREAS under the Crow rate benefit, Manitoba was the cheapest place on the Prairies from which to ship grain but became the most expensive following the abolishment of the Crow rate; and*

*WHEREAS the Canada Transportation Act proclaimed on July 1, 1996, gave railways the ability to discontinue and scrap branch lines without public input; and*

*WHEREAS several lines were targeted immediately by CN for abandonment; and*

*WHEREAS CN gave notice on May 6, 1998, that the Erwood Subdivision will be discontinued in 1998; and*

*WHEREAS the loss of this line would severely impact upon the communities of Bowsman and Birch River as well as surrounding communities; and*

*WHEREAS in 1997, western grain farmers lost millions of dollars due to backlogs and delays by the major railways; and*

*WHEREAS as a result the federal government set up the Estey Grain Transportation Review which is scheduled to release a report later this year.*

*WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the provincial government go on record requesting CN and CPR to not proceed with any discontinuance of lines until that report has been tabled.*

PRESENTING REPORTS BY  
STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

## Committee of Supply

**Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Chairperson):** 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 Portage la Prairie (Mr. Fauschou), that the report of the committee be received.

**Motion agreed to.**

## TABLING OF REPORTS

**Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development):** Madam Speaker, I would like to table the Annual Report for the Manitoba Surface Rights Board.

## Introduction of Guests

**Madam Speaker:** Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members,

first to the Speaker's Gallery where we have with us this afternoon a delegation of parliamentarians from Chile under the direction of Minister Henriquez, Minister of Housing.

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

I would like to also draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today Grand Chief Francis Flett, MKO, and Chief Fred Harper of Red Sucker Lake.

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

Also, we have in the public gallery this afternoon, thirty-five Grade 9 students from Linden Christian School under the direction of Mr. Derek Kroeker. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable First Minister (Mr. Filmon).

Also, seventy-two Grades 1 to 12 students from Valley Mennonite Academy under the direction of Mr. John Friesen. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck).

Also, thirty-nine Grade 5 students from Belmont School under the direction of Ms. Sukhbir Gill and Mrs. Shelley Maslow-Myk. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh).

Also, thirty Grades 9 and 10 students from Arthur Meighen High School under the direction of Mr. Ryan Muirhead. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Faurshou).

Also, fourteen Grade 11 students from Otter Nelson River School under the direction of Ms. Martha Greenwood. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin).

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

## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

### Speech and Language Services Waiting List

**Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition):** Madam Speaker, in 1992 the provincial government cut programs for speech and language services to children and preschool children. When the Postl report was made public, it stated that the waiting list was some 18 months and recommended staff be hired. The government then promised they would do so in the election campaign and have failed to do so since.

Today, in meeting with parents, a parent named Lorraine said that a child that does not learn to communicate gets frustrated and gets behavioural problems that will carry on into the school system.

Madam Speaker, I would like the Premier today to announce that they are in fact going to implement the Postl report and implement finally their election promise. It is over three years since they made this commitment. Let us make this commitment on behalf of our children here in Manitoba today.

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** Madam Speaker, there is no question that we believe that the investment made in children in their ability to learn, their ability to study, is an important investment, and indeed this government has indicated that it is committed to reduce the waiting lists for speech therapy for those areas to assist our children with speech difficulties in learning. Certainly we are committed to implementing those improvements.

\* (1335)

**Mr. Doer:** Madam Speaker, the waiting list has gone up from 18 months under the Postl report to two years now, according to Mr. Thorfinnson, and parents that we listened to today said that the parents have two options. They can pay between \$60 and \$100 a day for private, fee-for-service clinicians that have gone from 10 under his government to 60, or they can wait two years. Will the Premier stop just talking about this issue and start introducing real programs, real resources, real clinicians to deal with the real challenges that hundreds of Manitoba families have right now?

**Mr. Filmon:** Madam Speaker, indeed we are committed to dealing with it. My understanding is that resources have been budgeted for that purpose, and it is our intent to reduce the waiting lists.

### **Education System Public Health Nurses**

**Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition):** Madam Speaker, the Postl report also goes on in terms of talking about a Healthy Child program. It talks about the essential role of nurses in schools and talks about having preventative health programs and direct health care programs in our schools, not only to help the children but to relieve the pressure on teachers.

We have heard that the responsibility for dealing with head lice in the Winnipeg schools has moved now from public health nurses, a city jurisdiction, to teachers, who of course are under the purview of the provincial Minister of Education. Would it not make a lot more sense to hire more nurses to do preventative health work and direct health work in our schools, as recommended in the Healthy Child report, instead of going again in the opposite direction on behalf of our kids?

**Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training):** Madam Speaker, the member asks a very good question and one that this government has taken a lot of work to reply to even in advance of it being asked. Last year, for example, the Department of Health made available for school divisions some \$450,000 for the express purpose of hiring registered nurses for schools. That was a very good move that was taken up by school divisions to the tune of some \$270,000. I may have the figure off a little bit there, but in that neighbourhood.

As well, we have side-by-side pilot programs going on right now where we have public health nurses, say in Polson School, along with community police officers, et cetera. So the ability through the Children and Youth Secretariat to put together programs where the whole child is seen and where appropriate servicing coming from Health into the schools and all those kinds of co-ordinating activities are well underway by this government.

### **Speech and Language Services Waiting List**

**Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley):** Madam Speaker, Manitoba parents are telling us of horrendous waiting lists at the preschool level, waiting lists of over 500 for evaluation in speech and language therapy. Children stay on that list for years; they never reach the top. Then they are school age and they go to the bottom of the waiting list, and some of those waiting lists are growing, as the Leader of the Opposition has said. We have heard the Premier's platitudes; we have heard him express concern. I would like to hear from the Minister of Education today what specific steps she is going to take to reduce those waiting lists in the next six months for Manitobans.

**Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training):** The member has heard me speak in the first question, has heard me speak on other occasions about the work of the Children and Youth Secretariat and about putting whole service schools into being, notwithstanding the fact that there are clinicians and resource teachers, school psychologists and people of that nature in the school. In fact, we currently have a ratio of 14.9 to 1 in terms of educator-pupil ratios in the schools, and many of those are clinicians in those extra four positions.

But, Madam Speaker, when we talk about trying to integrate services into the schools, as our pilot projects are now showing, and we bring in the medical services as well as the justice, et cetera, into the schools, I think you are going to see a very positive report come on those pilot projects. In the meantime, in terms of the students that are being serviced by the existing health care providers, we are working both at the preschool and the school level to reduce those waiting lists by ensuring that there is, first of all, a good early referral by audiologists to those kinds of therapies.

\* (1340)

**Ms. Friesen:** Would the minister confirm the information provided by the Speech and Hearing Association, that Manitoba has only three educational audiologists for school-aged services in Manitoba, that city school divisions have waiting lists of over 20 and that one rural school division has a waiting list of over

a hundred and two? What specific steps will you take in the next six months to change that?

**Mrs. McIntosh:** The member asks me to confirm those figures, and I will, because, as we have seen from many other examples in the House, the figures provided in the preamble from the member opposite are frequently incorrect. So I will confirm them, Madam Speaker, and provide the answers to her once her figures have been confirmed as accurate or otherwise.

### Private Clinicians

**Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley):** Madam Speaker, the minister will find that I raised these questions last week, and she still has not—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. Would the honourable member please pose her question now.

**Ms. Friesen:** Would the minister tell the House whether she is recommending to school divisions the practice that some parents are now resorting to of bringing private clinicians into public schools? Is that the future of public education in Manitoba that this government has led us to?

**Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training):** Madam Speaker, I have not received recommendations from parents to bring private clinicians into the schools in Manitoba.

### Foster Care Special Needs Children

**Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows):** Madam Speaker, foster parents with children with special needs are telling us that they have to fight for every dime of respite services, homemakers, recreation, clothing, and this is a very discouraging process for these people. They want to know why it is that the agencies are not more considerate, and why it is that the more articulate they are and the harder they fight, they get the services, instead of the services being based on the needs of the children. Will this minister address this problem so that the needs are being met on the needs of the child, not on the ability of the parents to fight?

**Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services):** I thank my honourable friend for that question. I do know that many, many of the children that we have in foster homes today, significantly more than ever in the past, have additional supports through special needs rates in our Child and Family Services system. I would say over half of the children within our system certainly are supported with more than the basic rate in our foster home placements, and I know that additional services based on the needs of the child are supposed to be available.

I have had conversations with some foster parents, yes, who have called my office with issues around difficulty in accessing services. I certainly pass that information on. I know we have been able to help a lot of families as a result of working together to try to ensure that the services are there when the children need them.

**Mr. Martindale:** I would like to thank the minister for acknowledging that it is the special-rate foster parents that we are talking about and ask the minister: why is it that the parents of these children are being so nickled and dimed to death, which is what they tell me, and becoming so discouraged that they either want to stop fostering or they go to other agencies where they are paid much higher rates? At the time when we have numerous children in hotels and in four-bed units, why is this minister and her government's policies discouraging these parents when we need more parents to foster?

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** I indicated in my first answer that I have had foster parents call my office directly. Every time a foster parent calls with an issue, we refer it to the agency. We work with the agency to ensure that the services are there and available for those children.

\* (1345)

If my honourable friend has specific circumstances and specific families or foster parents that are raising issues with him, I would encourage him to share that information with me or have those foster families call. We will ensure that we work with the agency to try to resolve the problem.

**Mr. Martindale:** I would like to ask the minister why it is that parents would have to phone the minister's office. Why can they not get the help they need by talking to the contact person in the agency? Why do they have to fight for these services? Why do they have to phone the minister's office, and why is it that these policies are discouraging people from fostering so that they want to quit taking foster children or they switch to the other agencies where they get much higher rates? Then Winnipeg is backlogged with children in hotels. Why will this minister not do something about this unacceptable situation?

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** I will tell you what this government has done to address the issue of children in care. We have increased support to the Winnipeg Child and Family Services agency by \$23 million over the last five to six years, not an insignificant amount to try to address the needs. We have funded the agency with the dollars that they believe are required to provide the services to children in the city of Winnipeg.

If, in fact, there are some workers in the system that are not able to provide referrals and supports to those children, we need to know about that so we can try to address that issue. But I want to indicate that the funding is there. There have not been reductions in support to the Winnipeg Child and Family Services agency, and we will continue to attempt to meet the needs through increased resources as they are needed for children that need support through our Child and Family Services system.

#### **Manitoba Medical Association Negotiations—Ministerial Responsibility**

**Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan):** Madam Speaker, several weeks ago the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik) pronounced the MMA as irrelevant. A couple of weeks later the MMA were up in Brandon and were the minister's best friends. Several weeks ago when we suggested binding arbitration, the government and the minister rejected it. Then the minister came back and said binding arbitration with conditions. Several weeks ago the minister said, no, we will not negotiate for salaried doctors. Now there has been a negotiated settlement for salaried doctors.

Madam Speaker, my question to the Premier is: with all of these flip-flops by his Minister of Health, will the

Premier consider putting another minister in charge of the negotiations with the Manitoba Medical Association?

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** Madam Speaker, of course the member for Kildonan, with his glib approach to this, belittles the complexities and all the difficulties of delivering high-quality health care to the people of Manitoba, to over a million citizens. Dealing with a whole spectrum of doctors, many of whom are specialists, distribution in different areas, ensuring that we have doctors in places that are needed, ensuring that we deal with the various complexities and anomalies of providing for after-hours service, for weekend coverage, specialty referrals and all those things; it is easy for him to boil it down to glib one-word answers and 10-second clips, but that is not the kind of thing that is going to be needed for good public policy in Manitoba for a high-quality health care system in Manitoba.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Madam Speaker, how does the Premier expect his Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik) to negotiate these complicated agreements with the physicians and in our health care system when, after negotiations are concluded, to begin to deal with the issues, the minister stands up and publicly says that the doctors have kept the people of Manitoba as hostages? How do you expect this minister to have the ability and the good will and the confidence of those people to negotiate agreements, given those kinds of statements?

**Mr. Filmon:** Madam Speaker, if the member opposite supports putting in jeopardy the most vulnerable people in our society, the people who are in dire need of health care coverage and attention, if he believes that is the best approach to dealing with government, then I am glad that the people of Manitoba have seen fit not to have him in government and in charge of these things.

#### **Binding Arbitration**

**Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan):** Madam Speaker, can the Premier explain, therefore, given his comments and given what I have said earlier, why it is that it took three weeks for you to agree to our suggestion of three weeks ago that would not have put Manitobans through this, of going to binding arbitration in the first place without those conditions, and why you had to go through such a process and allow the minister to go

back and forth and flip-flop? We would have had a settlement, and we would have been negotiating three weeks ago if you had not blown it.

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** Madam Speaker, the only people who blow it here every day are the members opposite who cheer when people are being put at risk, when individual Manitobans are being denied service. Those are the people who are blowing it day after day.

\* (1350)

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader):** Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I do believe the comments of the Premier are once again unparliamentary. He talks about cheering. We have been the ones in this House arguing that this government should have gone to arbitration a lot sooner so that people would not be put in that position.

I would like to ask, Madam Speaker, that you ask him to withdraw the unparliamentary comment and, in addition, answer the very serious question we are asking about why it took this government so long to deal with the need for arbitration to deal with this dispute.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable First Minister, on the same point of order.

**Mr. Filmon:** Madam Speaker, on the same point of order. It was the member opposite who used the term having "blown it" in the negotiations and the discussion. It is the member opposite who is the one who has been, throughout the piece, supporting efforts to withdraw services and to put people in jeopardy, and he demonstrates it by coming here day after day.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. On the point of order raised by the honourable member for Thompson, I can find no verification that the words stated by the honourable First Minister are unparliamentary.

#### Canadian Unity Centralized Government

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** My question is for the Premier. In recent media reports, we hear of the

unholy alliance of the Reform Party with the Bloc party, Madam Speaker, and what they want to do is divide Canada into 10 separate nations.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

**An Honourable Member:** Which party are you with today, Kevin?

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Not with the Reform Party.

Madam Speaker, the question for the Premier is in respect to the whole issue of national unity. When you have arguments coming from the one side, where we are talking about a highly decentralized national government, does this government have a position on the issue of decentralization versus the status quo?

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** Madam Speaker, this government has always favoured having a strong national government that is able to act in the best interests of people nationwide in the development and assurance of qualities and standards on a nationwide basis.

This government also recognizes that in many cases the government that is closest to the people, that is actually responsible for delivering the service, should have a great deal more to do with the delivery of that service and not have standards or not have imposed upon them dictates from Ottawa, who do not know as much as we do about things that are going on in the local economic area.

We believe that it is a matter of ensuring that those responsibilities that are being divided up amongst the governments of Canada, that were conceived 130 years ago at a time when Canada was very, very different, ought to be reviewed from time to time, and that at all times, rather than have ideology, rather than have lust for power as our motivation, we ought to be evaluating whose best position to deliver those services and who can do the most efficient and effective job on behalf of the taxpayer, because we are all one taxpayer. That has always been our approach. It has been a very pragmatic approach.



### Federal Transfer Payments Cash Transfers

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Madam Speaker, given the Premier's response: will he then be prepared to commit to the belief that it is indeed in Manitoba's best interest that we maintain cash transfers and that any discussions with respect to the possibility of tax points transfers over the cash transfers is something that this government will not tolerate whatsoever?

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** Madam Speaker, when the cash transfers continue to erode and to erode to the point that we are virtually left without cash to be transferred from Ottawa, what good are cash transfers to us? How on earth can we continue that circumstance in which the cash transfers continue to be eroded and reduced from Ottawa to the provinces? That is not something any of us should be supporting, and I am surprised that the member for Inkster is taking that position.

Madam Speaker, we have always said that when it comes to the transference of tax points, they have to be equalized tax points so that we not only get it on a per capita basis but we get the proportionate equalization that goes along with the recognition that equalization is very much a fundamental part of national transfers from the federal government to the provinces.

\* (1355)

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, will the Premier acknowledge the only way in which you are going to get influence from the national government is through cash transfers, not tax points transfers? This government needs to take a position which supports the need for cash transfers and will reject categorically suggestions, whether they are from Alberta or B.C. or other potential provinces like Quebec, in favour of tax points transfers over cash transfers. That is not in Manitoba's best interest.

**Mr. Filmon:** Madam Speaker, I do not think that Quebec is a potential province at the moment, but I say to the member opposite that the issue very clearly is that, in terms of cash transfers, successive governments for decades in Ottawa, Liberal and Conservative, have reduced and reduced those cash transfers. We do not

have the security on cash transfers any longer. We have targeted programs that Ottawa comes into and out of. We just saw a recent one, one of the programs that we—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

### Point of Order

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, just on a point of order, because there is a responsibility to be more straightforward with the facts. From what I understand, there is a cash floor that has been established for the transfer payments. So the whole premise of the Premier's arguments is based on information that is just not accurate.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable Leader of the official opposition, on the same point of order.

**Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition):** On the same point of order. I believe this is a matter in dispute, but I think the record will show clearly that the Mulroney government cut money for health and post-secondary education, and that has been accelerated by the Chretien government. We say a plague on both their houses, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable government House leader, on the same point of order.

**Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader):** We have just had a lesson from two opposition members on how to abuse the point of order, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable member for Inkster certainly did not have a point of order.

\* \* \*

\* (1400)

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable First Minister, to complete his response.

**Mr. Filmon:** Madam Speaker, we know that, in terms of the cash transfers from Ottawa for health and post-

secondary education, we have had since the Chretien government has been in office a reduction of transfers of almost \$7 billion annually from Ottawa to the provinces. So there is no question about the reduction in cash transfers. We see the other approach which is then to take targeted money and put it into a program like Taking Charge!, a program that was in fact responsible for taking more than a thousand people off welfare, single people off welfare, and into employment here. Ottawa began the program, and even before their committed money was spent, they have pulled out of the program. That is the kind of thing that he wants to rely on for the future of Manitoba.

Well, I say that he is either naive or not in much understanding of the circumstances when he proposes what he does with respect to Manitoba's future.

#### **Northern Aboriginal Communities Food Pricing—Investigation**

**Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupert's Land):** Madam Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Consumer Affairs.

As the minister should be aware, prices of basic groceries in many remote communities are normally about a hundred percent higher than Winnipeg. Allow me to give you an example: in some communities, \$5 for six potatoes; \$9 for a gallon of gasoline; \$14 for a 10-pound bag of flour; \$8 for four litres of milk.

Now what has been happening here is that many aboriginal communities in northern Manitoba feel that there has been some price gouging. In discussions with Chief Fred Harper this morning from Red Sucker Lake, he brought to us a 10-pound bag of flour from his community, sold at the Northern Stores, and it is quite evident that in the flour were weevils, as they are called.

In regard to these recent allegations of price gouging, I want to ask the minister whether he would ask his department to conduct an investigation into food prices in all remote communities that do not have all-weather roads or rail service.

**Hon. Mike Radcliffe (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Madam Speaker, my honourable colleague wrote me a letter today, and it was delivered

to my office about an hour ago, touching on this matter. I am advised that the federal Department of Indian and Native Affairs has made an agreement with the Province of Manitoba, arising out of the melt we had and the loss of the winter roads, that they would be augmenting the costs of—or they would be covering the additional costs of transporting goods into northern areas by virtue of an airlift. The understanding was that the northern merchants were to charge nothing in excess of what their normal prices were. We have heard an example, of course, of what the customary prices were; however, I want to assure my honourable colleague that if he would give me some more particulars on this, I would be delighted to have the Department of Consumer Affairs investigate the matter.

**Mr. Robison:** Madam Speaker, according to a 1993 MKO report, it indicates that at the best of times Red Sucker Lake experiences 87 percent higher food costs than Winnipeg. They in Lac Brochet experience 88 percent higher food costs compared to Winnipeg. Grand Chief Francis Flett is in the gallery, as is Chief Fred Harper of Red Sucker Lake. I would like to ask the minister to avail himself of the opportunity to see first-hand that flour and also to see first-hand some of the concerns that these leaders of these northern aboriginal communities have.

**Mr. Radcliffe:** Since I have had the honour and pleasure to occupy the chair as the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, I have maintained an open-door policy in my office, and any citizen of Manitoba is welcome to approach my office and approach me personally if they find that they are having difficulties with any of the issues that my department covers. In response to my honourable colleague this afternoon, I would like to assure you, Madam Speaker, that I would be delighted to meet with these individuals whom he makes reference to.

#### **Prospectors Course Status Report**

**Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James):** Madam Speaker, Manitoba's mineral industry is in crisis. We have seen layoffs at Thompson and downsizing in Flin Flon and mine closures in Bissett, and we have seen a growing depletion of mineral resources in Manitoba. Serious questions are being raised about the govern-

ment's commitment to dealing with Manitoba's shortage of prospectors and its commitment to ensuring a strong and healthy mineral industry.

Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Mines: how does the minister explain the total bungling by the province of the prospectors course, which was to be offered last year in which 17 participants signed up for the program but only were given four weeks of a five-month program, to have it only end with no practicum? The whole thing was a total disaster.

**Hon. David Newman (Minister of Energy and Mines):** Madam Speaker, the companion I had on my trip up to Thompson to the Mid-Canada Mining Corridor Conference is exercising far more negative emotion than I saw exhibited in the trip North. However, fuelled by the great northern hospitality and the good news from the mining industry, I can understand why she might pose a question in this sort of fashion.

The answer to that is, indeed, I have nothing but dissatisfaction with the way that that program was handled last year, and the Mining Association of Manitoba, the industry members that were involved and the people that were involved in trying to make that a success are absolutely committed to improving on the performance of last year.

If I may take a moment, because, for the record, I have sent a letter to the honourable member for St. James indicating the facts about prospectors' assistance, and it is just not factual that she asserted—when she asserted before that it was reduced by 50 percent. The position that I advanced last time is indeed correct.

#### Point of Order

**Ms. Mihychuk:** Madam Speaker, I am afraid that the minister is totally confused. The question was based on a prospecting course that the province had initiated and was attempting to provide last year. The minister seems to be completely confused with a question that I had asked last week.

Madam Speaker, mining is a big industry and there are a lot of different factors, but the minister seems to be completely confused about the question.

**Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader):** Madam Speaker, the honourable member for St. James can hardly be given much credibility when she rises on a point of order to try to bring attention to a minister who is simply correcting misinformation brought to this House by the honourable member for St. James. At the worst, we have a difference of opinion.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable member for Thompson, on the same point of order.

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader):** Yes, Madam Speaker, and indeed I could probably ask members to repeat after me: Beauchesne Citation 417, "Answers to questions should be as brief as possible, deal with the matter raised and should not provoke debate."

Madam Speaker, I often rise on a point of order when one or two of those provisions are broken, but I think the minister broke all three, and I would like to ask you to call him to order.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. Now I am really confused. When the honourable member for St. James stood on her point of order, I did not recognize that she stood on the same point of order that was acknowledged by the honourable member for Thompson. However, the honourable member for Thompson did raise a point of order, and I would request that the honourable Minister of Energy and Mines respond to the question asked and keep his remarks as brief as possible.

\* \* \*

\* (1410)

**Ms. Mihychuk:** Madam Speaker, my second question to the minister will be very specific: can the minister explain why his department did not contact the mining companies about placing these students in this prospecting course into a practical field experience until after the mining field season was over? The field season was over, and the students were at the door. Bungling.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. The question has been put.

**Mr. Newman:** Madam Speaker, I will endeavour to get a full explanation so that I am not going to attribute any interpretations of what happened in any way that may be confusing to the honourable member for St. James. I will undertake to do that from the Mining Association of Manitoba who indeed does have a perspective on that and has communicated with my department to make sure, as I said, that no deficiencies will occur in the program in future.

**Ms. Mihychuk:** Madam Speaker, can the minister explain, given last year the program was a disaster and did not get completed, given the strong support from the mineral industry, why he did not revamp the program and run it this year, given the crisis in the shortage of prospectors in Manitoba? If he believes that there is a need, why did he not do it this year?

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. The question has been put.

**Mr. Newman:** Madam Speaker, for the record, in response to the question, the prospectors' involvement in any programs is reflected by the number of applications that they make to source funding for those kinds of programs. Although we had funding available in the amounts of \$100,000 a year from 1992-93 through '95-96, only \$47,000 to \$80,000-\$97,000 in one year—an excess was applied for. In 1996-97, and I might say granted on a supplemental basis, \$150,000 was available, \$89,000 applied for; '97-98, \$150,000 was available, \$122,000 applied for. So this year we made \$125,000 available in anticipation that hopefully all of it will be applied for, and if more is applied for, I would certainly seek supplemental funding from Treasury Board.

#### **Linnet Graphics Data Access**

**Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood):** Madam Speaker, yesterday in Estimates debate, the Minister of Natural Resources confirmed that Linnet Graphics is going to maintain its control of the data that it amassed over the last five years on behalf of the province. While he acknowledged the province owns the data, Linnet will be the entry point for gaining access to the data and will pay the province royalties when data are accessed through the Linnet gateway.

Madam Speaker, my question to the minister: why in the world, when you have severed or supposedly severed your monopoly relationship with Linnet, are you letting it be a supplier of data that was collected by the province, with the province's money in the public sector? Why is the province not supplying that data at appropriate charges or free in order to encourage development?

**Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Natural Resources):** Madam Speaker, we do.

**Mr. Sale:** Madam Speaker, the minister contradicts what he said in Estimates yesterday.

**Madam Speaker:** Question.

**Mr. Sale:** He indicated—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Sale:** Will the minister tell the House how it is that his answer yesterday was that Linnet would continue to provide data amassed by Linnet with provincial funds and pay royalties to the province, if he is now contradicting himself and saying today they are not doing that? Which is true?

**Mr. Cummings:** Madam Speaker, I think perhaps both the member for Crescentwood and I should peruse Hansard, because what I indicated was that there are often times when we are able to provide and do provide information, the same information that Linnet may well be providing.

#### **Home Construction Occupancy Permit**

**Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona):** Whether you live in St. Vital, Riel, Transcona or anywhere else in rural and northern Manitoba, Madam Speaker, the purchase of a new home is likely to be the largest single investment any family would make. The Wakaluk family in Transcona purchased a new home recently and received occupancy approval from Kensington Homes. The family moved in and subsequently found the construction incomplete only after encountering health problems in the meantime.

In the eyes of the family, the builder and the New Home Warranty Program have been less than fully co-operative, Madam Speaker. I want to ask the Minister of Labour, who is responsible for building codes in this province, to undertake an investigation to see whether or not the City of Winnipeg and perhaps other municipalities are performing final inspections of these new homes before the occupancy permits are issued and before the families move into these buildings?

**Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Labour):** I will endeavour to get that information for the member.

**Mr. Reid:** I want to ask the Minister of Labour if he will undertake to have his Building Standards Board undertake a review of the practices of builders allowing occupancy of homes before the construction is complete to ensure that families' safety and health is protected? Will he refer that matter to his Building Standards Board?

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** I will endeavour to review that matter.

**Mr. Reid:** I want to ask the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, Madam Speaker, to undertake to lend the full weight of his department to ensure that the Wakaluk family, and perhaps others, are protected in such matters, since the New Home Warranty Program will not acknowledge a formal complaint as long as the builder picks away at some of the complaints, a process which can take a number of years, disadvantaging the families in these new homes.

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** Madam Speaker, my honourable friend has brought forward some information, and in the past it has not always been totally accurate. I have indicated that I will review this matter and certainly get back to him.

#### **Northern Manitoba All-Weather Road Construction**

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson):** Madam Speaker, earlier in Question Period, my colleague the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson) raised some very serious questions about the impact of price gouging in northern communities.

What I would like to ask the provincial government, given the fact that the real concern in those communities came from the fact that they were dependent on winter roads which were not accessible due to the weather, and given the fact that this government has done very little to look at extending the all-weather road system in the province, I would like to ask the Minister of Highways whether he will now look at the request, the repeated request from many northern communities to start looking at planning future roads access to be extended to those communities that do not have roads in northern Manitoba.

**Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Highways and Transportation):** Madam Speaker, we look at roads all over the province but particularly in the North where access to communities is limited in many cases to air, and the only road access is winter roads in the wintertime. I can tell the member that we are looking at that and will, over the course of time, hopefully come up with solutions that serve some communities.

\* (1420)

**Mr. Ashton:** Madam Speaker, I am wondering, as a supplementary, whether the minister will listen to communities, for example, such as the community of York Landing which does not have road access, which have indicated their interest in becoming involved directly in the construction of all-weather road access that would give them year-round access instead of the seasonal access they have now.

Will he work with those communities and start planning for the future of northern Manitoba by trying to extend the road network of Manitoba into those northern communities?

**Mr. Findlay:** Madam Speaker, I am sure the member recognizes that one of the biggest stumbling blocks is dollars. I think I have received support from members opposite that the federal government has a responsibility in assisting all 10 provinces, two territories in this country in dealing with the road challenges we have in terms of building and maintaining roads that serve all communities all over Manitoba and all over Canada. I think that support is there, and I hope it continues to be there.

We on this side continue to work to get more dollars from a federal partner that should be playing a role.

**Madam Speaker:** Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Is there leave of the House to revert to Introduction of Bills? Is there leave? [agreed]

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### Bill 303—The Brandon Area Foundation Incorporation Amendment Act

**Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East):** Madam Speaker, I thank the House for the leave.

I would move, seconded by the MLA for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), that leave be given to introduce Bill 303, The Brandon Area Foundation Incorporation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi constituant en corporation "The Brandon Area Foundation," and that the same be now received and read a first time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### The Maples Collegiate Unity Group

**Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina):** Madam Speaker, earlier this afternoon, the Maples Collegiate Unity Group held their annual March 4 Unity. It is extremely reassuring to see the strong student-driven community response promoting unity in our society. The youth of our community understand their responsibility in making Manitoba a positive harmonious environment for people of all cultures.

The students participating in today's unity march are creating awareness and understanding between cultures. The unity group is focused on helping their peers and the community at large to support efforts to promote unity and equality among Manitobans of all origins. Today's march was an impressive public awareness event and reflected the students' desire to take their efforts into the community. Our government—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. I wonder if I might ask for the co-operation of all honourable members. I am experiencing great difficulty hearing the honourable member for Pembina.

**Mr. Dyck:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Our government is supportive of schools such as Maples Collegiate in the development and implementation of their own programs to foster respect and understanding. Through these activities, people find a sense of understanding, pride, and respect for each other. Although Manitoba is culturally diverse, it is a single society united by our shared laws, values, aspirations and responsibilities. Our future depends on all members of our community receiving every opportunity for full participation in society.

I would ask all honourable members to join me in commending the Maples Collegiate unity group for their contribution to the well-being of our Manitoba community. Thank you.

#### Mid-Canada Mining Corridor Conference

**Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James):** Madam Speaker, I had the pleasure to attend the Mid-Canada Mining Corridor Conference in Thompson, Manitoba, on Tuesday, June 2, and had the pleasure of meeting with many of the 120 delegates that came from wide, wide ranges of North America, all the way from North Carolina, coming up to promote their services and equipment to the mining industry in Manitoba, all the way from the east coast of Canada, all the way from British Columbia, including the provinces of Saskatchewan, Manitoba and the North-West Territories. It was, once again, a successful event, and I wish to congratulate the organizers.

Madam Speaker, these are companies that provide services for the mining industry in Manitoba. They provide equipment, mining equipment, assay services. Also represented were mining companies and training companies. And how is this relevant to Winnipeg? I think it is particularly potent when Campbell North, the owner of Campbell North, who has a rental equipment service, said: Winnipeggers need to recognize that 30 semis leave Winnipeg every day to drive up Highway 6 with goods for the North, 30 semis a day.

So it is particularly relevant to the people of Winnipeg and it should be to the province of Manitoba. But this government has been taking the line of backing away from the mineral industry and turning its back on the importance of mining to Manitoba. This is an industry second only to agriculture in Manitoba. It employs directly over 4,000 Manitobans and indirectly supports 12,000. It is deplorable that this government did not seem to think it worthy to have a booth or a display representing the province of Manitoba in an international conference held in this very province. Shame on this government and shame on its lack of attention to the mineral industry. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

### **National Transportation Week**

**Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson):** Madam Speaker, as we all know, this week is National Transportation Week, and National Transportation Week is a time to celebrate, I believe, the efforts of many thousands of Canadians who work in the transportation industry. The week was created to develop a greater public awareness of the vital role that all modes of transportation play in the economy of this province and indeed the country of Canada.

In 1998, the theme of the National Transportation Week is Transportation: Canada's National Resource. This recognized the importance of transportation to the development of Canada and the contribution it still makes today. I want to take the opportunity to salute all those people that work within our Highways department and indeed the ministers who have worked under our term of office to improve the transportation system in our province very dramatically—I cite Highway 75, Highway 8, Highway 7, and many other highways, Highway 59 that we are currently working on—and making the kinds of transportation routes available to the trucking industry especially, improving the services on national lines and our railway industry, recognizing the importance of Winnipeg in the establishment of Winnipeg in Manitoba, and the importance of those institutions to the transportation industry.

I also want to recognize that James Edward Foran was named as transportation person of the year. Mr. Foran is a partner of Aikins Macaulay and Thorvaldson and practices transportation law. So the institute is well

aware of Canada's and Manitoba's importance of the industry. I want to indicate to you, Madam Speaker, that the importance of 700 semitrailer loads of goods leaving this city of Winnipeg and Manitoba heading south every day of every week is an indication of the importance of the transportation industry in Manitoba. I want to ask all members to join me in congratulating the institute.

\* (1430)

### **Regent Avenue Traffic Control**

**Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to raise a very serious matter, one that has occurred in my constituency and should be of great concern to all of us in this Legislature. It involves one of my constituents and her family. It is the fatal traffic accident that occurred on Regent Avenue this last month in front of the Club Regent.

Erica Rose McEvoy was killed upon leaving Club Regent to cross Regent Avenue to catch the bus. She was only 21 years old. This occurred because two vehicles were drag racing eastbound on Regent Avenue. There had also been a previous fatality that occurred in front of Club Regent approximately a year before this where a woman was making a U-turn at Owen Street and Regent to return to Club Regent. This is a common occurrence where vehicles make a U-turn to go to Club Regent when they are eastbound.

Recently there was an egress in the median completed in front of Club Regent to remedy the problem of the U-turns. However, there is still a problem of high speeds on Regent Avenue and the fact that the transit bus is across the street from Club Regent in the middle of a block and there are no traffic lights or crosswalks. Some residents would believe that a crosswalk would solve the problem. Others would feel that crosswalks actually would not solve this problem. There have been some suggestions of moving the bus stop that is across from Club Regent because it is a high-traffic area. I think that this warrants study, that there has to be some serious analysis of the traffic problems on Regent, particularly as this government moves to serve alcohol at Club Regent and there will be continued traffic to and from.

I also want to express at this time my condolences to the family who continue to live in Radisson, and I hope that we can deal with this problem so there will no longer be any fatalities in front of Club Regent.

### **The Maples Collegiate Unity Group**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Madam Speaker, I stand today to commend and congratulate actually the Maples Unity Group. They have done a wonderful job. I see my colleague from The Maples, who I did not know if he was going to make it back in time, because one of the things that he has done consistently through the three years is he walks with the students from The Maples to the Legislature, and he had to make it back there somehow.

But anyway, what I wanted to be able to do, Madam Speaker, is just acknowledge what is a fantastic effort from a group of wonderful young adults to try to make more Manitobans aware of a very important issue that faces each and every one of us in many different ways, that is, the whole issue of racism.

We have had many different reports in the past that talk about it. The Manitoba Intercultural Council Combatting Racism is one of the ones which I talk about most often. One of the things that came out of that report was that of education. The best way to combat racism is to make people more aware of it, to educate. I think what the students of The Maples have demonstrated is their intentions to make their expressions known to many other Manitobans about a very important issue for them. I commend all of those who were involved in organizing this their third unity march from the Maples school down to the Leg. With those few words, I will leave it at that.

### **ORDERS OF THE DAY (Continued)**

#### **House Business**

**Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader):** Madam Speaker, I would like to obtain the unanimous consent of the House, notwithstanding the sequence for consideration of Estimates as outlined in Sessional Paper 142, tabled on March 24, 1998, and subsequently amended, to consider in Room 255 the Estimates of the

Department of Housing on completion of the Estimates of the Sport Directorate.

**Madam Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent of the House to alter the sequence of consideration of Estimates in Room 255 to consider the Department of Housing immediately following Sport—until further notice?

**Mr. McCrae:** These changes would apply until further notice, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Until further notice. [agreed]

**Mr. McCrae:** Madam Speaker, I wonder if there would be a disposition to waive private members' hour today.

**Madam Speaker:** Is there leave of the House to waive private members' hour?

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Madam Speaker:** No. Leave has been denied.

**Mr. McCrae:** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mrs. Vodrey), 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.**

### **COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)**

#### **JUSTICE**

**Mr. Chairperson (Gerry McAlpine):** Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This afternoon, this section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 254 will resume consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Justice.

When the committee last sat, unanimous consent had been granted to have all questions and answers considered under line 4.1. Administration and Finance



(b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits.

**Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples):** Just to let the minister and staff know what my intentions are so they can make plans for other departments that are waiting, my intention for the remainder of the Justice Estimates is to ask questions in regard to a subject that briefly I gave notice about, a Manitoba police college or a police program. That is the next area that I plan to, so whatever staff would—after that, there might be some questions, general questions, but after that I think I will save the remainder of the questions for concurrence. I am sure the minister could answer many of the questions without his staff being present there in concurrence that I would have to ask there. So that is my intention.

I think I and the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh), from the time we have been elected in '93, we have established a reputation of being able to use a lot of Estimates hours if we have the opportunity, but I think I am going to confine it to those subjects, the Manitoba police college, and after that I will be asking questions in general terms. The rest will be concurrence. So possibly, the member for St. Johns, I do not know if he has any questions at this point. No, okay.

So my question in regard to the Manitoba police college, as mentioned, I have recently been informed by a number of people within police associations, the police community, that we are starting to have an outflow of trained police officers from Manitoba. This is after a great deal of money is expended upon training police officers, whether it is by a municipal police force, the Winnipeg Police Service, Brandon Police Service, and it has an effect even on the smaller departments in that, as those trained officers leave, quite often what will happen is some of the small-town police officers then lose their trained officers to Brandon or to Winnipeg.

One of the reasons why it has nothing that we could do about, I think, I know from being in the Winnipeg Police Association for over the past decade, the bargaining contracts that have gone through have given raises to the members on the force, and to get those, basically what was negotiated was a lower starting

wage. So right now you have in Winnipeg a very low starting wage which makes police forces like Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver, where they are offering certain perks to move, we are losing police officers.

Now one way we could save the taxpayer money, from spending this, you know, paying recruits for a number of months while they are being trained, only to lose them, is make the recruits pay for their own training. I gave the example of the Maritimes Police College where anybody who wants to be on a municipal police force in the Maritimes has to graduate from the Maritimes Police College or an equivalent course, and it is right in their police act; otherwise, you are not eligible to be hired on the municipal police force.

So once you have that, graduate, you go there as a trained officer, and there is always some internal training, but at least the police force is not paying you a salary during that training period, just as no one paid anyone a salary while they were becoming an architect. They pay their tuition, they go to university, and they come out. I believe there is a B.C. Criminal Justice Institute, as an example, and I would like to explore the cost of this, if there is money in this budget that could be looked at studying this, what are the impediments, what could be done.

I do not think I would be satisfied to say, well, okay, if it is a good idea let someone bring us a proposal. I would like the Department of Justice to be proactive in this, and if it has not already done a study, do a study on it because it would be a benefit to the police service and to the justice system in Winnipeg if we did not lose trained officers. I am looking at the Winnipeg Police Service where, if every eligible officer who was eligible retired, we would have a vacuum of expertise on the police service. So there is a benefit, and I think there is a certain responsibility for the minister to be proactive on the subject.

**Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Well, there were some issues that were left outstanding from yesterday, the community service orders and the work in that respect. I think my staff have some information on that, and perhaps I should briefly address that at this time, if that is all right with the member for The Maples.

I want to just indicate that, of course, we as a government are very supportive of these community services orders. The problem raised by the member for The Maples does not simply lie with youth justice committees. The same problem is found when courts order alternative work. That has always been a problem for as long as that particular disposition has been available to the courts or at least utilized by the courts.

This issue, I think, needs to be dealt with in a broader way than perhaps has been done previously. I will indicate that there are some steps that are being taken right now. I think there are certain steps that can be taken on an individual youth committee basis group as well, but, as you are aware, there is a Provincial Council on Youth Crime headed by Mayor Carlson. I have met with him a number of times. One of the things that is happening right now with that particular council is that they are being briefed by my department, not so much in terms of specific issues, but allowing them to become acquainted with my department and any problems that might be there. I thought it was very important that if they are going to be advising me on an ongoing basis that they have a good insight into how the department operates. I think this issue is clearly one that could be considered, if not addressed, by the Provincial Council on Youth Crime.

\* (1450)

The other initiative, I think, that should take place is a more proactive utilization of nonprofit organizations through Manitoba and contact with those nonprofit organizations to see whether or not there is capacity for those organizations to take a larger role in that area. One of the problems that has always been identified is that private business people are often reluctant to take on someone, for example, who has been charged with theft and to have that person then working in their store or around their premises or even around a particular residential homeowner situation. There is a natural reluctance for that to occur.

I think that we do need to take further steps in coordinating our efforts to find alternatives and appropriate workplaces for these individuals in nonprofit situations. The other point that was raised, I believe, in our discussion two nights ago at the Maples

Youth Justice Committee was that there have, in fact, been situations where youth have been used in profit organizations, and concern was expressed that these organizations are getting free labour and turning a profit. Well, I am not so sure that that always holds nor is that necessarily bad because, for example, if the organization or the profit, the business, the profit-generating business, is, in fact, the one that has suffered the loss, I see nothing wrong with the person working off that loss by working there. I think that we can explore those alternatives as well.

The youth justice committee, in the way it conducts itself, may well provide alternatives and placements. Number one, if the youth justice committee involves itself in victim-offender reconciliation, often the victim himself or herself, if they are comfortable with the accused person or the offender, then there may well be an opportunity for that victim right there to work out something with the offender in terms of alternative measures. I know that is done, but I think that this problem speaks to the necessity of having the victims there at these disposition hearings or conferences as often as possible.

In areas where the larger community is involved, and I am thinking usually of First Nations communities, they have been very active in having their youth who appear in front of these committees participate in community projects, whether it is cleaning the local fairgrounds or the curling rink or that kind of thing. I think in the smaller communities that even though it is smaller, there seem to be more opportunities and indeed a willingness to take on those kinds of responsibilities. I think that the same opportunities exist in the city in the communities, but we need to explore better ways of doing it, so the member raises a good point.

I would like to point out to him specifically that on May 5, in Winnipeg, the youth justice committee heads I believe all met with a member of the Winnipeg Police Service in respect of the graffiti campaign. So there are opportunities, I think, that are immediately available to send youth to work off their disposition in that way. That is something that I think could be quite easily facilitated.

The other matter which was raised with me by my staff and, in fact, was discussed with me at the Maples

Youth Justice Committee—I do not know if the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) was there when we had that discussion, but, in fact, often the youth justice committee, as part of its disposition, requires the parent or the offender or both together to find appropriate work. So that becomes part of the disposition, that they find the work. So instead of utilizing valuable time from the youth justice committee members, in fact that becomes part of the disposition, and I think may well make the process much more meaningful.

\* (1500)

So there are some things that are being done, that can be done by the local committees themselves, but I think that we can, as a government, explore the issue of the greater participation of nonprofits. So that is basically the answer I can give to the member at this time.

In respect of the question then posed today in respect of the police college and the possibility of there being—

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Kowalski:** Before we go on that, if the minister would like me to, his answer has raised some other questions in this area, before we go on, if he is willing to continue on with this subject that we are into now, the community service orders.

**Mr. Chairperson:** The honourable member does not have a point of order.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Chairperson:** The honourable minister, to continue with your response.

**Mr. Toews:** Well, and all I am saying is I want to accommodate the member. If there is something that has arisen as a result of my answer, I would prefer that he ask the questions in respect of that issue, and then we can proceed to the question of the police college that he raised earlier.

**Mr. Kowalski:** Okay, just to clarify, one of the questions I asked yesterday—and I am glad the minister came back because I had forgotten about it—was using the resource of the community resource centres. If that

is possible, or if it is not, why it is impossible to feed in—like for our justice committee, it was 659 hours. What would be the impact on feeding that into the resource centre that covers the north end of Winnipeg?

**Mr. Toews:** I also have Bob Chamberlain here with me who is the director of Law Enforcement Services.

Just in respect of that particular question, I can indicate, if that is an alternative that the member thinks is a good one, we can look at that. It does however have fiscal implications. There are registration issues and there are other monetary issues. Traditionally, the community justice committees have wanted to be separate and apart from that process.

So one of my big concerns is I do not want to take away the freedom and the flexibility that some of these community members have in establishing their own program and having a sense of ownership over that program. One of the worst mistakes I think you can make sometimes is to let Big Brother take over a community organization, and so we have to be careful.

Now, the member does raise a good point. If the issue is simply fiscal, is there some other source that we can access and can we arrange it so that it is not government taking over these committees, because I think that would be a serious mistake. Then the new program in respect of safer communities and community mobilization, we would have government perhaps approving projects or co-ordinating projects without interfering in the community input and accessibility.

So I want to say that I spoke with my director of Public Safety yesterday about the administration of this federal justice program, and he has been very, very active already in inviting the federal government to share space with the provincial offices. We have some room. We would prefer to work together with the federal government in this area, so that we co-ordinate our activities, the province and federal government, minimize the amount of administration and make sure that the dollars get into the hands of community members where dollars are necessary. Again, in not all of these cases are dollars necessary, but sometimes they do need a little bit of operating money and perhaps supplies such as paint and other things. So there are

possibilities that we can work on, and I think that that is something I certainly will ensure that my staff looks on.

**Mr. Kowalski:** In his previous answer, the minister mentioned he saw nothing wrong with community service work being done in a private business, especially if that business has been the victim, but I think that is getting into restitution. That is not totally community service; that is restitution.

But one of the concerns on committees is the liability question. If we send little Joey to work at Joe's autobody shop and a car falls on little Joey, can our committee be sued? Are we still covered? I believe if it is in the form of restitution, there would be no problem. But if we sent little Joey to do community service work with the idea that he is going to get some work experience skills, he is going to find out how to keep a schedule and that at Joe's meat market which was not a victim of a crime but just as counselling, what are the liability issues there?

My past understanding is as long as anything the justice committee does falls within the program guidelines, we are covered under liability. But I do not believe working for private businesses would be under those program guidelines, and so, in fact, justice committees would be putting themselves at risk of liability by sending kids to community service work orders in unauthorized places.

**Mr. Toews:** I understand that there is, in fact, an issue of liability and liability insurance in the scope of the guidelines that govern the activities of youth justice committees. It is a problem, though, that is not unique to that area. In many situations where people are looking for skills and private companies are willing to provide the opportunity for our young people to develop those skills, there have been, I understand, accommodations been made in the past.

I recall—and I cannot recall the specific context but when I was Minister of Labour—that there were certain arrangements made through the Workers Compensation Board to ensure that certain volunteers were covered. I think it was in the context of volunteer firefighters and those type of people. I appreciate they were doing a public service and putting themselves at risk and having

no insurance, so it was felt that in the public good, in that type of a situation—I cannot recall specifically if it was volunteer firefighters but it was something like that. So, again, Workers Compensation was adjusted or amended, the act or the particular program, in order to accommodate those people.

Again, if the issue here is simply that the guidelines do not permit it, well, if the idea is a good one, why would we not want to review those guidelines to allow for that to occur, so that any disability policy or insurance policy does, in fact, protect the youth justice committees. So if the member and the youth justice committees raised that as an issue, I would be prepared to have my staff look at the legalities of that.

As one can appreciate, the program flows as a result of the authority of the Young Offenders Act, and there may be federal guidelines that are beyond my ability to change, but there may well be opportunity for me or my department to make recommendations that those guidelines, in fact, change.

I recall meeting with a particular youth justice committee over a year ago now, and they were also concerned that they were operating outside of the context of the Young Offenders Act and the guidelines. When I inquired what the actual problem was, they indicated to me that some of their youth were not that youthful, and when I inquired further, I found out that some of them were as youthful as 55. So, again, if youth justice committees are performing an important function like this, it should be the role of government, indeed, my department and the federal government, to facilitate that kind of thing rather than to say that is beyond the scope of what you should be doing. So we need to address issues like that.

\* (1510)

Again, the issue with under 12s that the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) has been so actively involved in a pilot project, and I understand that that project is going along very, very well. It is almost at a point—I received some communication from a particular inspector from the Winnipeg Police Service that they are prepared to make that a routine order, and they have the paperwork done and the forms, and it looks like an excellent program.

Again, should we concern ourselves with the fact that the Young Offenders Act only applies to people 12 years and older? I think that is shortsighted. I think we need to take advantage of every resource that will assist our young people, no matter what age they are. So, in this area where the member for Inkster brought the idea to my attention and worked very closely with Mr. Greg Graceffo of our department and with the chief constable in the city of Winnipeg, again, another indication of how government can facilitate ideas whose time has come. I think that is very accurate there.

So we can look at some of those guidelines, see if there is something that we can change, and I would ask my staff to attend to that issue.

**Mr. Kowalski:** Just as a point of clarification, it is no longer chief constable. They did away with that. It is now chief of police. It is a technicality in the police department.

In regard to the provincial council, one of my pet peeves is, in fact, when the provincial council was first formed that there was no one on the council who had been on a justice committee. I believe the present chair has never been on a justice committee. Now, I realize that their focus is not just on justice committees, but I understand that a major part of their work is to be a resource to advise justice committees, to be a research component. The question I have is: is there anybody on that provincial council now that has been on a justice committee?

**Mr. Toews:** I think that whether or not any of these people have been on youth justice committees, I know some of those members have been very actively involved in community volunteer organizations and are very familiar with what it means to work with volunteer members. I need only point to the mayor of Portage la Prairie, whom I appointed as the chair, I believe, about a year ago now, perhaps not quite that long ago. He has been involved, virtually, in every facet of volunteer organizations in his community. I believe he is quite aware of family group conferencing which is one aspect that many youth justice committees get involved in. I know we have had discussions about youth justice committees. So, whether or not he has actually been a member, he is very familiar with these types of

alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, including youth justice committees, family group conferencing and other matters.

I know we are presently looking at appointing three other individuals to that committee. I am not sure whether any of them have experience with youth justice committees. I do not want to give their names right now because they have not been appointed, but one is a police officer from outside of the Winnipeg city police and RCMP, one is a First Nations person, and the third is a resident of the city of Winnipeg, but all come very, very highly recommended.

So while there may not be—and I do not have that information. The member may well be right. I know that the chair is very, very familiar with youth justice committees. I have talked to him about the issue—but if the member is suggesting that he knows of somebody else who should also be there, maybe that is something I can consider.

**Mr. Kowalski:** Yes, I am not denigrating the quality of anybody who has been on the provincial council. I have known people and they are highly qualified people, but also there is a morale issue, a recognition issue for those people who have been volunteers in Community and Youth Corrections for 10 years or longer.

Gerry Maghera from the central justice committee, I think he has been there since '84 when it started off. Then you have the chairs of the justice committees of Winnipeg, and by not having any of them forward there, what message does it send to them, that what you have been doing for 15 years is not of value, is not to be recognized, when someone who has never been on a justice committee, and you form a provincial council to advise them, and no one amongst them is chosen, it sends a message.

Again, I say I think there have been some very qualified quality people on the provincial council, but every time you appoint someone to that and ignore all those people who have done this work for years and years and years and can bring that experience to that provincial council, I think you are sending the wrong message.

**Mr. Toews:** Well, it is certainly not my intent to send the wrong message. One of the things that I think my department prides itself in is being inclusive, in ensuring that not only is there appropriate gender representation but, in fact, that people from all walks of life are available. One of the things that one has to remember is that people on youth justice committees spend an awful lot of time volunteering, and then to put the extra burden of participating on a Provincial Council on Youth Crime may be an additional burden that they may not want to shoulder.

Again, I can only speak very highly of both the police officers, Winnipeg City Police and RCMP who are on the committee and some of the other people on that committee, very, very acquainted with youth and youth crime issues. Dr. Henry Janzen is on that committee, again a very positive influence. I do not have all the names here, and maybe it is not appropriate for me to mention all these names, but I found a very good, balanced representation on that Provincial Council on Youth Crime.

Again, I do not believe there is any limitation that is there in terms of numbers. We want to make sure that the group is a good working group and can deal quickly with problems, but I think that the message I have been sending out to youth justice committees over the past year is that, in fact, I do value very much their involvement and work. They are at the forefront of a strong movement for community involvement in dealing with offenders. They provide a means to increase victim and community satisfaction.

\* (1520)

The work of the Provincial Council on Youth Crime, along with the financial support that this government has given to justice committees for training, incidental expenses, and for the publication of the justice committee rapport is critical and necessary to the development of justice committees as skilled and informed partners within the system. So the alternative measures for adults and family group conferencing are, as I have indicated, emergent program areas in which justice committees are, in fact, beginning to take an outside role.

One of my staff members pointed out to me, of course, that recognition and meaning takes many forms.

I know that, just recently in the Carman area, there was a meeting of all the youth justice committee heads and members, in fact, where they were giving recognition for their long-serving status. Indeed, one of the reasons I come out to see other youth justice committees, including the youth justice committee that the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) is a chairperson of—indeed, I have gone to see the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) and his youth justice committee—is to let these people know, these volunteers, these community workers, know that I value their work very, very much. I had the pleasure of handing out some certificates to these participants. I believe that they appreciated my attendance there.

Indeed, there was a particular individual who I think the member for The Maples presented with a very special certificate, Lloyd Gyles. I heard of all the wonderful things this individual has done, the participation, his workload. I know that his wife expressed some concern about the fact that he was rarely home because of the involvement in these youth justice committees. I commiserated a little with her on that. I know that my wife often feels the same about my involvement, but I think that that individual certainly was a very, very positive contribution to the Maples Youth Justice Committee, and in my small way, I try to recognize that.

I know that we as government cannot always recognize everyone's involvement as much as we should. Alvin Toll, who is the probation officer over there in Maples, this is an individual who spent a lot of time, and I think his efforts are very much appreciated. I think he has expressed his appreciation to the youth justice workers.

What I am trying to say is that many of these people who are involved in these youth justice committees are not looking for a lot of outside glory. What they are looking to do is to serve their community. Their recognition, their satisfaction comes from serving their community. I certainly felt that at The Maples, and I believe that that has been a consistent message that I have heard from other youth justice committee members. So whether or not we have specifically appointed somebody onto the Provincial Council on Youth Crime from a youth justice committee, I think that we are, in fact, recognizing them financially,

administratively and during the course of social gatherings, that their contribution is necessary and important to the well-being of the community and the efficient running of the justice system.

**Mr. Kowalski:** I will give a compliment to the Minister of Justice. In the 10 years that I have been involved with the youth justice committees, I have never seen so much support for the justice committees as we have in the past year. It has really made a difference, both financial and in a number of other ways that, yes, I think the justice committees are feeling like they are important and are part of the system more so than ever before.

But we have that meeting of chairs of justice committees of Winnipeg. Years ago, it used to be a monthly event. Now, it is just on the call of the chair, and there you have the chairs of the committees that cover half of the population of Manitoba. There is a vehicle, and you would think that one of them would be on this provincial council. I know what you are saying, that there are other forms of appreciation, and they are not the ones, but that is a resource. There are people with experience. As I said, there are people there who have been doing this justice committee work since the Young Offenders Act was passed. I think since '84 or '86 they have been on it, and they are a resource. Maybe they are not looking for it, and maybe they would even have to leave some of the work they are doing on justice committees to be on the provincial council, yes, but it would be nice to be asked.

So I think we could leave it there. I hope that will be taken into consideration on future appointments, that people who have been on justice committees for a long time, that they will be taken into consideration.

So the question I have now is: is there anything being done to look at a provincial police college in Manitoba? Has there been any studies or comparisons to see the benefit between the Maritimes Police College, the B.C. Criminal Justice Institute, and what are some of the impediments to doing it, some of the advantages and disadvantages?

**Mr. Toews:** I think that in the past there may well have been done a study on a police training academy. I am not familiar with that document. I believe it was

done prior to the dissolution of the Manitoba Police Commission. That study was done at some time prior to that, and I have never seen that study.

I can indicate to the member, an establishment of a police college has never been one of my priorities. Not that it is not important, but perhaps the importance of that issue has never been brought home to me. So I am not saying that I have made a conscious evaluation and said this is something I will not do. I sometimes feel I have enough problems to fix without looking for other issues to raise, and even proactive initiatives take time of my department. I know that they are very hard-working. They work very hard for the people of Manitoba, and I do not want to raise issues before these issues are—that we can move in a specific direction.

The point is, though, that this government has looked at the whole idea of training in the area of emergency services, as opposed to police services specifically, and that, of course, is the so-called fire college out of Brandon. That has been, even when I was the Minister of Labour, quite a challenge in terms of making that the institution that all provincial firefighters would utilize in their training agenda.

The fire college, I think it is—maybe it is not called the Brandon Fire College anymore, it is called maybe Brandon Emergency Services College or something like that, is a very, very impressive college. They attract people from right across Canada, and indeed, they, as an SOA, a special operating agency, are trying to attract people from as far away as South America. They, in fact, were working on a contract to train Cuban firefighters, but I understand that the American government was upset about that because of the Helms-Burton law and said that if any Cubans came to train in Manitoba—and it was also in Alberta—that the people who were at the training college would be barred from entering the United States. That is just an aside. We did not get the contract anyway, but it was a curious little situation. But they have been marketing their product right across Canada and the United States.

One of the real challenges though was that Winnipeg, who has its own fire training facilities here in Winnipeg through the Winnipeg Fire Department, was not very keen on utilizing that Manitoba fire college. In fact, they would hire people who had been through the

Brandon Fire College and then make them go through the training at Winnipeg again, and I was told by some people that the training of the Brandon firefighters was, in fact, in some ways superior, in other ways different from the training that the Winnipeg firefighters had. So that caused some tension.

I think that does not speak so much for saying that we should not have a province-wide fire college. That speaks more to trying to standardize training procedures in order that there is mobility throughout the province and that when firefighters come together to help each other at a particular fire people know what the other person is going to do or is doing.

\* (1530)

**Mr. Kowalski:** If I could just interject at that point, in the Maritimes, when they set it up, how they covered that resistance by municipal police forces who did not want to get on board was they made it a requirement under their provincial police act that they had to be a graduate of that Maritimes Police College or an equivalent.

Whether those municipal police forces wanted to get on board or not, if they were going to hire any new recruits, they were required to go through that Maritimes Police College or an equivalent and their internal training would not have been considered an equivalent. As far as the fire department, I understand they are now on board and they are hiring people from there now.

**Mr. Toews:** All I am trying to point out is that this is a process that has literally taken years and years. I know ministers before me and perhaps ministers after me in the Department of Labour will have to deal with that issue of the fire college and the sensitivities and the vested interests. I do not use that word in the negative sense. It is just simply that the way business has been done in the past is changing and so you have people who are resistant to that kind of change.

The suggestion that the member makes in respect of legislation is one that I would be very, very cautious with. I think that when you create a legislative requirement like that, one wants to be careful that you do not create a monopoly. Monopolies, in my opinion, do not necessarily lend themselves to the best in

training. One wants the best in training and so just in the same way that we offer various types of similar programs in different universities throughout Manitoba for certain types of courses, I do not think it is a bad thing that various different training facilities might offer similar courses.

I think the member has also indicated that in the Maritime situation they recognize equivalent colleges. I am just saying that I would be hesitant to mandate any particular college as being the one that an employer should recognize.

The other issue is, again, in the Maritimes, as I understand it, I think the college is in—is it Nova Scotia or P.E.I.? P.E.I. Again, I recognize that there is not a separate college in each province. There is a regional college. What we have done in areas, for example, like the veterinary school, we do not have a veterinary school here in Manitoba, but we have an agreement with Saskatchewan where we pay for certain positions. I believe at least 12 Manitobans can go to the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon every year. Also, I think we might have a similar agreement but with lesser numbers to Guelph at the veterinary school there. I think it is in Guelph. But I think we have to look at efficiencies like that.

Is it feasible that every province sets up a police college? I think not. The argument then that has been put to me when I have raised the issue of a police college here in Manitoba, say, is: look, we are already sending firefighters to Manitoba to be trained. It would only be fair then to have the police college in one of the other prairie provinces. So that is again something that we need to work out, if that is, in fact, something that is considered advisable. I know that right now the Winnipeg Police Service does its own training. Brandon, which is internationally accredited, as I understand, does its own training. Winnipeg is internationally accredited as well, and they then provide the training to Altona, Winkler, Morden. Indeed the police chief in Winkler is a Brandon city police officer, a graduate of that police force, and I know that there is a very close connection between those smaller police forces.

The member raised the issue of the people leaving the Brandon city police force. Now, I understand that there



were just recently five constables with a total years in training of about 20 years, so they are, in my opinion, relatively junior, three- or four-year constables who left Brandon city police. Those are the numbers I received, in any event. Four of them went to Calgary as a result of a big sweep that the Calgary Police Service did in terms of attracting people to Calgary, and one I believe went to Saskatoon or Regina.

The issue was not so much one of training. Obviously provinces and police forces outside of Manitoba recognize that the training that officers are receiving in Manitoba is of a good, if not superior, quality and that they want those police officers. I do not think a police college here is going to necessarily change that. It might standardize some of the training practices. That might be good, that might be not as good. I do not know. I am not an expert in that area, but what I am trying to say is that there has been no reluctance by other police forces to hire graduates of the Winnipeg Police Service or the Brandon Police Service. One of the things I know that the police forces, especially the smaller ones, say is, if we send our officers to be trained in Brandon, there has to be an understanding that Brandon then is not going to raid those police forces as a resource for employees.

I would not say that there is a restrictive covenant in that respect, but there is a gentleman's understanding that you do not take a small community's entire police force overnight and leave the citizens defenceless there. So they been working that out on a fairly acceptable basis.

**Mr. Kowalski:** I do not know if I did not make my point or it was not clear, but the point is that for six months, or whatever the training period is, the Winnipeg Police Service or the Brandon Police Service is paying a constable a salary to be trained, put in that investment plus the training costs only for it to have that investment lost by that person going to another police force. By the province taking a leadership role and setting up a police college where the student pays the tuition, the police force is not paying that person a salary for six months. If it is set up as a special operating agency, it is no cost to the province. We could standardize. There could be a benefit. To me it is a win-win position.

No, it is not going to stop other police forces from being interested in our well-trained officers. The department would not have invested so much into that person, and it will not be a financial loss to that department, whether that be the Winkler police department or the Brandon police department. They are paying a salary for that constable while he is there.

Someone could correct me. I am told recently the RCMP have changed their policy. When I went through the RCMP training I was receiving a salary, and I understand now it is under a different status, that they do not get a full salary while they are going through Regina.

Maybe that is another way of solving the problem, but, right now, for those five Brandon officers, what Brandon paid, six months salary for those officers plus investment in training, they are out of pocket.

\* (1540)

**Mr. Toews:** I mean, that is a good point and that is exactly the rationale behind the fire college, that the training is done on the trainee's own ticket, not on the taxpayers' back. That is exactly why the fire college, I think, has been having a measure of success now as city governments are looking around saying: how do we save money in certain areas without compromising the quality of the service?

If one wants to become a doctor or a lawyer or a plumber, you pay for it yourself. There has been this apprenticeship program really in the police forces and in the fire departments that has, in fact, given these people a salary while they are being trained. What was pointed out to me, and I do not know enough about the issue to say anything more than—what has been pointed out to me is that when you spend this much money on a particular person, even if that person might not be entirely satisfactory, you almost feel compelled to hire that person because of the investment that you have put into him or her. That was a point that was made to me in support of compelling everybody to go to the Manitoba fire college.

I prefer to move in that direction in a more incremental way. I recognize that there are issues of collective agreements or issues of existing training

programs, and, ultimately, it is a decision for the taxpayers in these municipalities to say: is this something that we will continue to pay for? In the area of the fire college, I think more and more the elected officials in the municipal governments are saying: you know, the province is providing this fire college through this SOA. Why should the taxpayer be funding this training program by hiring people as cadets on full salary? That is the issue.

I think that in time it may well evolve that way. I can indicate to the member that I recognize his problem and the seriousness of some of the issues of manpower or person power or whatever we call that now. I am just trying to be inclusive here. All I am trying to say is that we, in fact, know that in the next number of years with the RCMP, the RCMP, in terms of their training at Depot, is not going to be able to keep up to the amount of people that they need in the RCMP.

Over the next five years, there will be about 5,000 people eligible to retire, active, serving RCMP members. [interjection] The member suggests perhaps I could go to the RCMP.

**An Honourable Member:** Another career.

**Mr. Toews:** I do not think Canada's national police force is that desperate for personnel that they would hire me.

**An Honourable Member:** You could ride a horse.

**Mr. Toews:** Careful. But in any event, I think that there are going to be additional pressures and in the next little while, we know that with the Winnipeg police force there are going to be at least 120 people in the next year eligible for retirement. That is one-tenth of their police force. We have seen that to a lesser degree in the provincial government. We will see that more and more happening now as people, who have spent an entire career in the public service, are now, when they reach an age of 45, 50, 55, either retire or look at other alternatives before retiring.

I know the police forces have quite a challenge, and they are going to have to meet that. I want to say that my department is available to consult with them to see if there are ways in which the provincial government should be involved in that task. Traditionally, we have

not been involved in the training of police officers. At a time when our resources are scarce and colleges and police training centres are already doing a very good job, one has to think very carefully before the province moves in that direction.

**Mr. Kowalski:** So the message I am getting is that it is not a bad idea. Maybe some day it would be, but someone else is going to bring it forward. The provincial Justice department, if it is approached by municipalities and others, might consider it, but it will not be taking a leadership role in this, and I think that is a shame. I think a portion of the provincial budget goes to transfer payments to the city of Winnipeg. I do not know if any goes to the city of Brandon. It would be a savings in Winnipeg; the biggest police force is a large portion of their training budget. As I said, it is a win-win proposition.

If you look into the history of the Brandon Fire College, and contrary to popular belief, I am not looking to dean of the police college, even though I have made jokes about that. I think there are many people much more qualified than I to do that, so I am not looking for a job for myself or anyone else. I honestly believe it has merit. I would like to see the province show a leadership role, as they did with the fire college. Before the municipalities were onboard, it was in existence. It was doing the job and gradually municipalities are seeing the benefit and are seeing a cost saving. Basically I am not getting a strong signal here that there is a lot of interest in the provincial Justice department in this, and someone else is going to have to come forward with a proposal, whether it is a municipality or an individual.

I know there are private business colleges that are offering police training now. I think that might be fine in some areas, but I think when it comes to police work, this is one where government has a role in training police officers, and it should not be up to private industry. I think here is an opportunity. I think it should be looked at. I think there should be leadership, not just waiting for a proposal to come forward from municipalities or others. It is a win-win position. The province gains, the cities gain, the police forces.

This idea that there may be collective agreements, being a former member on the board of the police

association and be involved. I cannot see them having any major concern about those people until they become their members. It is not going to reflect on their number of members, the amount that do so, so there is going to be no concern there. If the city could save the money that they pay for salaries while they are training, they would. If the province could then maybe look at how much they are giving to the city, if the city is in a better financial position because of that savings, it helps the province, so everyone wins. So I am disappointed that there is not more interest from the province on this matter.

**Mr. Toews:** I am sorry that the member is disappointed. I think this is not to say that we have not been very proactive in respect of police training. In fact, the province pays the RCMP \$3,500 per officer contracted as provincial police officers for recruitment training. We have traditionally met our responsibility in that respect financially. I think that what the member is saying is that there is a better way of doing what we are already doing. As I can indicate, it has not been on my agenda as one of the burning issues, because, generally speaking, I have been very pleased with the quality of the police.

In fact, there might be other training areas that I would consider priorities before I would address that, and so I am not giving the member the brushoff here. I know that he is legitimately looking at this issue. What I can undertake for the member is that there was a study done on that. I believe there was a positive recommendation done, so maybe our government should be looking at that issue. I will look at that report to see whether or not I should be changing my mind, or not even changing my mind, but reclassifying this in terms of priorities.

\* (1550)

*Mr. Jack Penner, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair*

**Mr. Kowalski:** This might be the wrong place to bring it forward because it might be under a different department, but the Winnipeg police commission—one time there was one in existence, okay. There is no longer a Winnipeg police commission. One of the benefits of having a police commission in Winnipeg is it keeps the police force at arm's length away from

politicians. I think when politicians get too close to the police chief and the police department, it is a dangerous situation. Before, when we had a board of commission between the police chief and the elected officials, there was not maybe as much of a need of a requirement.

Now, with the change to The City of Winnipeg Act and doing away with the Cuff report and with the elimination of the board of commissioners, we have the elected officials a lot closer to the police chief and the police chief being required to be a lot more responsive to those elected officials. That is a concern.

Is this something that the Department of Justice—can we see legal ramifications to this? It is a concern of mine that, for example, if community policing is one of the most popular things, I think sometimes it is only because it has the name community in it. A lot of people do not even understand what it is, but if scientifically and academically it is proven to be an ineffective way of policing because it was politically popular, would the police chief be forced to carry on in that vein, for example? You know, that is just a hypothetical example, but that is the danger of having a police chief responding to elected officials as opposed to the police commission. Have you looked at that?

**Mr. Toews:** Well, the issue of police governance is a very, very important issue. When we get into the Winnipeg city police situation, we are talking about a very sophisticated police organization, well-trained individuals, and other statutory instruments that come to play in respect of governing the activities and conduct of those police officers, one of which is the Law Enforcement Review Agency.

I am somewhat sceptical of the effectiveness of arm's-length commissions in some cases. I do not know whether the Winnipeg police commission was, in fact, fulfilling its obligation or the task that it was set out originally to do. I am not that familiar with that issue, perhaps, because I am not that directly involved in that relationship.

I want to assure Manitobans that there are appropriate standards that people comply with, but decisions in respect to policing in any community ultimately come down to the elected officials, the mayor and council. The way in which the actual policing conduct occurs is

a different issue which is governed by legal statutes such as the Law Enforcement Review Agency, and indeed others that I cannot think of right now.

When I spoke with the MKO in Thompson—I believe it was last year at their conference; indeed, the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) was there—one of the issues that was raised at that time was the issue of governance. To me, when one sets up a new police force where the community may not be that sophisticated in policing matters in terms of a modern police force, the first thing I think that needs to be established is the governance model. We have seen in the past with certain stand-alone police agencies, whether here in Manitoba or otherwise, problems when that governance issue has not been properly addressed. I think one of the greatest challenges to aboriginal policing is to find that appropriate governance mechanism. Certainly Grand Chief Flett recognized that concern.

Now there was a proposal that he and the chiefs at that meeting made in respect of governance. They did not see that that governance model should be a matter that should be imposed immediately. In fact, we signed a memorandum of understanding that we would work together towards the RCMP First Nations Community Policing program which then would bring in the RCMP governance model. So I am not aware of any particular situations that would cause concern for me that the present governance situation related to the Winnipeg city police is inappropriate.

I am certainly satisfied, generally speaking, with the RCMP governance model, although I have some concern that it is our provincial police force, and yet we cannot have as direct a control over the statutory framework or regulatory framework which governs that process. But that is one of the disadvantages of living in a federal government or in a federal system. There are many advantages, but there are some disadvantages, and one of them is the problem that provinces have when they contract with a federal police agency.

I want to say, however, that the co-operation and conduct of the RCMP, certainly the past assistant commissioner, Commissioner Moodie, has just been excellent, and I look forward to working with the new assistant commissioner, Tom Egglestone, who was just

installed during a change of command ceremony on last Friday afternoon, just a week ago. So, if the member has specific concerns about the Winnipeg police governance situation that he thinks should be addressed, I would have my staff look at those. I am not satisfied at this point that there is any kind of an egregious problem that needs to be addressed.

**Mr. Kowalski:** I think there has been a change in how the City of Winnipeg is run by eliminating the board of commissioners; I think, if nothing else, that merits the minister to keep an eye on how that affects police service. That covers half the population of Manitoba, so I know occasionally the minister meets with the chief of police, and that might be something he might want to ask the chief of police: has this change in reporting affected his ability to enforce the law of Manitoba and Canada?

I think it should be a question that should be asked of him because I know of other officers in small-town police forces where you did not give a ticket to the mayor's son. That is to the extreme. It does happen. So, when there is not that arm's length, if whoever the new mayor is wants Chief David Cassels to focus all his attention on one particular area and if David Cassels believed in his best police judgment that that is not the best use of resource and that, can the mayor fire the chief? Or, even more important, in hiring a chief, should it be an independent police commission that finds someone who does not have political ties, who is independent?

We want our judiciary to be independent; we want our Crowns to be fair; and I think we want our chief of police to have a fair amount of independence and not tied too closely to the politicians. I think earlier in these Estimates the minister talked about how, when a survey was done on the public perception of the judicial system, the place where the public had the most confidence in was the police. I think by allowing the politicians too easy, too quick access to the decisions of the policing, could taint that perception. I think it is something that the minister should discuss with the chief of police not only of Winnipeg but anywhere else, if that is an issue for them.

\* (1600)

**Mr. Toews:** It is a good point, but it leads back, I think, to—maybe there is a fundamental difference in philosophy between the member and me in respect to the role of the Legislature and the role of legislation. I have always been a believer that one has to be flexible enough in legislation to allow professional people to exercise their professional opinion. I can only refer to one specific situation which might give the member some guidance as to how I think about the situation, but I know that I was counsel to the government of Manitoba in a particular case where various professionals—and I will not get into any details—opposed a new act and wanted the old act to continue. They were very upset about a new act that had already been passed but not proclaimed. A constitutional challenge was brought to that act, and the old act was struck down. The new act was then proclaimed in force.

In speaking to one of these professional people, when we were met with the constitutional challenge on this new act now as to whether it was constitutional, I said to him how was the administration of the act going. The person said, very well, I like this act a lot. I said, well, that is quite a switch from six months ago. I said why do you like this act so much. He says I can basically do whatever I want under this act because there are so many criteria and checklists. I just go down the checklists and just check a number of things. I do not have to exercise any professional discretion if I did not want to.

I thought to myself is that not interesting. We legislate so much that we take professional judgment and common sense out of the decision maker. So we want to be very careful that our governance of professionals, including police or the police chief, does not hamstring the exercise of common sense. I know, for example, in the area of my own department I do not get involved in any particular prosecution; it is improper for me to do so, I think.

In Great Britain, the attorney general is outside of cabinet, does not even participate in cabinet. They are outside of cabinet. That has been the rule in Great Britain. Here in Canada what we do is, in fact, have the Attorney General, the minister of Justice in cabinet, but issues relating to prosecutions are not discussed in cabinet. I think that is generally the practice.

Prosecutions and the reasons why people are prosecuted is an issue that remains at the deputy level and no higher. Now, I am not saying that the deputy does not brief the minister on these matters, but he briefs the minister with only a view of informing the minister rather than actually asking for advice.

Under our Criminal Code, a Minister of Justice can sign a direct indictment, or the Attorney General can sign a direct indictment, that is, to by-pass a preliminary hearing. In this province, the Attorney General does not sign direct indictments. Those direct indictments are signed by the Deputy Attorney General. The reason is that we want to keep political influence out of the prosecution's process. Constitutionally, legally, I have the authority to do that, but what you do is you set up certain—I guess, they are called Chinese walls. I take the expression from a case that the Supreme Court of Canada talked about in terms of conflict of interest, a case that arose out of Winnipeg, in fact, dealing with law firms. But you create certain processes and procedures by which you have an understanding, not to say that that line is not crossed from time to time, because it is not illegal. I think it is best that these responsibilities be clarified on an administrative basis so that political influence is, in fact, minimized.

In the same way, I would hate to see the governance of police and the police chief and the relationship between the police chief and their political taskmasters be overly restricted by legislation. That would concern me, because I think the more legislation you bring into this area, the greater the likelihood of diminishing a person's capacity or, indeed, even willingness to exercise common sense.

**Mr. Kowalski:** I think I will save the remainder of my comments and questions for, what is it called, concurrence.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Penner):** Item 4.1. Administration and Finance (b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$442,300.

**Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns):** We will be pursuing our questions on the department in concurrence this year in the main, but just for the minister's assistance, if you will, or information, three things we will be seeking at concurrence: the first is we

understand that there has been an audit or some review of the need for minimum standards for security guards in Manitoba. There was some audit of needs with the security guard companies, and we will be asking for a copy of that report. Second of all, a copy of the report done regarding the administration of the Chief Medical Examiner's office. The third is a particular statistic—and I know the minister will not have staff at hand in the House—and it is simply an update of the Maintenance Enforcement office's 1997 active accounts and, second of all, total arrears.

**Mr. Toews:** All right, if we will leave that then for concurrence, I will have that material. I also understand that the member wanted some material in respect to The Corrections Act for bills. I will just indicate that my staff will provide the appropriate spreadsheet on The Corrections Act for the member, and whatever material I can give in respect of these three issues I will give. There might be some issues that I need to discuss with my department.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I thank the minister for that. I know staff has been reviewing The Corrections Act and The Correctional Services Act and looking at changes. I know they are having a challenge there. So if whatever document is available could be provided at the earliest opportunity, I know staff, for one, would appreciate it as I would as well.

**Mr. Toews:** I will have that available as quickly as possible. I know that they prepared certain material for me, but I looked it over and I do not see any problem giving it you.

\* (1610)

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Penner):** Item 4.1.(b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$442,300—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$81,000—pass.

4.1.(c) Policy, Planning and Special Projects (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$276,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$139,800—pass.

4.1.(d) Financial and Administrative Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$803,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$245,600—pass.

4.1.(e) Human Resource Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$623,700—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$156,900—pass.

4.1.(f) Computer Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$589,300—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$309,300—pass.

Item 4.2. Criminal Justice (a) Administration (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$352,800—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$95,800—pass.

Item 4.2.(b) Prosecutions (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$6,176,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$1,293,200—pass; (3) Witness Programs \$582,000—pass.

Item 4.2.(c) Provincial Policing \$54,642,300—pass.

Item 4.2.(d) Law Enforcement Administration (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$310,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$130,700—pass.

Item 4.2.(e) Public Safety (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,443,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$425,300—pass; (3) Grants \$1,041,400—pass.

Item 4.2.(f) Criminal Injuries Compensation (1) Other Expenditures \$2,780,000—pass; (2) Less: Reduction in Actuarial Liability (\$100,000)—pass.

Item 4.2.(g) Aboriginal Policing (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$113,000—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$39,400—pass.

Item 4.2.(h) Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$425,000—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$1,098,800—pass; (3) Pediatric Cardiac Unit Inquest \$500,000—pass.

Resolution 4.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$71,350,100 for Justice, Criminal Justice, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1999.

Item 4.3. Civil Justice (a) Executive Administration (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$144,800—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$21,100—pass.

Item 4.3.(b) Manitoba Human Rights Commission (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,039,200—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$375,600—pass.

Item 4.3.(c) Legislative Counsel (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,290,700—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$370,600—pass.

Item 4.3.(d) Manitoba Law Reform Commission (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits - zero; (2) Other Expenditures - zero; (3) Grant \$50,000—pass.

Item 4.3.(e) Family Law (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$587,700—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$115,400—pass.

Item 4.3.(f) Constitutional Law (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$659,200—pass (2) Other Expenditures \$120,300—pass.

Item 4.3.(g) Legal Aid Manitoba (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$6,166,200—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$6,742,600—pass.

Resolution 4.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$17,683,400, (for Justice, Civil Justice, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1999.)

Item 4.4. Corrections (a) Administration (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$571,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$269,400—pass.

Item 4.4.(b) Adult Corrections (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$29,678,000—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$5,593,600—pass; (3) External Agencies and Halfway Houses \$336,800—pass; (4) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations (\$80,000).

Item 4.4.(c) Correctional Youth Centres (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$10,431,800—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$1,170,500—pass.

Item 4.4.(d) Community Corrections (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$8,080,800—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$1,787,900—pass; (3) Program Development \$2,039,000—pass.

Resolution 4.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$59,878,900 for the

Department of Justice, Corrections, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1999.

4.5 Courts (a) Court Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,807,200—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$995,900—pass.

4.5.(b) Winnipeg Courts (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$7,879,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$1,702,600—pass.

4.5.(c) Regional Courts (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$4,573,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$2,447,900—pass.

4.5.(d) Judicial Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$7,617,700—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$999,000—pass.

Resolution 4.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$29,023,800 for the Department of Justice, Courts, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1999.

\* (1620)

The last item to be considered for the Estimates of the Department of Justice is the Minister's Salary. I wonder do we need to have the minister's staff leave the table at this time for the consideration of this item. Item 4.1. Administration and Finance (a) Minister's Salary \$26,300—pass.

Resolution 4.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,693,900 for the Department of Justice, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1999.

This completes the Estimates of the Department of Justice.

The next set of Estimates that we will be considered by this section of the Committee of Supply are the Estimates of the Department of Justice Initiatives. Should we briefly recess and allow the minister and the critics an opportunity to prepare for the commencement of the next set of Estimates? Is that what you want to do, or do you want to continue right through? No, okay, then let us continue.

## JUSTICE INITIATIVES

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Penner):** The Committee of Supply will now be considering the Estimates of Justice Initiatives. Does the honourable minister want to say a few words?

**Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** No.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Penner):** No, and the critic does not want to say anything. Item 26.3 Justice Initiatives provides funding in support of the development and implementation of various initiatives to address aboriginal and other justice related issues. There is a resolution.

Resolution 26.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,500,000 for Justice Initiatives for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1999.

This concludes the Estimates for Justice Initiatives.

The next set of Estimates that will be considered by this section of the Committee of Supply are the Estimates of the Department of Government Services. Shall we briefly recess to allow the minister an opportunity to appear and, secondly, for the critics to appear? Agreed? [agreed]

\* (1630)

## GOVERNMENT SERVICES

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Penner):** Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. The Committee of Supply will be considering the Estimates of the Department of Government Services. Does the honourable Minister of Government Services have an opening statement?

**Hon. Frank Pitura (Minister of Government Services):** Yes, I do, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to present the 1998-99 fiscal year spending Estimates for the Department of Government Services and for vote 27.1. Emergency Expenditures.

My first year as the Minister of Government Services has been a memorable one, to say the least. It was this

time last year that I found myself the new minister of four months and about to face the flood of the century. While the rest of the country and the world watched, the Manitoba Emergency Management Organization co-ordinated untold responses to protect people and property from the flood waters.

The greatest achievement in memory of the flood of 1997 for the Manitoba Emergency Management Organization and Manitobans is that we fought the flood of the century without loss of one human life. The emergency response was successful in minimizing the effects of the flood. MEMO was working and improving our emergency response capabilities by developing plans and procedures to address the needs identified during the flood. The province is working at building a more detailed response structure, providing a clear definition of the roles and responsibilities of all levels of governments, developing evaluation criteria, improving and expanding emergency preparedness training.

As a result of the flood of the century, all rural municipalities, especially in the Red River Valley, have a heightened awareness of the co-ordinating role Manitoba Emergency Management Organization has to play in responding to emergencies. Manitoba Emergency Management Organization and the Union of Manitoba Municipalities are in the process of working together to identify how we can better enhance emergency preparedness in the province. MEMO and UMM are examining strategies to support communities in enhancing their state of emergency preparedness. I would also add that, as well, the Manitoba Association of Urban Municipalities are involved in this process.

This includes identifying means of motivating and supporting community programs as well as looking at the potential of a municipal emergency preparedness accreditation system. As a result of the flood, communities in the Red River Valley from Emerson to the R.M. of St. Clements have formed a Red River coalition. I would probably put a little bit of a check on that, because I do not believe that the municipalities in the Red River coalition go beyond the southern part of the city of Winnipeg. However, we would add that MEMO is working with the Red River coalition in updating their emergency plans and emergency preparedness programs.



The flood is over, but the disaster recovery efforts are not. MEMO's efforts have been focused on meeting the needs of Manitobans in rebuilding their homes and businesses. MEMO has developed a comprehensive provincial disaster recovery plan that will address the financial means of Manitobans expeditiously.

One of the programs Manitoba Emergency Management Organization established, the temporary accommodation program, has provided assistance to over 600 households. The program was established to provide assistance for temporary accommodations for flood victims who required a safe place to live while restoring their homes. This program will continue until all residents in the Red River Valley are able to return to their homes.

To give my honourable colleagues an appreciation of the magnitude of the Disaster Financial Assistance Program, MEMO has processed over 5,200 claims and awarded claims of over \$63 million to Manitobans who suffered losses as a result of the 1997 flood. The Province of Manitoba has made a number of changes to the Disaster Financial Assistance guidelines to ensure fair and equitable treatment for victims of the 1997 flood.

I cannot say often enough how grateful I am for the dedication of those involved in fighting the flood and in the disaster recovery efforts that are still ongoing. As minister and as someone personally threatened by the flood, I am so appreciative of the efforts above and beyond the call of duty day after day for weeks which seemed without end. I know it takes a special kind of person who dedicates himself to work in the emergency response field. It is our staff who meet the victims of disasters face to face. It is our staff who provide the human face of government in times of disasters, and, in carrying out their duties, our staff daily absorbs and witnesses the suffering caused by disasters.

As a government, it is our primary responsibility to help people recover, but we should never lose sight of the emotional toll that disasters wreak on their victims and on those that work to assist. For the many times I have said thank you to staff on previous occasions, I would like to say thank you again.

In another aspect of emergency preparedness, the Minister of Natural Resources and I announced in

March that the province had purchased two additional CL-215 water bombers in order to protect Manitobans from the devastation of forest fires. Manitoba now has a fleet of seven water bombers to provide protection to the citizens of rural Manitoba and to protect our province's forestry resources.

My department, through the Desktop Management Unit, is assisting in preparing government to meet the technological changes of the future and the changes that must be in place for the next millennium. The government in Manitoba is re-engineering a number of corporate systems such as payables, disbursements, procurements, and moving toward further shared use of common databases. To support the government-wide information and financial systems that the province is implementing, a desktop and local area network technology infrastructure is required that will be uniform, reliable and flexible. Security of data will be paramount and will be enhanced. The desktop initiative refers to the desktop and network infrastructure and support services that are being put in place to move toward a corporate managed system for the future of government in Manitoba.

The situation the government in Manitoba is addressing regarding Desktop Management is common to most mid and large organizations, both public and private sector. We made the decision to move to a managed desktop environment and outsource significant components of the desktop technology based on the direct benefits to the province and to the public. Benefits such as standardizing and integrating key desktop management functions will result in a well-managed base infrastructure that can adapt to meet changing program needs. This new infrastructure will result in government being able to provide better information and services to the public throughout this province. With the Desktop Management Unit assuming responsibility for in-house computer maintenance, the remaining functions of the former Office Equipment branch were realigned and savings achieved through elimination of operating costs.

Responsibility for the provision of facsimile services and copier services is now with the Telecommunications branch. Responsibility for the standard Office Equipment management is now with the Materials Distribution Agency. You will notice the

Supplementary Information reflects the establishment of Desktop Management Services as a separate branch. In its initial year, Desktop Management was a subcomponent of the Telecommunications branch.

The 1998-99 Estimates of my department reflect full year operating and staffing levels for the Desktop Management program. As minister responsible for The Government Purchases Act, my department and I will be providing advice on a re-engineering of the corporate procurement system which is part of the government's Better Methods and a year 2000 initiative. It is envisioned that the Purchasing branch will be restructured into an entity responsible for policies and guidelines regarding all procurement in the Manitoba government. The Purchasing office will focus on strategic planning of government requirements, development of large contracts and consultative procurement services rather than transactional processing of individual needs.

\*(1640)

The Department of Government Services is very much involved in partnerships with other levels of government and government agencies in developing opportunities to achieve cost savings and improve service and program delivery to the public. This department has been instrumental in planning and completing the co-location of federal and provincial programs and staff. Manitoba Environment and Environment Canada offices are co-located in the Union Station VIA Rail Station at Broadway and Main. Manitoba Industry, Trade and Tourism and the federal western diversification offices are co-located in the Cargill Building on Graham Avenue providing a one-stop shop for small business assistance.

My department is continuing to pursue other opportunities for co-location with the federal government, and a working group of federal and provincial officials meet on a regular basis to discuss partnership initiatives. In partnering with other levels of government, whether it is the city or the federal government and whether I use the term co-location or amalgamation, it is the goal of the single-taxpayer concept that motivates the department's overall direction in accommodation planning.

My department is working with the town of Churchill to develop a business arrangement, more of a business relationship that will improve the ongoing support for the town centre complex. In another northern community, Leaf Rapids, my department is actively involved on the board in determining a future direction for their town centre. We are also taking a more businesslike approach with our clients by establishing performance measures and indicators to ensure that we are offering services in the most cost-effective manner.

The property management functions of the Department of Government Services over the past year have been assessing alternative methods of service delivery. Through the assessment of service delivery, the department investigates which means of providing services is best suited to the client and the location. Alternative service delivery may result in the combining of functions with departments or levels of government. Alternative service delivery is about improving a single-taxpayer concept.

A few years ago, this government developed a visionary approach for the future direction of the province. The Manitoba framework document provided core business principles which sets the tone and example of my department's business dealings. The department has been successful in negotiating favourable rental rates and reducing lease costs which will provide substantial savings to the province. By living within our means as a province and as a department, we have been able to put capital dollars back into the economy to create jobs and build and renovate facilities necessary to offer programs that improve the quality of life in Manitoba.

Over the past few years, my department has been able to increase dollars allocated to capital projects. This year, my department will spend \$18.2 million on capital projects. The department will be able to proceed with major projects, some of which have been in the planning stages for years. These projects have a geographical representation to them in that they are in Winnipeg, Headingley, Portage la Prairie and Brandon. These projects support the Manitoba framework by enhancing the facilities that house educational, social service and justice programs in this province.

Phase 1 of the project to retrofit Building A at the Red River Community College has commenced. The

contract has been awarded to Bird Construction. Building A, which was originally constructed in 1962, has recurring and increasingly severe problems. The financial responsibility for the project is being shared with the Red River Community College, and the project will be completed over a three-year period.

So that we may continue to learn from our past, the province has undertaken project management of relocating the Hudson's Bay archives to the Provincial Archives Building. The \$2.5-million project will be completed in September of this year. The project will transform the space that once housed the concert hall into environmentally controlled vaults to store the archival material donated to the province by the Hudson's Bay History Foundation.

The Brandon Court House, built in 1906, has long been outmoded and obsolete in terms of size, functionality, fire safety provisions and barrier-free accessibility. Consultation with the various user groups for redevelopment of Law Courts facilities for the Brandon area has been ongoing since 1992. It is anticipated the project will be tendered this July with construction to commence by September.

My department is responding to an immediate need for a high security youth facilities. This summer we will tender for a new 20-bed high security youth custody unit to be located at the Agassiz Youth Centre in Portage la Prairie. The project is anticipated to be completed by March 1999.

In addition to those projects I have mentioned, my department has completed a number of major projects at Headingley Correctional Institution in relation to the restoration and redevelopment of the institution following the 1996 disturbance. One of the final phases in the redevelopment is the construction of a new 76-bed maximum-security unit at Headingley Correctional Institution. Site improvements will begin in June. Construction of the unit will begin in September.

I have mentioned just a few accomplishments and initiatives that my department has to its credit. There are many more. Although events like the flood of the century have brought this department very much into

the public eye, it is the nature of my department's mandate to manage support functions and to provide efficient service, safety and security. This support allows other departments to concentrate on the delivery of their programs for the maximum benefit of all Manitobans.

In closing, I would like to say thank you to all the staff of the Department of Government Services, who work often without recognition in assisting their client departments and thereby serving the people of Manitoba.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Penner):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Would the honourable critic for the opposition have an opening statement?

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood):** Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank the minister for his state of the department address this afternoon. I would suggest, however, in the interests of time constraints, that we move on. I would like to ask questions on the computer contracts. I think we can do that in one of the sections that we will move to soon.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Penner):** Under the practice, the debate of the Minister's Salary is traditionally the last item on the agenda. Is that the wish of the committee? [agreed] Before we do that, we invite the minister's staff to join us at the table. We will then move into the consideration of the Estimates.

I wonder if the minister would like to introduce his staff.

**Mr. Pitura:** I have with me Deputy Minister Hugh Eliasson; Assistant Deputy Minister of Supply and Services Gerry Berezuk; Gerry Bosma, our director of Financial Administration; and Dave Primmer, the director of the Desktop Management Unit.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Penner):** 8.1.(b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits.

**Mr. Maloway:** By way of procedure, I was going to suggest that we move to 8.1.(e) Information Technology Services. I think I can ask most of my questions under that particular area. We have done this in the past, last year. We have done it with the Consumer and

Corporate Affairs Estimates so we do not go line by line until the very end.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Penner):** I wonder if that might be an agreement that we might strike, that we not be too particular about the line-by-line Estimates, if the minister would concur to that. Is that agreed? [agreed] Proceed.

**Mr. Maloway:** I would like to ask the minister if he could at this time provide us with a copy of the contract between the government and SHL.

**Mr. Pitura:** The short answer to that is, no, I cannot. I hope that the member will appreciate the fact that when the contracts are signed between a private company and the provincial government that there is substantial commercial information in the contract which is of a competitive and hence a confidential nature. Therefore, we are not in the position to be able to release the contract with SHL.

**Mr. Maloway:** I wonder whether the minister would agree to release the hardware contract that was given to IBM.

**Mr. Pitura:** Well, perhaps I can clear up a bit of fuzziness here with the honourable member. Our contract with Systemhouse—under that contract, Systemhouse was to supply a totally managed desktop environment for the province. Under that contract, they had to meet certain performance standards that would provide the province with a certain level of service and level of technology, for lack of a better term.

With regard to Systemhouse's contract with IBM, that is a contract that they underwent themselves to procure desktop hardware and, as such, that is a contract between Systemhouse and IBM. It is not between IBM and the province. I hope that clarifies the situation for the member.

\* (1650)

**Mr. Maloway:** It does not clarify anything. It just simply confirms in my own mind what we have been saying all along. That is that this government is using this as a diversion to hide the contract. By giving SHL the carte blanche agreement to run the system, then it

allows SHL to make all the subagreements and then he can claim that it is out of his control.

The fact of the matter is that the government does have a lot of say in who gets what in this agreement. As a matter of fact, the minister is aware that a team of four individuals reviewed and evaluated the proposals for the hardware contract. I would like to ask him whether he would give us, provide us, with the list of the names of the four individuals and their qualifications at this time.

**Mr. Pitura:** I am advised that all four of the staff that evaluated that contract were staff of SHL, and that included their senior management and their technical specialists. There were no staff from the provincial government.

**Mr. Maloway:** Mr. Chairman, that was not my question, though. The question was: what were the names of the four people, and what were their qualifications?

**Mr. Pitura:** Well, that is, I guess, what I am trying to communicate with the honourable member is the fact that the people who evaluated the contract were from SHL, and I am not apprised of their names. If they were provincial government employees, I might be able to have a handle on the names, but, since they are with SHL, I do not have that.

**Mr. Maloway:** Mr. Chairman, would the minister endeavour to obtain that information for me?

**Mr. Pitura:** Well, I think that, since the contract is between SHL and IBM, the honourable member may want to approach SHL to see if they would release those names to him.

**Mr. Maloway:** Mr. Chairman, the minister knows that is not realistic. The minister is in charge of this department, not SHL, and the question is to him. I am asking him to get me this information, tell me who the members are of this evaluation team.

**Mr. Pitura:** Well, I am not sure where the honourable member is going on this, but, as I indicated earlier, they are employees of Systemhouse. As such, it would be

up to Systemhouse to release the names of their evaluation team.

**Mr. Maloway:** Mr. Chairman, I understand that the evaluation team made this decision and that they reviewed it with his department, with Manitoba. So surely he knows who the members of this team were because they met with his department.

**Mr. Pitura:** I am advised that, in terms of the department's involvement, once the selection process was in place and the evaluation was done, the members of my department reviewed the selection process, but not the respective team itself.

**Mr. Maloway:** Mr. Chairman, well, your department people met with the team. Surely, they know the names of the people they met with.

**Mr. Pitura:** Well, to the honourable member, I will endeavour to contact Systemhouse and see if they will release the names of the evaluation team for me. If they do, in that case, I will gladly share them with the honourable member.

**Mr. Maloway:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to know who from his department then met with this selection team.

**Mr. Pitura:** Mr. Chairman, I am advised that the leaders of the evaluation team met with our director of the Desktop Management Unit, David Primmer.

**Mr. Maloway:** Mr. Chairman, the evaluation process is, you know, very nebulous at best in my view, and without knowing all of the details it is impossible for me to decide that they did make the right decision. But, clearly, they used some very nebulous criteria in the selection process. I have asked now many times that that minister release to us a copy of the point system used, an explanation of the point system used, because it was never explained to the bidders, at least to their satisfaction. I think that is all we want to know. We want to know of the 11 bidders how many points did each one of these get.

So I would like to ask the minister if he would, at this point, release to me or give me a copy of the names of the 11 bidders.

**Mr. Pitura:** I would have to answer in part to the last question that the honourable member asked that, no, I cannot, due to the confidential nature of the way that the tendering process is done. I think it could possibly, in terms of having the 11 names that were there—in fact, I thank the honourable member for informing me that there are 11 names. I was not apprised of that.

But for the honourable member's benefit, I think what we have to do is take a look at how the tendering process and the open bidding system works within the provincial government. The honourable member has it in his mind that the evaluation process and the criteria that were put into place were somehow seemingly done only in this particular type of contract and therefore is suspect, but within the bidding process for government contracts, it is not unusual for a contract to be laid out so that there is a number of criteria that are listed to be able to assess whether a bidder is awarded the contract or not.

I think that the honourable member should be aware, as well, that even when individuals apply for a position within the provincial government, that in order to have an objective evaluation, a point system is used in a number of categories during the interview process to end up with a score for each individual who applies for a position. This is done in many human resource areas within government.

So when you come down to a contract like this and you take a look at it, certainly cost is an important part of the process. However, the overall aspect of the contract has to be evaluated in terms of not just supplying a product carte blanche—put it on the table and walk away from it—but there is service that has to be performed on the product and the ability to ensure that the product quality is there. So these evaluation criteria are put into place for these contracts.

I just want to share with the member, too, that with the selection process with regard to this particular contract, Manitoba provided Systemhouse with the criteria based on product standards developed by the Desktop Management Unit in consultation with departmental Information Technology staff. So all the staff within the provincial government first put together what they felt was the product standard that they required for

the Desktop Unit to function within government. No problem with that, okay?

Manitoba then reviewed the government procurement process to ensure that the Systemhouse process was consistent with the government process. So Systemhouse was required to use the government process in their request. So then this request for proposal was issued on a national electronic tendering service which is called MERX, okay? That was put on October 17, and the RFP clearly communicated the evaluation criteria. So everybody knew what the ground rules were in the response to this proposal.

Manufacturers had two weeks to respond. The first week was reserved for questions from manufacturers of Systemhouse in terms of, you know, there may be some areas of the RFP that some of the manufacturers did not quite understand and they wanted clarification on. They have that ability to ask those questions. So the responses were due by October 31 of last year. Thirty-nine manufacturers requested copies of the RFP; 11 manufacturers responded with proposals. I am sorry, I did have the number here.

The evaluation was conducted from November 1 to 9, and the process and the results were reviewed with Manitoba on November 10.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Penner):** The hour being 5 p.m., committee rise.

\* (1440)

## SPORT

**Mr. Chairperson (Ben Sveinson):** Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This afternoon, this section of Committee of Supply meeting in Room 255 will resume consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Sport. When the committee last sat it had been considering item 28.1. Sport (a) Support Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits on page 125 of the Estimates book.

Does the honourable member for Osborne have any questions on this particular set of Estimates? Not at the moment?

**Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne):** Not at the moment.

**Mr. Chairperson:** I guess we will have to wait. The honourable Minister of Urban Affairs, is that okay?

**An Honourable Member:** Housing and Urban Affairs.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Housing and Urban Affairs.

**Hon. Jack Reimer (Minister of Urban Affairs):** Mr. Chair, while we are waiting, I wonder whether the minister might entertain a question about the volunteers that are coming forth for the Pan Am Games. I know that there has been shown tremendous interest in it. I wonder if maybe he could just comment as to his impression as to the amount of volunteers.

I know that a lot of people are involved with the enthusiasm of the Pan Am Games. I can recall back to 1967, when I first had exposure to the Pan Am Games and the amount of people that were involved with the operations and with the volunteerism, the amount of people that had shown interest in getting involved. It would appear that the enthusiasm that is out there right now, in talking to a lot of the general public, that there is a willingness to participate. This is something that I think here in Manitoba that we are very, very fortunate that we have this type of tremendous asset in our community, not only in Winnipeg, but Manitoba.

We saw this very recently with the Canada Games in Brandon, where we had a lot of people coming forth to volunteer of their time, their effort. I had the opportunity to go out there to see some of the events out there at Brandon. I was impressed with not only the facilities and the amount of involvement that was put on on the local level, but I think that there were a lot of people that came up from various other areas that wanted to volunteer.

In fact, it was the oddest thing, I was in the airport in Toronto a couple of weeks ago, and I happened to be talking to a gentleman. He was mentioning about the Pan Am Games in Winnipeg. He said he was in Brandon. He said he and a group of people just decided to come up to Brandon to be volunteers, and they had nothing, no other motive other than to be part of the volunteer program in Brandon and get involved

with the summer games. They really enjoyed it, and he just wanted to let me know of the friendliness and the openness of the people in Brandon and how much he enjoyed it. This was a totally unsolicited type of comment that he wanted me to take back to Manitoba. So I felt quite privileged, not only as a member of this government, but as a resident of Manitoba, that this particular gentleman was of the same opinion that Manitoba was a great place to spend some of the volunteer time with. It was with that that I know that there is this type of volunteerism that the Pan Am Games are starting to generate.

So with that, I just wanted to put something on the record regarding the tremendous volunteerism that I think that we are all going to benefit from with the Pan Am Games next year. So thank you very much for the time, Mr. Chairperson.

\* (1450)

**Mr. Chairperson:** We would like to thank the Minister of Urban Affairs and Housing for those few comments.

28.1. Sport (a) Support Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$15,000—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$25,600—pass.

28.1.(b) Sport Manitoba \$10,205,000—pass.

28.1.(c) Major Sport Initiatives (1) Team Canada Volleyball Centre \$75,000—pass; (2) 1999 Pan American Games \$5,000,000—pass; (3) 1997 Canada Games - zero—pass.

28.1.(d) Manitoba Boxing Commission \$29,100—pass.

Resolution 28.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$15,349,700 for Sport for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1999.

This ends the Estimates of the Department of Sport.

## HOUSING

**Mr. Chairperson (Ben Sveinson):** Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will be considering

the Estimates of the Department of Housing. Does the honourable Minister of Housing have an opening statement?

**Hon. Jack Reimer (Minister of Housing):** Yes, I do, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to present the 1998-99 spending Estimates for Manitoba Housing. The Department of Housing is committed to assisting Manitobans in need to access suitable, adequate housing at affordable rates, maintaining and improving the quality of social housing assets and programs as an integral part of Manitoba's social system, promoting the development of suitable housing and the maintenance and improvement of existing housing stock, providing relevant housing programs and services to Manitobans in an effective and cost-efficient manner.

Currently, my department's primary business is in the ongoing operation of government-subsidized housing targeted to households with income levels that are too low to obtain suitable and adequate accommodation in the private market without spending more than 30 percent of the household income on housing costs.

The Department of Housing has subsidized close to 21,000 units over the course of its history. Its portfolio includes housing for the elderly, for families and for nonelderly single individuals, as well as crisis shelters for victims of family violence and accommodation for individuals and groups with special needs. While federal-provincial cost-sharing arrangements vary, depending on the specific housing programs, government subsidies generally cover the difference between total project operating costs and the rental revenues from tenants paying rent geared to income rental rates. Over 80 percent of the subsidized housing stock is directly owned by Manitoba Housing; however, the portfolio also includes projects financed through Manitoba Housing that are owned and operated by private, nonprofit organizations and rent-supplement units in not-for-profit or market projects where federal and provincial governments cost-share the difference between the market rent and the tenant rent geared to income rate.

The department operates in a complex and rapidly changing environment, and we must be constantly

aware of the needs and demands of the clients that we serve. In our family housing, for example, a recent analysis revealed that 67.2 percent of family households are headed by single female parents. The average family has a household head age of 37 years and includes two children. Close to 69 percent of our family households receive social assistance as their primary source of income. As these clients benefit from new training programs and move into the workplace, their rents will be adjusted to reflect a rental rate geared to the household income.

Social housing's purpose is to help families break the poverty cycle by providing affordable rents so that other needs are not sacrificed or overlooked. Stability can improve the health and enhance the educational performance of children, giving them better skills and a capacity to support themselves and contribute to society in the future. Household stability is also linked with the stability for the community or the project in which the family resides. For this reason, it is important that appropriate measures are taken to ensure that a sense of community is fostered in family housing developments.

An example of what can be accomplished through stability, as I have cited previously, is our Gilbert Park complex. This project, with 254 units of family housing, is one of the largest, highest-density family projects in Winnipeg. The project consistently experienced serious social problems associated with projects of high density. In a process initiated in the early 1990s, the tenants association for Gilbert Park was encouraged to increase its involvement in the day-to-day operations of the project and to play a more active role in the prevention of vandalism and the handling of problem tenants.

Today the group operates a clothing depot and a food bank and provides recreational programs for the children within the project. More recently, the department began to provide the association with the support and the assistance necessary for them to assume greater responsibility for the management and the ongoing operation of their complex. We have also taken steps to enhance stability and safety in Lord Selkirk Park, another high-density project in Winnipeg. The MHA has provided the Winnipeg Police Service with space in the project to develop a community-based policing

program similar to what was provided at Gilbert Park. This office serves as a focal point for relaying information between the MHA and the tenants. The presence of this office has already had a positive impact on the project as a community and has contributed towards the gradual reduction in the project's vacancy rate.

Additional incentives are being looked into to support the residents, to improve community safety, and to enhance the stability of the surrounding areas. These include the possible provision of a safe house to meet the needs of children and families who are at risk, working with local schools and agencies to provide work-experience opportunities for tenants and provide work with the tenants to develop a safety program that explores other areas of promoting a safer and more secure community environment.

Elderly housing presents entirely different challenges. A recent analysis revealed that 15 percent of our tenant population is more than 85 years of age. The fastest growing segment of the population is those 75 years of age and over. The aging of the population has major implications for both the Department of Housing and the Department of Health. As tenants in elderly housing projects age and become increasingly frail, a lack of service is necessary to permit aging in place, may be a significant factor in our vacancy rates.

At the same time, the health care system is faced with growing pressure on long-term and acute care facilities as well as increasing home care demands and costs. The department continues to provide noon meal programs where space and facilities exist. Congregate meal programs that operate independently of Manitoba Housing have been given access to kitchen facilities in elderly projects in rural communities.

Space for health clinics and for home care workers has been made available in certain projects. As well, tenant resource workers available in a number of elderly projects help tenants to identify their service and care needs and refer them to the appropriate service provider. However, with the continued and increasing need of our elderly tenants, we recognize that these initiatives might not be sufficient to meet the needs of all our tenants.



Manitoba Housing is now working in partnership with the Department of Health and a nonprofit organization to deliver supportive housing and assisted living units on a pilot basis. This initiative will meet the current needs and the future needs of the aging tenant population through the provision of 24-hour supervised and other support services such as meals, housekeeping, and laundry in the project.

\* (1500)

The department has long recognized the challenges presented by the aging social housing portfolio. Over 62 percent of the social housing units in Manitoba were built prior to 1978. Many components such as heating and ventilation, plumbing, roofs, and unit amenities require replacement or improvement. In addition, changes to the building codes related to health and safety necessitate large investments to upgrade the existing portfolio.

Proper maintenance of the physical structure of our housing projects is important, as this is the asset through which we provide our services. Further, this asset represents a considerable investment on the part of the people of Manitoba.

To address the continuing maintenance demands, the department has prepared a project-by-project 10-year plan for required modernization and improvement of its public housing portfolio. While this plan includes all major anticipated capital expenditures, it does not include emergency expenditures or major expenditures that must be moved forward due to earlier than anticipated system failures or building upgrade code requirements.

Given current budgetary constraints when such emergency expenditures take priority, planned major expenditures must be deferred. Unfortunately, the age of the project leads to increasing maintenance costs at a time when responsible government is looking towards measures by which fiscal economies and savings can be realized. Through the use of information technology, we will be establishing and monitoring short-, medium-, and long-term plans so maintenance requirements can be prioritized and financial planning will enable us to address these maintenance needs.

Information systems are also being developed to improve our knowledge about our clients. By understanding our clients, we will be better prepared to provide accommodation and services that best meet their needs and expectations. Over the past year, clients' satisfaction with services surveys have been implemented and tested on a sample of projects in Winnipeg. Three-quarters of the elderly tenants surveyed were satisfied with their accommodation. Their primary areas of dissatisfaction were with the painting of their suite and with the heating and ventilation system. Of the family tenants surveyed, close to two-thirds were satisfied with their accommodation, with primary areas of dissatisfaction being the safety or the security of the project and their opinion of the housing project as a place to raise children.

As noted previously, this survey was initiated and tested over the past year. It is our intent to expand the survey to include more Winnipeg projects and to include at least a few of the rural districts. In addition to surveying our current tenants, we were also surveying tenants as they leave our projects to determine what we have been doing right and where there is room for improvement. Further, new clients are surveyed to determine their satisfaction with the application and the tenancing process, again so we know where we can improve the process.

These surveys will be conducted on an ongoing basis so we can see where progress has been made and where further action is required to better meet the clients' needs. Without a doubt, however, the major challenge facing the department is our changing relationship with the federal government. The department has been, and continues to be, heavily influenced by the federal housing policy. Following its January 1, 1994, withdrawal from new commitments to social housing, the federal government formerly offered to the province management responsibilities for the entire social housing portfolio in Manitoba in March of 1996.

The total federal portfolio, which has been offered for transfer to the province, consists of approximately 17,500 units developed under several program and funding arrangements, the majority of which are owned and operated by nonprofit organizations. In 1996, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation announced

that its annual funding share for the social housing portfolio would be limited or capped based on the 1995-96 expenditure levels. This funding allocation will be reduced in subsequent years of operation as project commitment and subsidy agreements mature and reach their expiration date. This will occur whether or not the province accepts the federal offer.

There are risks associated with exceptions of the federal offer. Rising interest rates could impact on our loan exposure, and inflation could impact on housing costs. On the other hand, there are also opportunities. The province would have the ability to harmonize all the housing programs thereby reducing duplication of services and enabling more efficient and effective program operation.

The new agreement would also allow the province to use the resulting savings to develop new and different housing programs to address unmet housing needs in Manitoba. Four provinces and one territory have signed the federal devolution agreement to date, however Manitoba wants to ensure this offer is the best way to meet the housing needs of all Manitobans.

CMHC would prefer that all provinces accept the devolution proposal, enabling the federal government to completely remove itself from the ongoing involvement in the public housing field. However, we are not prepared to make a hasty decision in this matter. This is not a challenge that the department takes lightly. A conclusion of our analysis of the federal proposal and our negotiation with CMHC will fundamentally change the policy environment for public housing in this province.

The final decision in this matter will ultimately determine our future role and the responsibilities and the management and the operation of the public housing portfolio in Manitoba. As I look forward to the coming year, I see exciting and challenging times ahead. My department has established the following objectives to meet these challenges:

First, we will continue to negotiate a strong provincial position with respect to the federal government's proposal to devolve responsibility for all housing programs to the province; secondly, my department will ensure that its housing assets are utilized to their

maximum potential. We will accomplish this by continuing to take a proactive approach to marketing vacant units and by evaluating our services and programs to measure their effectiveness and to identify means of improving them; third, we will provide the tools and the technology for staff and management to make better decisions and improve the efficiency of internal operations. Finally, we will explore the potential for partnerships with other government departments and with the private sector to identify means and better, more cost-effective ways of providing services to our clients.

My department recognizes that housing plays an integral part in the health and the well-being of individuals and of the community as a whole, and we will continue in our efforts to meet the challenges that are before us.

This concludes my opening remarks, Mr. Chairperson. I look forward to a discussion on the Department of Housing's 1998-99 Estimates. Thank you.

**Mr. Chairperson:** We thank the minister for those comments. Does the honourable member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) wish to make an opening statement? No.

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

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

**Mr. Reimer:** Mr. Chairperson, with me, I have my deputy minister, Mr. Bill Kinneer; my senior policy analyst, Linda McFadyen; my financial senior consultant, Mr. Henry Bos; and, my senior do-it-all man, Mr. Ron Fallis.

\* (1510)

**Mr. Chairperson:** We thank the minister. We will now proceed to line 1. Housing Executive (b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$371,800 on page 86 of the main Estimates book.

**Mr. George Hickett (Point Douglas):** I would just like to ask the minister to put on record that instead of going line by line we just ask questions in general, and then we will do the line by line after we conclude our questions and when our critic concludes her questions.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Is that agreed by the committee? [agreed]

**Mr. Hickett:** I had a few concerns raised to me from constituents of Point Douglas, especially pertaining to 55 Plus senior housing units. There is quite a concern among some of the residents. It seems to be that the senior residences, the so-called designated senior residences, are shifting away and are being made available to the so-called younger generation. It is creating some problems for some of the tenants where the habits and the hours kept by younger tenants who are moving into these so-called senior residences are not conducive to the so-called hours of seniors. Also, the activities of the so-called younger generation are not generally the activities that seniors are used to that have been in some of these residences for many years.

As far as my understanding, seniors housing units are for 55 Plus. Has there been a directive, or is there a change in policy where those are waived in some of the so-called seniors units to open the door for younger people to occupy these suites?

**Mr. Reimer:** I should point out to the member that this is not an overall policy adjustment that we have made within the department. I think what has happened, there are certain areas and certain situations where there have been chronic vacancies and the ability to fill these units has proven that there is a high percentage of people not wanting to move into the area. This has been used as an alternative to fill units. It has been done on a fairly selective basis. It is only because of, like I mentioned before, chronic vacancies, and we have had a problem in trying to get some occupancy in those units.

The member had mentioned the age. I think that it has come down from the normal, which was around 65 years, in looking at trying to fill up some of these units.

**Mr. Hickett:** What would some of the reasons be for the so-called seniors not wanting to move into seniors housing that has been in place for years? My

understanding of the seniors housing was not 65, but it was 55 and over, that you had to be 55 to qualify for seniors housing units, not 65. People would have to reach that age, but I could tell you that there are some people who are much younger than 55 that are occupying suites, and they have totally, totally different lifestyles than what the seniors that have been in those suites have had for years. So what would be some of the reasons why we cannot or are having difficulty attracting 55-and-over seniors to these units?

**Mr. Reimer:** The member is right. I had mentioned 65. He is right. It is 55 in the age designation. A lot of the units where there are chronic problems are what we call bachelor units or studio units. This is where there seems to be a hesitancy for people to move in. This is usually where there is the change of trying to get younger people into these homes. We tried to accommodate those that are possibly in difficult situations of trying to get into units. This is one of the reasons that there is a younger crowd, if you want to call it, going into some of our housing, but it is usually because of, like I mentioned before, a chronic problem of vacancies or a high percentage of studio units and that we have had a problem in trying to fill them. This is one of the areas that we have moved in some selected areas.

**Mr. Hickett:** From the minister's comments, I have to assume that one of the biggest problems is that some of the seniors are looking more at one-bedrooms or bigger apartments. If that is the case, is there any thought or any plans to expand the rooms of some of those bachelor units where you can open up and make it into accommodations for couples instead of just looking at the mix and match that if we do not do something now it will escalate and you will have a harder time moving seniors into those units? The reason I raise it is because I received a call at home at eleven o'clock from a senior. She said to me come down and hear for yourself. So I did. The music was very loud, and there was a pretty loud party going on. She says we have never had this before. Hopefully, the staff of Housing or even the minister himself could check on some weekend nights and stuff and maybe take a tour at eleven or twelve o'clock and see what is happening there.

A lot of the seniors in those apartments are becoming fearful, because some of them are of advanced ages,

and they are saying if things get out of hand, what do we do? The other big concern pertaining to that is the possibilities of fires. You know, when you have people who are inebriated and partying, and they only have a couple of elevators there, it is hard for the seniors to get out if there is a fire. The other thing is the whole aspect of someone taking their possessions or muggings, like, they are just fearful. I do not know, that is not what my understanding of seniors' housing was to be. It is not much fun if you are constantly living in fear when it is supposed to be your golden years.

So I hope the minister will look at that situation and hopefully address that.

**Mr. Reimer:** Mr. Chairperson, the member brings up a very good point. This is one of the things that we have recognized that there is a problem where we have units, where we have an overabundance of bachelor units or studios in certain complexes, and how we can best utilize them. We are looking at some pilot projects. I believe we are doing some in Winnipeg, and we are doing some in some of the rural areas where we have looked at some of the complexes where it is structurally feasible. It has proven to be sometimes very economical in putting a combination of a door or an archway or something between two studio units to make them into a one-bedroom unit, and it has proven to be quite beneficial.

We are hampered in a lot of buildings because of structural configurations and bearing walls and access that we cannot do that readily with—[interjection] Yes, you have to be careful of what wall you take down sometimes.

**An Honourable Member:** Or put up.

**Mr. Reimer:** Or put up; it can cause problems. But we recognize that is one way to try to overcome some of the conversions from the studios to one-bedroom units. I think that we are willing to do it more readily as these pilot projects have, from early indications, proven to be successful in that they are occupied fairly readily when we do convert them. We are going to be looking at the feasibility of doing more of them, because some of them have proven to be quite inexpensive in putting a doorway through or an archway. Here, again, there are a lot of buildings we cannot

do it with, but some of them we can. We will look at them very seriously at doing those type of conversions.

\* (1520)

**Mr. Hickes:** So what I hear the minister saying is that they will be developing or will have a pilot project. It amazes me, because if you look at all government departments, this government seems to have more pilots than Air Canada has. There are pilot projects in Family Services, there are pilot projects in Northern Affairs and on and on, but I think we should look at something that is more permanent and maybe taking from those pilot projects but putting it into action, because I think it is really needed.

The other problem that has arisen from this, and I hope that the minister will be serious about the zero-tolerance policy that was brought forward by the minister and his government. Right now, because of the declining-age acceptance of residents in the seniors buildings, there is exposure to drug use and prostitution in those buildings, which was a very rare occurrence but now is being conducted right in the seniors residence. I hope there is a real stringent and strict orientation or scrutiny of the potential tenants before they even move in to try and weed out some of those, because that is something that some of the seniors have never really seen first-hand. They are not too pleased about it, and I do not blame them. I hope that will be addressed.

The other issue that I want to raise is 470 Pacific Avenue. Because of the younger tenants being moved in, and there is no security provided there, they are asking the possibility of providing security at night where some individuals have had other residents break right into their apartments and force their way in and almost terrorized the tenants to hand over certain things. They are scared to report. Is there a possibility of putting security in place at 470 Pacific Avenue which is a seniors home?

**Mr. Reimer:** The member is pointing out a problem. Possibly what I can do is try to get a further explanation for the member. I can tell him that we do have a security program in that area. It is on a 24-hour basis with one of the local security companies called Elite Security. The information that I have been given is that they are available when a call is made to them. They

are not onsite, but if there is a problem, they will respond on a phone call's notice. If there is more of a problem, maybe we will have to take a closer look and see how we can try to get a closer handling of some of the problems there.

**Mr. Hickes:** I think the point that was being made to me was that if there was onsite security, it would make people think twice before they acted negatively on the seniors that are living in those residences. If there was onsite security, because of the intimidation factor, you phone the security and they know exactly who that individual is, and they are scared of the repercussions after. So I think what they were talking about was onsite security, that individuals, be it if they were off the street or whatever, would have to go through a security person at the desk before they could enter the building later in the evenings.

Also, it is not the Housing issue, but if you had security, what probably would help is that there is prostitution action right outside of 470 Pacific, which was not there before. They are getting quite concerned about that. They feel that with the security right on site, it would help a lot, and it would give them a really firm sense of security and assistance if they needed it on really quick notice.

**Mr. Reimer:** One of the things I know that the member is quite aware of is working with tenants' associations, you know, in working with them in trying to resolve some of the problems in the various complexes. I am not familiar with this particular building, but if this building has a tenants' association that the member is aware of, and if he feels that there is something that we might be able to accomplish by meeting with this group, I would encourage maybe that if he would like to initiate a meeting with the tenants in that particular building, and we can talk to them and see whether they can come up with possibly some ideas or that we can resolve maybe some of the problems that they may feel that they want to talk to us about. I would be willing to try to make an arrangement with a meeting with the member and the tenants in that building, and we can see if we can try to resolve some of their fears.

**Mr. Hickes:** I thank the minister for that response. I will follow up on it and see if we can arrange a meeting.

I just have one more issue I would like to deal with. What is the process right now or what is the development of Lord Selkirk development? I know that about two years ago we met with the minister with the tenants association, hopefully for them to take more responsibility. Since that meeting, Gilbert Park has taken on more responsibility, and I think what they are looking at is along the same lines. Is there any further development to that?

**Mr. Reimer:** Lord Selkirk Park has certainly proven to be a challenge in trying to bring a sense of stability and sense of community in that area. I think that we have tried very hard to work with that whole area, and I must give a compliment to the tenants association. I have seen a marked notice of difference in attitude since there has been more of a stability in the tenants association with, I believe Donna Harrington is the president of the association right now. I have met with her. In fact I had a meeting with her just, I guess it was less than six weeks or not more than two months ago. We sat down with her. She had a bunch of concerns and items that she was wanting to clarify with us.

The idea is to try to delegate more responsibility to Lord Selkirk Park. I think that the initiative that they have shown in trying to take hold of their community and some of the efforts that they have come through is commendable. The idea with the constable onsite, with some of the family services onsite, I have just made accommodations for David Livingstone School next door to occupy a suite for some sort of parenting program that they were wanting to put on.

So I think that there is a degree of optimism that we have at Lord Selkirk Park that we have to still capture more of in trying to get them more involved with their community. I am of the opinion that if they show the willingness to take on the responsibility, I will certainly delegate more authority to them and decision making.

\* (1530)

We can see it already in our vacancies. One year ago we had about 130 vacancies in there and we are down to 30 now. It has turned itself around. I think that the more that we can act as a catalyst in getting the community to take hold of it themselves, I think that it is a normal process to delegate more authority to them

and funding decision making in where they feel that they would like to spend money and how they would like to improve their area.

We are working now at trying to eliminate some of those walls around Lord Selkirk Park. We have been trying to get rid of those things for the last two years, but I know that we are going to do it soon and that we will have a noticeable difference there with some of the walls coming down, because I know even the police have mentioned that. I am certainly willing to meet—as the member has mentioned, he had arranged one other time with the tenants association. I do not want to sound like a broken record, but I think that working through the local MLA in some of these areas and working with the tenants association, we have seen some positive results. I can relate to Gilbert Park. In that way, I certainly can relate to Lord Selkirk Park

In Transcona, we have been able to work with the Triplex people, and that is mainly because of just a willingness to show direction to let the people get involved with the decisions that they feel that they should make for their own community. So I support what the member is trying to do in Lord Selkirk Park, and I will try to work it out with him in any way I can to try to improve the Lord Selkirk Park area.

**Mr. Hickes:** I thank the minister for that. Since I was elected in 1990, the Lord Selkirk development is like night and day. You are right. There is a lot more stability, and the tenants have more resources. With a lot of the boarded-up units, their boards have come down. Families have moved in. But now to me is the next step where you have stability and you have communities that want to move forward, and all the resources that have been put in place from the community policing to more involvement with the schools, the tenants association and on and on and on.

I hope that we do not just say, well, okay, they are on their way now; that is good enough. Now they are going to be on their way. I hope that does not happen. The reason I say that is because the family resource centre has made a huge contribution in the turnaround of the whole community. As we speak, they have proposals out for funding. They have applied to the Family Services. I know that is not your department, but, if you have any influence, I hope you will use that,

because everybody working together has made that a much better place and a much healthier place for the individuals to live. If we start losing the resources that made it so positive, it will go back to the way it was before. I hope that never, ever happens, because there are too many good things happening, and the people are very happy. And, yes, the tenants association today is very strong. They have good leadership in Donna Harrington and her association. I just wanted to say that I will ask her to give the minister a call and to see if something could be set up where maybe more responsibility could be shared and passed along.

I know we have always had a very good working relationship. I look forward to that because we belong to different parties, but I think our hearts have to be for the people. It only can be accomplished if we work together. So, with those few questions, I thank you for allowing me, and our critic, I thank her for allowing me to have the opportunity to raise some of these concerns on behalf of my constituents. Thank you.

**Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne):** I am pleased to hear that Selkirk Park has undergone such a sea change, and I am sure it is entirely due to the MLA. He has been there since 1990, so now we are handing compliments around.

I wanted to begin by telling the minister it is kind of fortuitous us meeting here today, because later on this evening I am going to the Ecumenical Council apartments on Stradbrook for their 25th anniversary, their silver anniversary. The apartment was begun in 1973 under the Schreyer government, and there is a celebration this evening. I do not know if the minister or any of his staff are going to be present, but if the minister would like me to take any message from him, I would be more than happy to do that.

**Mr. Reimer:** Certainly the member can take greetings on behalf of the Minister of Housing and congratulate them on their 25 years of providing service to the community. It is kind of odd that the member should mention that because we were out in the rural area just a couple of weeks ago, staff and myself, and we were doing the tour of some units down in Deloraine and areas down there for celebrating 25th anniversaries of housing complexes. So they are all starting to get into that cycle. So certainly the member for Osborne can

take my greetings to them and wish them all the best as they go for another 25 years.

**Ms. McGifford:** And now to get down to business.

I wanted to begin by asking the minister a question about the Mayfair-Stradbrook area because my understanding from some of my constituents who live there is that they have been attempting to establish a kind of residence committee and had requested an apartment block in the development—I do not know if that is the right expression or not, but let it stand for now—and were not able to have one. I wonder if the minister could explain this to me. Is it because everything is full? Does this resonate with his staff?

**Mr. Reimer:** I have been advised that the staff has not been made aware of any request. One of the things that we look at when we are allocating units for community use is where there is not a waiting list. A lot of units in some areas do have a waiting list, so we feel that it is more important to have an accommodation in those units, and then we can free up for a meeting room or something like that sort.

But in some areas, I encourage the use of a unit for the community in the area because, as I mentioned earlier, it brings a sense of stability. But in some areas where we have a high demand and a waiting list, we cannot free up that unit.

**Ms. McGifford:** Perhaps I will check with the residents and write to the minister about it.

I also wanted to ask some questions about the Centre of the Deaf. There has been a lot of activity, it would seem to me. On January 15, 1998, I attended a meeting at the School for the Deaf, and it was facilitated by Mr. Sanderson—obviously, the minister knows Mr. Sanderson—and there were all kinds of speakers. My understanding is that it was turning around a potential new director for the centre. There was also some controversy about money from housing being used solely for the centre, as opposed to money which apparently or may have been used to promote certain services in the centre.

Then I believe it was on February 23, my information is that there was a meeting attended by Mr. Adrian

DePorto, a Crown attorney, and Bill Nakratz, and it was said that as of March 2—and I am checking information out with the minister. I am not quite sure that everything I have here is correct. I am understanding this person to be Bill Nakratz—I am unsure, again, about the pronunciation. Pardon? [interjection] Nickarz, okay, would become the property manager of the centre, but for the housing only, and this would leave the board responsible for the health unit. I believe there have been other negotiations and discussions and conversations. I believe the board wanted to ask Manitoba Health to take over the health unit. Anyway, there seems to be some confusion.

\* (1540)

*Mr. Mervin Tweed, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair*

Rumours are rampant, and I wonder if the minister could confirm or tell me today exactly who is staying, what is going on, what is the future of the Centre of the Deaf?

**Mr. Reimer:** Mr. Chairperson, the Centre of the Deaf that the member is referring to, I guess there is a bit of a history involved with this association. I think it has been—this is the fourth time that they have run into some sort of major redirection of their structure and their management at that complex. This last time, I guess, it was all predicated with the resignation of a director and then there was a problem with the paying of the bills in this unit which predicated Manitoba Housing to get involved, along with Manitoba Health, Manitoba Housing to the extent of managing the housing component of the Centre of the Deaf and the Department of Health in the management of the 22-bed PCH component of it.

As the member mentioned, Mr. Bill Nickarz is now managing it, but it is on an interim basis until there is a stability brought back into the structure. That is the same with the Health department, in running the PCH, until there will be another licensed operator that would take over that component. So the member is right. There is a bit of a transition mode but hopefully with the measures that we have put in place with the Department of Health and the Department of Housing, the building will stay. There is no inconvenience to the tenants or the residents; it is more of a management

restructuring. The idea is that it is not to affect the tenants.

**Ms. McGifford:** I appreciate that the intention may not be to affect the tenants, but does Mr. Nickarz know ASL?

**Mr. Reimer:** No, he does not.

**Ms. McGifford:** Well, I am sure that the minister understands that when people are deaf and their means of communication is ASL, communication becomes a difficulty if the manager does not know ASL. I wonder if there has been an arrangement, if there is a person, a translator available, and how many hours per day that person is around. What has been worked out in this regard?

**Mr. Reimer:** I have been told that there is staff that is available there that can sign with the tenants, and in fact, in the evenings, there are residents who act as a safety component in providing assistance to the management at that building also.

**Ms. McGifford:** Well, Mr. Chair, I do not think trusting in a resident, who may or may not be available, is really an adequate way of providing translation services to people in this apartment.

My understanding is that Adrien Deporto, the Crown attorney, and Bill Nickarz attended a meeting on the 23rd, and it was said that they would be taking over, Bill would be taking over as the property manager for housing only as of March 2. I also understood that there was an agreement to give 30 days notice. I want to know if this was the case, and if it was the case, why that was not honoured.

**Mr. Reimer:** I just want to clarify something from the previous answer that I gave to the member in regard to people in the evenings for signing. I have been informed that these are paid employees that are there to give assistance in the evenings.

\* (1550)

In regard to the 30 days notice, I would have to get clarification from the actual—what was happening there because we are not really sure whether there was a

verbal or a written communique to that effect, so we would have to check on that for the member to get better clarification. So we will get back to the member on that.

**Ms. McGifford:** Yes, thank you. I would appreciate further communication on that. One of the other questions I would like to ask the minister: he spoke about Manitoba Health being in the premises on an interim basis until a licensed operator could assume responsibility. I would like to ask some clarification as to what he means by a licensed operator.

**Mr. Reimer:** I am informed that PCHs work under a licence component in—

**Ms. McGifford:** I am sorry, PCH?

**Mr. Reimer:** Personal care home.

**Ms. McGifford:** Thank you.

**Mr. Reimer:** PCHs or personal care homes work under a licence agreement, and for an operator to take over the deaf centre, they would have to be licensed in that specialty. So this is what I am referring to when I say a licensed unit.

**Ms. McGifford:** Has it been run by a personal care home before, or is this a new development?

**Mr. Reimer:** The deaf centre was running the unit before, or the program before under a PCH licence. They ran into problems, as I mentioned earlier, in regard to the paying of bills and their financial obligations. This is where Manitoba Health stepped in and have taken over the management of it to a degree.

Once there is a stability brought back into that relationship, it is entirely possible that they may be able to remanage that facility, but until that time, I guess Manitoba Health would be the manager of that particular program, because I think, as the member knows and I referred to earlier, we have two distinct operations within the same building, a personal care home component, or a PCH, and a housing component. Sometimes it can be a little bit confusing in trying to distinguish between the two of them.



**Ms. McGifford:** So the minister is saying that, currently, Manitoba Health is, at least on a temporary basis, taking over the management of the personal care home aspect of the building, and that this is not going to be contracted out to any private company or anything of that nature, and that when the building gets back on its feet, if you will, that management of this area may once again pass back to the hands of the board.

**Mr. Reimer:** As clear as mud. Manitoba Health right now is supervising the running of the Deaf Centre Manitoba on the personal care home. You have to be careful there because to say one thing is applying it to both of them, but for the personal care home. We run the other one, but once it has been established into a more concrete relationship, then they will look at relinquishing the licence to a party that would run it.

When the member is referring to private operators, she has to remember that under the so-called parameters of private operators, they were operating it prior to this as a private operator. It was not run by the government or Manitoba Health. It was run previously by the deaf centre on the PCH end of the spectrum, so they were the managers of the complex.

**Ms. McGifford:** Then the housing part of the deaf centre, which I understand Manitoba is currently managing, will pass this part of the building back into the hands of the board once Housing is satisfied that the centre is running in a fashion that it considers to be fiscally sound?

**Mr. Reimer:** Eventually we are working to that end. It is hard to say exactly when that is going to transpire, but the ultimate end is to put it back into this previous operation, yes.

**Ms. McGifford:** The obvious question, of course, is how long? I understand that the minister cannot give us a day and month, but I wonder if he could hazard a guess based on the expertise of his staff as to when that might be.

**Mr. Reimer:** It has been pointed out it is hard to give a definite time or even a guesstimate on it because it is relatively new in taking over and in trying to come to some sort of resolve as to how to get the management team or the management capabilities back in structure

for the place. I could not even—you know, to speculate at this time is a bit premature.

**Ms. McGifford:** So Manitoba Housing has not set a target for itself.

**Mr. Reimer:** No. I think it is more important to have better management and the capabilities to have it working efficiently than to try to restrict it to a definite time frame.

**Ms. McGifford:** Well, I think we all agree on the importance of sound management, but I think that we might also agree on the importance of community involvement in the management of the centre and particularly the board. I wonder, in view of this, why the minister has not set at least a target as to when the responsibility could pass back to the board.

**Mr. Reimer:** Yes, I agree with the member that there should be parameters. I guess at this particular time, because of the complexities and also trying to get the deaf centre back into the loop, if you want to call it, it is taking some time. It has been pointed out that they are working towards trying to get it resolved. As the member mentioned, it is better to have a better management in there than just a quick-fix and trying to get things back in a proper manner.

**Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson):** Mr. Chairperson—

**Mr. Chairperson:** Could I ask you just to pull your mike a little closer.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Sure.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Thank you.

\* (1600)

**Ms. Cerilli:** I intend to start asking some questions more on the budget. I appreciate that my colleagues have focused in on some issues related to their constituency, but after listening to the discussion on the Centre of the Deaf, I do want to ask just one question, and it does relate to the financial management of the centre.

I also attended some of the meetings that the member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford) was at, and I was quite

concerned about—I think there was five staff there from the department, and there was a hesitation for any of the staff to answer questions. The audience there was a full house, and they were angry. They were very frustrated. They felt offended, was the words that were used after. The staff, I think, claims that they were not invited there to speak, that they were invited to a meeting. But out of courtesy, I think that the staff could have answered some of the questions being asked by the tenants there. They really were also offended at the fact that someone was placed to manage the building who could not communicate with the residents.

I guess I am going to get into some questions later on about general policy in Manitoba Housing related to special needs groups like deaf tenants, but it does raise a lot of questions. So there are two things I want to focus on now related to that, and that is one of the issues that was raised is the problem that Manitoba Housing currently does not have any funds that flow to address the fact when there are special needs tenants, particularly when there are multiple handicaps, and that that can lead to additional wear and tear on a building and additional demands. You just can think, for example, with wheelchairs that are continually bumping into doors and walls, that there could be a requirement for having additional funds to do painting and renovations, repairs. That is just one small example.

In the past, the practice has been for Housing just to fund bricks and mortar kinds of services, and they do not account for when there are special needs funds. So I am wondering if that issue is going to be addressed by the department.

Also, Manitoba Housing does not provide any additional funds for the kinds of support staff that a place like the Centre of the Deaf needs. What has been happening is they have been using some of their funds that have come for management of the building and putting that into paying for support staff who deal with the needs of the tenants. They have been managing this complex as one whole unit which has a whole range of housing support services, as well as the finances for paying the bills—the rent, the mortgage and all that—to Housing.

So that is another issue that has come to light through all of this, is that there needs to be funds, if not directly

through Housing, then in partnership either with Family Services or Manitoba Health so that a place like the Centre of the Deaf can have the housing supports that they need without having to dip into the money that they get from Housing for the bricks and mortar type things. As I understand it, this has led to a debt of what was \$250,000. They were losing approximately \$75,000 per year.

The other question then is: how could this happen? If this is a property that is owned by Manitoba Housing, it is one of the sponsored buildings, there should have been some intervention before Manitoba Housing had to sort of sweep in and simply take over the place. I have seen the report prepared by Mr. Sanderson, who was put there to try and work with the board to find a solution, and it seems like Manitoba Housing rejected the report from the staffperson they placed there and chose, in turn, to just take over the building.

So those are, I guess, three issues I would like you to respond to just on that issue at the Centre of the Deaf.

**Mr. Reimer:** It has been brought to my attention—I guess it is a combination of events and things that have happened at the deaf centre that have come to a position now where there is that taking over, as the member mentioned, by Manitoba Health and Manitoba Housing for the managing of it.

Originally, when the Centre of the Deaf was first built, the tenants of that building were people with hearing disabilities. The management of the building interpreted possibly the admissions to a point where a lot of people that were admitted to the building had more than just normal hearing problems, and this created a problem of funding in trying to accommodate these types of people. This, in relationship to what a Housing budget is comprised of, put a severe drain on the fundings that are typically allocated to a Housing component in the public housing sector. The funding of it actually overlapped into a Health responsibility so the management, in their efforts to accommodate people, brought people in that required additional funding levels of support, which the Housing component was not involved with in the funding formula.

So this is where the problem came in with the overexpenditures, with the Centre of the Deaf, where

Health possibly should have been the component that was funding these instead of Housing because the Housing component is built to certain specifications in the budget parameters which does not entitle or encompass a lot of the problems that the Centre of the Deaf accumulated upon itself in the admission of some of these peoples. So that is where the funding got overexpended, and this is where there was the problem that arose for the sake of trying to pay their bills where the Manitoba Department of Health and Manitoba Housing had to step in to try to rectify the problem.

**Ms. Cerilli:** The minister did not answer my question. He just repeated what I said. My question is: why did you not address this? You should have been reviewing the financial statements for this complex yearly and realized what was happening. This government seems incapable of having Manitoba Housing and your Housing department work with any other department.

There are a number of issues where this is the case, whether it is in dealing with placing mental health patients, whether it is dealing with the Centre of the Deaf. We have got issues now with women's shelters with Family Services. It seems like the Department of Housing has to improve its ability to work with other government departments to ensure that the tenants in Manitoba Housing receive the services that they need. This is the case with the Manitoba Centre of the Deaf.

It seems to me that Manitoba Health needs to develop a program or a number of programs to provide support services for Manitoba Housing tenants, and my question was: are you going to do that? Why has that not happened up till now, till you get to this point where you have a \$250,000 debt with this Centre of the Deaf? So I guess generally you can answer this from a general policy point of view, whether it is with mental health patients, who, as the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) raised, are being placed into seniors apartments, or whether it is the other examples we have just discussed here now. What is your department doing to ensure that, whether it is Family Services or Manitoba Health or other departments, you develop a partnership in programs so that tenants get the services that they need, the housing support services that they need?

\* (1610)

It seems like there is some kind of battle over who should be funding these services. If Manitoba Housing is going to stick by that they are only there to provide property management and property services and maintenance, then another government department has to provide the support services. I believe that you have to show some leadership as the minister of making sure that is going to happen.

**Mr. Reimer:** The member brings up some very interesting points and observations in regard to the direction with Manitoba Housing and the responsibilities. In particular to the Manitoba School for the Deaf, we in essence have a building there that we turned over to these people to manage. I guess you have to, you know, feel that there is a management capability within that structure and that board to manage the building properly. If they are getting involved with the addition of people who need additional services or additional care or health components, then that management of that building should be talking to the various stakeholders in trying to arrange for this type of care in their buildings.

*Mr. Chairperson in the Chair*

You have to have some sort of confidence in the people who are managing these buildings for you that they recognize where the problems are too and can address them in a sense of going after the proper channels of funding that are available and the admissions of the people into their building which they are responsible for. So it is a two-way street.

Granted, it is our building, but when you give the management to a group, you would think that they have the capabilities, or you would hope that they would have the capabilities, to manage it properly. It would appear that the management that has gone into this building now has had to be bailed out four times by government to get it back on track, that possibly the management has to be looked at in a more serious manner. This is one of the reasons why, when we talked about housing being part of the component, we are in no rush to run out of it yet, because there is a degree of stability that we want to bring back into that whole complex.

**Ms. Cerilli:** I do not want to belabour this point too much, but I cannot let it go without pointing out that I

have a chronology which I will be happy to send to the minister that points out that the board did raise this matter with the government on a number of occasions, that they did go to Manitoba Health, that it seems like it is the government's problem in being able to co-ordinate services for tenants with special needs, that there is a lot of investment that has gone on in some of these properties.

When we were at the meeting that the member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford) referenced, they talked about how Manitoba Housing has made no investments on upgrading and how the Centre of the Deaf has done all the fundraising to do even painting. They would have volunteers come in and do painting, and this is a Manitoba Housing property. I found that incredible.

It seems like there has to be some onus on the government. They review the books when they have an agreement with service clubs like the Kiwanis Centre in these sponsored housing developments. So putting all the responsibility onto them—and I will do up a letter on this and send you a copy of the chronology that I have. I know that there have been a number of meetings between yourself and staff. Maybe you have not been, but I know that the staff in the department have had a number of meetings with the board members and tenants at the centre, but I guess I am just raising this in the larger context as well from a policy point of view.

It is frightening to me that you are going into another agreement with the federal government to potentially take over another 17,000 units where a lot of those tenants may also have special needs. I know a lot of those developments are specifically designed for housing tenants that are not without a high level of special needs.

There has to be a better way that the government can have relationships between the various departments and ensure that housing support services are put in place, because it is a lot more expensive after the fact, as you are seeing now with this complex. I mean, if this could have been dealt with at the centre after the first year, if you saw that there was a problem where they were having to use monies from Manitoba Housing to provide for services they were not designed for—and I understand that that is what was happening—then it

should clue the government in that there is a problem here.

This government does not have any programs to provide support services in its own properties where there are special needs tenants, and I would think that is possibly another reason why you have some of the vacancy problems that you do and why you have some of the high turnover, and you have to bring in some of the policies that you have had.

I know, from doing some research in other jurisdictions, there are a lot of really interesting things going on across the country and outside the country in Housing in co-operation with other, whether they are community agencies, but to provide the kind of support services that tenants need so that they can successfully, independently live in their own apartments as independently as possible.

So I do not accept the approach that your department has taken on this, and I do not think that it is working very well for the department, because you are obviously having to deal with all these problems which end up being much greater after the fact rather than just having them demonstrate that there is a problem and a need for a new approach to providing the kind of support services.

I do not know if the minister wants to respond to that, but I would like to just ask some other questions about the budget. I had raised this issue in Question Period as well with the minister. I started doing some examination of the budgets for Housing over the past number of years, and I went back to 1983-84. First of all, I was just looking at the Estimates numbers, and I was quite concerned to look at what the Estimates were. In 1983-84, it was just under \$40.5 million. The Estimates went up to a high of \$51.2 million in '90-91, and now we are back down to \$43.5 million. That showed a real interesting peak and then drop down again, but when you compare that with the amount that was authorized and then the actual amount that was spent, you get a much erratic spending in the department.

I had asked the minister to explain why it was that when in '96-97 there were over \$65 million spent, the next year's Estimates could be only \$44 million, and the

minister explained to me that that was because of a \$10-million injection into maintenance and improvements, and that is shown in the documents of the government. But other than that one year, we are still on this downward trend of spending in the Estimates.

So I guess my question at this point is: do you have a sense now in this fiscal year if you are going to be on-line for the budget Estimates last year, if you are going to meet that budget estimate?

**Mr. Reimer:** I have been advised that by all indications we should be very, very close to what our budget estimate was of just over \$44.6 million.

**Ms. Cerilli:** So this year the estimate is \$43.5 million. How do you explain that there will be a \$3-million reduction?

\* (1620)

**Mr. Reimer:** There are various components that come into play when we look at the difference between the two numbers. It is a decrease of just over \$1.1 million between '97-98 and '98-99, and it is composed of a few different things. Maybe I can just share this with the member.

The Housing Program Support will be down just over a half a million dollars, almost \$572,000, and that is because of the reduction of some staff in various departments throughout the Housing component. In the Financial Services department, through Desktop Management and through some of the Client Services area, there has been a reduction in the staff. There is also a reduction in the administration fees for the CMHC units of over \$800,000. There is a decrease in interest associated with the land inventory. There is an increase in the repair and maintenance budget that offsets some of the decreases. There is an increase in the grants under the shelter allowance program of \$100,000.

Where else have we got some decreases? The Housing Program Support decrease is primarily a result of salary and operating costs associated, a decrease in inventory costs for land. There is a decrease in taxes and interest costs for units administered under Housing operations. So it is a various combination of different

pluses and minuses that comes up with the difference of the \$1.13 million, so, like I say, there are some increases and some decreases, so it finally comes out with that number of just \$1.1 million.

**Ms. Cerilli:** I appreciate that kind of detail. We will get into some of those specific areas later on, but the other thing that struck me when I was looking at comparing this year to last year is that we are actually going to get more money from CMHC. I stand corrected earlier. I had said \$3 million. It is really not, it is 1.2 difference, but we are going to get roughly over \$250,000 more from CMHC this year, even though whenever we ask questions, the minister always complains about how we are getting less money from the federal government. I have asked questions about the way that the CMHC funds are shown in the Estimates books and that. How can you explain, with the federal cuts that we have had across the whole country, that we are actually getting more money from Canada Mortgage and Housing?

**Mr. Reimer:** The one thing that I should point out when dealing with the federal government in working with the housing component, there are so many different components regarding the housing allowances and the housing relationships and the percentages of participation between the two levels that it becomes very, very time sensitive to try to understand exactly where you are getting the ups and where you are getting the downs.

In some areas there shows an increase in funding availability, but, in other areas associated with the federal government, there is a decrease in funding. So you take in the overall picture when I say that the federal government's funding is going down. It is going down in the overall picture, but in certain areas, because of the funding arrangements and the percentage differences, we do get some funding increases, but, in the overall, so-called big picture, we are still going down in our funding from the federal government.

**Ms. Cerilli:** That was my point. The Estimates book on page 2 for this year says that Canada Mortgage and Housing anticipated recoveries are \$36,691,400, and last year the same line was \$36,426,900. So the total is more this year by over \$200,000, and I am asking for an

explanation why. I am quite prepared to have you go program by program and explain the difference. I have got my pen ready here. This is a big issue.

**Mr. Reimer:** Mr. Chairperson, I can only refer the member, for a more detailed explanation, to page 42 of the Housing Estimates Supplement to point out where the fundings are coming from and what we will realize. You see our total operating expenditures are just over \$108 million, and then the recovery is 36.6, and in comparison to the year before was 36.3 over \$108.6 million, so this gives us a more accurate picture of what our Housing operations cost and what our recoveries are from the federal government.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Well, those numbers still show that we are estimating that we are going to get more money this year than we estimated last year, so I am not getting an explanation of why that is. It could be maybe we actually did not get that amount from the federal government. If you want to compare this year's estimate to last year's actual, I would be happy to hear that figure.

**Mr. Reimer:** Yes, I think part of the reasoning is because we are spending more money on buildings where we have a higher percentage of recovery. Recovery rates are variable. There are some projects where we are only at 12.5 percent participant, other units where we are 75-25 participant, and other areas where we share 50-50 participation with the federal government.

\* (1630)

There are variables, and where you spend the money will dictate what type of recovery you get. If you spend monies in a 75-25 relationship, where we get 75 cents back for every 25 cents that we spend out of a dollar, you know it is more favourable to us than some of our buildings where we are on a 50-50 ratio. So it would depend on where the emphasis has been placed on expenditures of maintenance, so that we get a higher percentage back from our partners.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Now that is an explanation that makes sense. I just want to see if I am understanding it correctly. You are saying you are spending—I want you to clarify what you mean by spending—that is

maintenance. Does that also mean when you are filling vacancies? Does that also apply to—is there a difference in the subsidy that you get?

**Mr. Reimer:** That is right.

**Ms. Cerilli:** So you are basically choosing then to maximize the money you get back from the federal government by putting more of your dollars and investment into those properties.

**Mr. Reimer:** I am sorry, I did not hear the member's question. I was just getting some further clarification on the point that I was just making.

A good example is Lord Selkirk Park where we are only 12.5 percent participants in that project. So when we spend a dollar in there, we are theoretically only spending 12.5 cents, and we are getting back from our partners 87.5 cents. There we would show some fairly significant recovery of dollars compared to other areas where we are spending 50-cent dollars.

As I pointed out earlier, Lord Selkirk Park, where we have gone from 130 vacancies last year to 30 vacancies this year, naturally is going to show as a decrease because we have higher rental income coming out of that unit.

**Ms. Cerilli:** To clarify then, though, in all these properties, Manitoba Housing is the owner of the properties.

**Mr. Reimer:** No, not all of them.

**Ms. Cerilli:** In some cases, the minister said, no, not all of them, so in some cases you are a joint owner with CMHC—

**Mr. Reimer:** That is right.

**Ms. Cerilli:** —or with a sponsoring agency.

**Mr. Reimer:** Or nonprofits, but we are not even owner at all.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Okay. So, I am just trying to think this through then. I mean, it would seem on the surface that this would be a management practice where you are

really taking advantage of the potential for getting money from the federal government, but, on the other hand, if it is going to mean that in properties where the federal government does not have as much of an investment, which is more than the responsibility of investment for Manitoba Housing, those buildings under this strategy will not be getting as much maintenance and will not be getting the same number of tenants, is that correct? Staff are shaking their heads.

**Mr. Reimer:** No, I think it is more of a policy that all buildings are assessed for their needs and their stress values and their wear and tear, and if it needs it, we will budget for the allocation. It is cyclical in a sense that it just so happens that last year we were spending more money on the 50-50 buildings than this year with 75-25 buildings.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Okay, that explains it. So it is not something you have chosen to do. It is part of the management plan for these buildings, and it just so happened that over these years the properties that are more of a federal responsibility for financing came up. That is why you have more federal recoveries. The other thing, though, because since '94 the federal government has not put any money into new financing for new buildings for construction, that means neither has the province. Is that correct?

**Mr. Reimer:** Yes, the final carryover, the member is right, our final billings that we came on stream with were in 1996, but there has been no new funding. She is right.

**Ms. Cerilli:** How much has the provincial government saved by not funding new construction over the last four years?

**Mr. Reimer:** I do not know whether there is a saving. We still have vacancies and we still have overall about a 10 percent vacancy, so there are still units to be filled.

**Ms. Cerilli:** I do not want to get into a debate over the vacancies at this point. It seems, though, that the government quotes the vacancies as a justification for not constructing, and that was not what I was asking. Maybe I will phrase the question in a different way. Let us say the four years previous to 1994, how much money had you been budgeting for new construction a year?

**Mr. Reimer:** That is something that staff do not have readily here. We may be able to go into our archives and try to find out what we were spending for new housing, say, from 1990 to '94 until the end of the program. We can get that for the member.

**Ms. Cerilli:** I appreciate the minister getting me that information. I am going to turn over the mike to the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) to ask some Housing questions related to her constituency. I think we will have to resume on Monday.

**Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley):** Mr. Chairman, I wanted to ask about some issues that have arisen about a tenants association at 400 Young Street. I believe the minister has had some correspondence on this issue from residents. The minister is looking puzzled. He has not received any?

**Mr. Reimer:** Unless it has been very recently. I cannot recall anything regarding 400 Edmonton, I believe she said.

**Ms. Friesen:** No, Young.

**Mr. Reimer:** 400 Young. It may be in my correspondence, but I have not come across it yet. Unless the member is saying it was sent quite a while ago, then I would really have to check why I have not got it.

**Ms. Friesen:** I think it would certainly be at least three weeks ago that I received a copy of it. My colleague from Radisson has also received a copy of a letter sent to the minister. It raises issues of the difficulties in forming a tenants association. It raises issues of a particular caretaker and the constant changing in caretaking arrangements at that facility, which has had some impact upon how the residents have been able to deal with each other.

I do not want to go any further if the minister has not got the letter, but I am very puzzled as to why I have it, the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) has it. It is copy of something that has been sent to the minister and he does not have it.

**Mr. Reimer:** I can assure the member that I will do my utmost in the next little while to find out exactly where it is. Staff seem to feel that they do not recall

seeing it come in either, so it is either stuck somewhere, but we will track it down. Maybe I could ask the member if she would indulge me to get a copy from her file, if she is willing to share it with me, and we can speed it up even faster.

**Ms. Friesen:** If I had thought the minister had not got it, I would have brought it with me. I do not have it with me, but we will certainly pick up on that at the beginning of the next session on Monday.

\* (1640)

I have another question, Mr. Chairman, and it deals with the housing—I think I have already raised this informally with the minister—on Wolseley Avenue from which tenants are now being moved. These are townhouses on Wolseley. Certainly, I think we both recognize that there has been a federal responsibility for this, but there was a provincial undertaking I believe to find substitute housing for the people involved.

One of my concerns is that the housing that people were in on Wolseley, first of all, was large housing. It enabled people to have families of two, three and four children. There were a number of large apartments and houses in that particular block, which is very unusual in low-income housing. There were at least, I believe, 11 children in that area who were going to Mulvey School. As the minister may not know, but Mulvey School has had for a long time, and has tried to deal with it continuously, issues of migration, as many inner city schools do. Mulvey has at some times been very successful in maintaining people within the neighbourhood. They have had, for example, a housing co-ordinator who has maintained within the school lists of available housing. It is not easy to come by housing of three and four bedrooms in that area.

So my concerns are threefold. One is the federal withdrawal obviously is really hurting neighbourhoods and communities. Secondly, that the people in those housing blocks be accommodated as soon as possible and in the best manner possible. Thirdly, that the children be enabled to remain in the neighbourhood where they can still attend Mulvey School.

Eleven children, and there may be more, but I know that there are at least 11 children—I mean that is quite a

large chunk out of a relatively small school. The importance of maintaining stability and continuity in inner city schools, I think, is one that we would all support. So this particular withdrawal of federal funds and what I understand is a relative slowness on the part of the province to find alternative housing for people of a similar quality and in the same neighbourhood really does have a very serious effect on a number of institutions, not just on the individual families, but on the whole community.

I wonder if the minister could give me some update on the residents of that housing complex and the efforts which have been made to find them places within the reasonable vicinity of the school.

**Mr. Reimer:** I was just getting an update as to the situation that the member is referring to. She did allude to the fact that it is federal housing that is being devolved through SAM Management. My information is that at the end of September of last year our department was informed, I guess, by SAM Management that they were in the process of having to do something with these particular units. The notification, from what I understand, did not go to the residents until the end of January, January 28, that this was happening.

We had indicated—when I say we, I mean Manitoba Housing—that we would be willing to try to accommodate these people, as many as we could, in our units and in our area as best we could. I have been informed that out of the amount of people who have been notified of the move, only eight people have sought housing with Manitoba Housing, from all the people that are being relocated.

As of the end of March, we do have four-bedroom units available, and in fact we do have five-bedroom units available, but they are within various parts of the city. They are not in that particular area in and around Wolseley. So there are units available, but it does mean they do have to move to a different area.

**Ms. Friesen:** Could the minister tell me what the rental was, say, on a three-bedroom unit in that particular complex?

**Mr. Reimer:** We do not know. We were not involved with those in that particular complex. So I could not



give the member those numbers on that particular complex.

**Ms. Friesen:** Could the minister tell me where the four- and five-bedroom units are that he has at the moment, and what the rental is on each of those?

**Mr. Reimer:** These are units that are on the what we call the RGI formula, rent geared to income. So the 27 percent of whatever their income is, that is what they would be charged for the rental.

**Ms. Friesen:** Could the minister tell me where they are?

**Mr. Reimer:** If the member would give us a day or two, I am sure that we can find out exactly where they are because they are throughout Winnipeg, from what I understand, and it is a matter of just compiling where they are, or I can go through the list while the member waits.

\* (1650)

I was just going through some of the statistics here for the four- and five-bedroom units. In the downtown area, there is none available. In the St. James area—and this is till the end of March, as I should point out—there are 10 four-bedroom units and four five-bedroom units. In what we call the north end, there are two four bedrooms and one five-bedroom. In the Brooklands area, there are two four-bedroom. In the Fort Garry area, there are four four-bedroom and three five-bedroom. In the Fort Rouge area, there is one four-bedroom unit. In the east end, there are three four-bedrooms and one five-bedroom. That is it.

**Ms. Friesen:** Could the minister tell me how many, approximately, large units—and we are thinking three-, four-, five-bedrooms—in the downtown area, and what is the housing stock that is available? I realize it is full, but in terms of the department's planning, what?

**Mr. Reimer:** We would have to provide that because all I have been provided with is the vacancy numbers and not the total numbers. If the member would like, I can get those for the downtown area. These are just vacancies.

**Ms. Friesen:** Mr. Chairman, the minister has quite a number of staff here. Would it not be possible to venture a guess on what the proportion of housing in the downtown area for low-income people, under Manitoba Housing, is of the larger variety? Are we looking at 10 percent, 5 percent, 20 percent? Obviously, these are requests which must be made quite frequently. If Manitoba Housing's large units are all full in the downtown area, then you must have a sense of what proportion, it seems to me, is of that scale.

**Mr. Reimer:** Staff, like the member mentioned, are trying to sort of give it a guesstimate of numbers, in and around 30 units they feel would be, you know, in around that area, in the downtown area.

**Ms. Friesen:** Mr. Chairman, could the minister tell me: in the selloffs that this department has been involved in since the 1990s, how many of the houses that have been sold, or accommodations sold by Manitoba Housing, have been of large units downtown?

**Mr. Reimer:** We have not sold any downtown.

**Ms. Friesen:** Mr. Chairman, I am thinking of houses in my constituency—Evanson, Arlington—which were owned by Manitoba Housing and which were sold off within the last two to three years. So I assume that those exist in other streets outside of my constituency in the downtown area as well.

**Mr. Reimer:** Yes, I was just looking in what, I guess, the interpretation of “downtown” may be what we are looking at. There have been some units sold. The member is right. For example, Arlington and Evanson, there have been units sold. In the north Point Douglas, there has been a unit sold, on Ross Avenue, and the rest are out of town. Brooklands, pardon me.

**Ms. Friesen:** Could the minister provide me with a list of those addresses of ones that have been sold? Obviously, you cannot do that today, but you perhaps could tell me today how many of those were family units, that is, more than two bedrooms.

**Mr. Reimer:** Those were all family units.

**Ms. Friesen:** Well, the obvious question is: why did you sell them when you have a demand in the inner city

for family units? Here are people who have been turned out of housing now on Wolseley. They could have gone—had that housing been available—into Manitoba Housing units within two or three blocks.

**Mr. Reimer:** I have been informed that a lot of these homes that were sold were of such a state of disrepair that the cost of revamping them possibly far outweighed the ability to realize payback on them.

I was just going to point out, too, that we did give some units to Reverend Lehotsky—I am trying to remember his first name—Harry Lehotsky, yes, for renovations, too, and those were units that had been boarded up previously for quite a few years.

**Ms. Friesen:** I think the minister gave one house to Harry Lehotsky that has been converted into three units. I wonder if the minister, since we are going to be back here on Friday, could provide me with the estimates that he received, the renovation costs to each of the houses that was sold, each of the units. The minister said the renovation costs would have been too high for the payback. Presumably, the government, in disposing of those assets, had, first of all, an estimate, and one would assume good practice would be to have at least more than one estimate. Secondly, there would have been a cost-benefit analysis on the payback rate. I say this particularly because every day we are seeing in west Broadway and in Wolseley houses which are being renovated.

The payback, as the minister uses the term—it is not a term that I would use—but the payback, as he says, is there for families. Why is it not there for the government in providing for low-income families, stabilizing neighbourhoods, stabilizing schools, providing the benefits to everyone, not just indeed to the individuals?

So I would like from the minister a list of all the units that were sold, their addresses, the amount they were sold for, the estimates that were done for the government on renovations and the cost-benefit analysis that was done on the disposal of those units.

**Mr. Reimer:** We will try to endeavour to find out those figures for the member.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Just for the committee's information, we will be back on Monday.

The time being five o'clock, time for private members' hour. Committee rise.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

**Mr. Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau):** Would the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply has been dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Natural Resources. Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber at this time.

We are on Resolution 12.1 Administration and Finance (b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits.

**Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin):** Mr. Chairperson, I just want to pick up quickly where we left off yesterday on the arrangements that have been with Linnet Geomatics and Louisiana-Pacific and the provincial government. I am hoping that the minister can help me understand better the ins and the outs of this rather complicated arrangement.

I am interested in knowing about the royalty that is paid. First of all, who pays the royalty and who receives the royalty?

**Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Natural Resources):** I believe the member may have been mixing and matching a little bit in his question, because, as I recall, his question was around the L-P contract. I have that information that I said I would provide for the L-P contract. I think that was part of his question. He asked about royalties, whether that is related to the L-P contract.

Let me try this as simply as I can describe it. A contract was signed in September '94. It is a five-year contract. That means it will conclude in 1999. The last payment will be July 1998 from L-P to Linnet. The job is to develop an annual operating plan plus a 10-year plan and develop the GIS software to accommodate that. The cost of this will be borne 30 percent by L-P, 30 percent by the province, and 40 percent by Linnet. This will allow for the long-term development plans. It will categorize tree growth, the economics, the transportation development that needs to occur, and development of modules for the woodland system. If

there was to be any reproduction or resale of this information to anyone else in the future or required by anyone else, and I am not sure why that might be, any reimbursement in the nature of a royalty would be reflective of the investment, in other words, 30-30-40.

\* (1440)

The member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) has been very clear in how he wants to understand this. This is not a situation where Linnet is acquiring something that would not be available to anybody else, but they have to put it together in a system so that it can be used by L-P so that they can quickly demonstrate the inter-relationship and the volumes and all of those different pieces of information that they need to know in order to justify their plans to the province and the province to be able to regulate those plans and to be able to provide that information. I would think a portion of this information would probably be asked for by the environmental work that has to be done.

The thing that I think interacts on this type of arrangement and probably causes some confusion—it certainly has the capacity to cause some confusion for anyone looking at this is that when we do licensing in this province, not only do we have the forest management licence, we have that overlaid by an environment licence. So there is more than one department of government that needs to be satisfied on what is happening with the harvesting out there in the field. We are talking about Louisiana-Pacific, and I know during their hearings they said they had never encountered a process like Manitoba's anywhere that they worked in North America. They were somewhat frustrated when they pointed that out, I would acknowledge, but I think that, as they worked their way through it, they recognized all of the interrelationships between the stream crossings, the environmental concerns there, the fish, the wildlife habitat, all those things that have to be brought together.

It is not just the Department of Natural Resources through the Forestry Branch that ends up being the regulator. They have to satisfy the environmental concerns and obtain environmental approvals as well for a number of the things that they might well be doing. Again, I would reference streams and crossings, those sorts of things. So this has been a real asset to the

Province of Manitoba in terms of being able to obtain reliable information that very quickly allows our regulators to understand the volume of wood, the accessibility and all the other factors that come to bear on this. Linnet being in place to be able to do this work has turned out to be quite an asset.

**Mr. Struthers:** The minister talks in terms of royalties as being a 30-30-40 split between L-P, the province, and Linnet. Maybe I am not getting it straight, but does that percentage of royalties change when you look at the broader picture, not just the agreement with Linnet. Is that a general agreement as well with the province and Linnet? I am not speaking now in terms of Louisiana-Pacific. I am interested in the royalties that the government can look forward to receiving from Linnet.

**Mr. Cummings:** What I described is very specific to the L-P situation and I think reflects the situation, the amount of work and input that is necessary to develop this, but it is very specific to this arrangement. This is not a template that every bit of work that Linnet does follows.

**Mr. Struthers:** Any of the agreements that Linnet is involved with, whether it is with Hydro or anybody else in the province, the provincial government is going to be expecting a certain amount of revenue from royalties. Do they all go on the 30-30-40 split, or are there different combinations for different groups that are involved with contracts with Linnet?

**Mr. Cummings:** What I said was, and I repeat, is that the percentages that I spoke about are very specific to this L-P contract. Other arrangements, I do not have that information specifically at my hands as to what they might be, but certainly they are there.

**Mr. Struthers:** Then I wonder if I can kind of roll two questions into one here. The first one is: how much revenue would the Department of Natural Resources be looking forward to receiving in the arrangements they have with Louisiana-Pacific and the province and Linnet? The second question would be: how much total revenue would the provincial government be looking forward to on a province-wide basis when you

take all the different contracts together? I wonder if the minister would have that figure and would be willing to share that with me.

**Mr. Cummings:** Where the value would be for resale would be in the developed woodlands system, software system, but I cannot tell you what the projections are for the ability to market that except that I believe this is a pretty competent system. So likely there is some market out there, and that is why we maintained a 30-percent royalty option against it, because it is, as I recall, some leading work in this area. In fact, we have been recently complimented by some international comparators that Manitoba now had in its hands some of the best and most competent data about what was available in its woodlands.

There is another piece of information that I can add. The woodlands system that was developed for L-P, there have been sales that have occurred. When I said I cannot tell the member how much we have earned or how much they are selling for, to give him a total, I can tell him that sales have occurred to B.C. and Alberta clients, companies operating in those two jurisdictions. They have purchased; that is the nature of the business. As we speak, I understand Linnet has had some major agricultural conferences where a lot of interest is being expressed in their capability.

\* (1450)

**Mr. Struthers:** Mr. Chairperson, I think I can understand the difficulty in projecting the revenue, but I think also when we enter these agreements in government, all the time we are projecting revenue. I do not know if I understand exactly why the minister would not be able to indicate at least a projected amount of revenue—

**Mr. Cummings:** I just do not have it in front of me.

**Mr. Struthers:** Oh, if it is a case of not having it in front, then—

**Mr. Chairperson:** Order, please. Could I ask the minister, if he is going to interject, he should do it when he is on the record, so that we can get everything for Hansard.

The honourable member for Dauphin, to continue.

**Mr. Struthers:** Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. The minister has indicated that he does not have that information in front of him just now, and that he will endeavour to provide me with total revenues that he is looking forward to, I am hoping, with not just the specific deal with Louisiana-Pacific but the total revenue from projects throughout the province that the government and Linnet are involved in. Maybe the minister can confirm that I have some reasonable expectations there.

**Mr. Cummings:** I am shaking my head in an affirmative.

**Mr. Struthers:** I believe that concludes the questions that I have, and that we can begin moving line by line approving the line budget, whatever the term is.

**Mr. Chairperson:** We will start with 12.1. Administration and Finance (b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$398,500—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$83,800—pass.

12.1.(c) Administrative Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$770,300—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$335,500—pass.

12.1.(d) Financial Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,236,500—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$322,000—pass.

12.1.(e) Human Resource Management (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$746,800—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$120,000—pass.

12.1.(f) Resource Information Systems (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$772,800—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$98,000—pass.

12.2. Regional Operations (a) Headquarters Operations (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,184,800—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$1,001,800—pass; (3) Problem Wildlife Control \$273,700.

12.2.(b) Northwest Region (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,898,800—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$669,300—pass.

12.2.(c) Northeast Region (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,075,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$906,900—pass.

12.2.(d) Central Region (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$4,306,800—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$1,638,100—pass.

12.2.(e) Eastern Region (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$3,107,200—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$960,300—pass.

12.2.(f) Western Region (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$4,050,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$1,470,700—pass.

12.2.(g) Fire Program (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,910,200—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$8,216,900—pass.

Resolution 12.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$34,671,500 for Natural Resources, Regional Operations, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1999.

12.3. Resource Programs (a) Water Resources (1) Administration (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$289,500—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$313,500—pass; (c) Grant Assistance \$25,000—pass.

12.3.(a)(2) Water Licensing (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$653,000—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$39,700—pass.

12.3.(a)(3) Water Planning and Development (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,083,200—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$113,600—pass; (c) Waterway Maintenance \$3,895,400—pass.

12.3.(a)(4) Surface Water Management (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$590,900—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$364,900—pass; (c) Canada-Manitoba Agreement for Water Quantity Surveys \$402,400—pass.

12.3.(a)(5) Groundwater Management (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$574,400—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$172,300—pass.

12.3.(b) Parks and Natural Areas (1) Administration (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$398,100—pass; (b)

Other Expenditures \$269,100—pass; (c) Grant Assistance \$134,000—pass.

12.3.(b)(2) Planning and Development (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$674,900—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$207,600—pass.

12.3.(b)(3) Park Districts (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$417,800—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$59,400—pass.

12.3.(b)(4) Park Operations and Maintenance (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$9,444,000—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$4,082,000—pass.

12.3.(b)(5) Support Services (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$177,200—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$60,400—pass.

12.3.(c) Policy Co-ordination (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$978,300—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$208,300—pass; (3) Grant Assistance \$10,200—pass.

12.3.(d) Forestry (1) Administration (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$302,900—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$325,800—pass; (c) Grant Assistance \$465,800—pass.

12.3.(d)(2) Forest Resources Management (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$797,600—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$781,400—pass.

12.3.(d)(3) Forest Health and Ecology (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$891,600—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$3,221,300—pass.

12.3.(d)(4) Forest Economics and Marketing (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$337,800—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$55,500—pass.

12.3.(d)(5) Forest Regeneration Stock \$1,411,900—pass.

12.3.(d)(6) Pineland Forest Nursery 0—pass.

12.3.(e) Fisheries (1) Administration (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$202,900—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$132,600—pass.

12.3.(e)(2) Fish Culture (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$625,500—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$309,000—pass.

12.3.(e)(3) Fisheries Habitat Management (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$326,500—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$74,500—pass.

12.3.(e)(4) Sport and Commercial Fishing Management (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$473,100—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$82,800—pass.

12.3.(e)(5) Northern Fishermen's Freight Assistance \$250,000—pass.

12.3.(e)(6) Fisheries Enhancement Initiative \$350,000—pass.

12.3.(f) Wildlife (1) Administration (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$406,500—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$268,800—pass; (c) Grant Assistance \$207,000—pass.

12.3.(f)(2) Big Game and Fur Management (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$517,100—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$221,900—pass; (c) Grant Assistance \$89,900—pass.

12.3.(f)(3) Habitat and Land Management (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$654,100—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$179,700—pass.

\* (1500)

**Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture):** Yes, I would like to make a substantial and rather lengthy interjection at this time in the Minister of Natural Resources' Estimates and give him some of my sage advice with respect to the responsibilities of that department, a department, Mr. Chairperson, that I have had the privilege of presiding over over a space of time spanning four decades. Does that suitably impress you, Mr. Minister?

I want to take this occasion just to insert, because this is the first opportunity that I have had. I noted in today's paper that the next Prime Minister of Canada,

the current Minister of Finance, is featured in that paper as acknowledging that he wishes to soften his image in preparation for becoming the Prime Minister of this country. To make that transition from Minister of Finance to Prime Minister, one has to undergo certain changes. Metamorphosis, I believe, is the word that I was seeking.

In doing so he is reigniting, and I am very enthusiastic about that and very supportive of that, the environmental issues in the land. What that reads to me is that there would be an opportunity that some of those programs that were stalled as a result of budget restrictions, the CMASS program, the conservation programs, programs that were shared jointly by the departments of Natural Resources and Agriculture—I am referring specifically to the \$9-million multiyear agreement that Natural Resources and Agriculture jointly had for a host of worthwhile conservation programs throughout the landscape of Manitoba.

I want to encourage my colleague the Minister of Natural Resources to read today's paper. Do not be fully engulfed in the politics of it. I mean, he does not have to—while he is still trying to make up his mind which aspiring leader of the national Tory Party he should support later on in October, let him dwell on the musings of the Minister of Finance, soon to become Prime Minister of Canada, in his signal to Canadians that he is prepared to loosen the purse strings for environmental programming, and I would ask that the honourable minister, now that he has a bit of spare time, the heavy pressure, that constant attack by the opposition by the member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers), the member for Interlake (Mr. C. Evans) has now receded into the background and you will have a bit more time on your hands, Mr. Minister, to pursue this little suggestion that I make about the potential enhancement of our environmental programming in the province.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

**Mr. Chairperson:** 12.3.(f) Wildlife (3) Habitat and Land Management (c) Grant Assistance \$645,000—pass.

12.3.(f)(4) Conservation Data and Nongame Management (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$329,600—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$142,600—pass.

12.3.(f)(5) Canada-Manitoba Waterfowl Damage Prevention Agreement \$334,800—pass.

12.3.(f)(6) Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Initiative \$225,000—pass.

12.3.(g) Computer Graphics (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$517,300—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$54,700—pass.

12.3.(h) Habitat Enhancement Fund \$50,000—pass.

12.3.(j) Special Conservation and Endangered Species Fund \$432,100—pass.

12.3.(k) Sustainable Development Co-ordination Unit \$235,200—pass.

Resolution 12.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$42,568,900 for Natural Resources, Resource Programs, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1999.

Resolution 12.4. Land Information Centre (a) Administration (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$577,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$470,100—pass.

12.4.(b) Crown Lands Operations (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$549,800—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$1,082,500—pass.

12.4.(c) Crown Lands Registry (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$233,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$150,300—pass.

12.4.(d) Survey Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,425,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$480,500—pass; (3) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations (\$1,482,400)—pass.

12.4.(e) Remote Sensing (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$645,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$127,200—pass; (3) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations (\$23,700)—pass.

12.4.(f) Distribution Centre (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$365,500—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$278,800; (3) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations \$95,000—pass.

12.4.(g) Land Mapping Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$423,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$612,700—pass.

Resolution 12.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$5,820,700 for Natural Resources, Land Information Centre, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1999.

Resolution 12.5. Expenditures Related to Capital (a) Equipment and Infrastructure \$535,600—pass; (b) Water Projects \$5,290,400—pass; (c) Park Facilities \$5,092,300—pass; (d) Less: Recoverable from Capital Initiatives (1,500,000)—pass.

Resolution 12.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$9,418,300 for Natural Resources, Expenditures Related to Capital, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1999.

12.6. Flood Proofing Programs - Capital \$48,800,000—pass.

Resolution 12.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$48,800,000 for Natural Resources, Flood Proofing Programs - Capital, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1999.

We will now return to the Minister's Salary. The staff has already gone, so we can deal with it right away. We are on Resolution 12.1. Administration and Finance (a) Minister's Salary \$26,300—pass.

Resolution 12.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$4,910,500 for Natural Resources, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1999.

This concludes the Department of Natural Resources. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the minister and his staff.

\* (1510)

## AGRICULTURE

**Mr. Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau):** We will now move on to the Department of Agriculture. The honourable Minister of Agriculture, if he will take his

seat, and the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) can move. [interjection] What for? We do not need a recess. Let us go.

Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will be considering the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture. Does the honourable Minister of Agriculture have an opening statement?

**Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Chairperson, yes, I do have an opening statement. In fact, I want to make a more formal opening statement than I normally make because of the changes that are occurring in agriculture and the scale to which these changes impact on all of us here in Manitoba.

So I am very pleased to introduce these 1998-99 Estimates for the Manitoba Department of Agriculture. It is an honour for my department and myself to serve our province's agriculture and food sector. A prosperous, dynamic and sustainable agrifood industry is vital to Manitoba's overall economy and accordingly contributes to the improved quality of life for all Manitobans. I would like to briefly comment on the farm income situation in our province.

In 1997, farm cash receipts in Manitoba were estimated at some \$3.3 billion, the highest on record in current dollars. Receipts from crop production rose by 7 percent to a record of \$1.7 billion mainly because the increased marketings of most crops more than offset the decreased prices of almost all crops in 1997. These are 1997 full year figures, of course. I appreciate that we are in 1998, but for the completion of figures, honourable members will appreciate that I have to use the figures for the last completed year for which the data is available. There was an 8 percent increase in livestock receipts to a new record of almost \$1.2 billion. Lower program payments were more than offset by higher crop insurance, freight cost pooling assistance and flood compensation programs, resulting in a doubling of direct payments to Manitoba producers which rose from \$56 million in 1996 to \$129 million in the year 1997.

Members of this committee are no doubt aware that our agrifood industry makes a significant contribution to Manitoba's economy. Given this awareness, I

believe that we have a special role to remind all Manitobans, especially those who are not directly involved in this industry, of our agrifood sector's critical importance to our province's economy and well-being. For example, our agrifood sector accounted for approximately 12.9 percent of Manitoba's gross domestic product in 1996. Over 24,000 farm units operated by families provide the foundation of our province's agriculture and food industry, as well as the backbone of Manitoba's rural economy.

The viability and prosperity of Manitoba's family farms are important to the growth and stability of this important industry to our province's economy. Although our farm families only represent 3 percent of Manitoba's population, they affect the lives and incomes of Manitobans far beyond their small number. Farm families are the foundation for this province's agrifood sector, making major contributions to Manitoba's economy. For example, for every nine jobs created on farms in 1996, five jobs were created in other areas of our province's economy. More than one in nine jobs in our province was the result of agricultural production, with approximately 60,000 persons directly and indirectly being employed by agriculture.

In 1996, agriculture directly or indirectly accounted for 21.8 percent of the total added value for the goods-producing sector in Manitoba. The food and beverage processing industry alone produced about \$2.3 billion worth of goods and services, accounting for almost one-quarter of Manitoba's total manufacturing output. I remind honourable members of the committee, all of this stems from 3 percent population base of the province of those of us directly involved in agriculture. For every dollar of net income produced by a primary agricultural producer, over \$1.70 is generated in Manitoba's overall economy. Agriculture accounted for more than \$1.08 of production in Manitoba's economy in 1996.

Farms in Manitoba are almost entirely owned and controlled by individuals and families. Farm families will continue to be the predominant decision-making units in agriculture and will continue to be a major focus of Manitoba Agriculture's programming and services.



I would like to share a few thoughts on new economic realities facing our industry. With a reduction of international trade distortions and implementation of grain transportation reforms, Manitoba's agrifood industry is shifting towards a level playing field with our competitors from across the world and across Canada. In doing so, our province's agrifood industry has a significant mix of advantages, giving it an edge over our out-of-province competition. Some of the advantages involve a reputation for high-quality agrifood products and relatively low cost of production, our well-educated and technically up-to-date producers, our high standards for food quality and safety, our highly skilled workforce, a competitive tax regime, our large sustainable agricultural land base, a central location in the heart of North America, low-cost feed grains, a strong and modern infrastructure, reasonable land costs, and reasonable and balanced environmental regulations. Our industry producers and processors have been and will continue to take advantage of the new realities of a level playing field. We can and we will successfully compete in an open international and national marketplace free of significant trade distortions.

*Mr. Peter Dyck, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair*

The Agri-Food Research and Development Initiative, ARDI, which is now underway, provides a new tool for our agriculture and industry to successfully compete within new economic realities of today. The overall budget commitments for this program is some 19 millions of dollars. ARDI is designed to initiate, encourage, promote and conduct innovative research and development projects that will contribute to the economic well-being of Manitobans. By focusing on diversification, value-added production, processing and exporting higher-value products from Manitoba, ARDI will enhance the agrifood industry's ability to adapt within the changing global market environment.

Because funding is limited, access to ARDI will be competitive. Priority will be given to those proposals with significant industry involvement and financial support. Projects accepted for ARDI funding assistance must demonstrate a return on investment dollars, facilitate adaptation in the industry, and address identified research needs. Projects must also be committed to the principles of sustainable development.

ARDI has come at a time when innovation is essential to enhancing value-added activity in Manitoba and strengthening our competition in the global marketplace. The introduction of this program also complements recommendations provided by the Working for Value Task Force in 1997, which encouraged the establishment of a research and development fund for these purposes. Our government, in partnership with the federal government, is pleased to bring just such a program to Manitoba's agriculture and food sector.

In facing our new economic realities, we are witnessing some encouraging in-province diversification trends within our crops sector. For example, over the past two years, our province's area seeded to potatoes increased by some 12,000 acres, now totalling some 72,000 acres in the year 1997. This expanded acreage is driven by the increasing supply needs of McCain Foods in Portage la Prairie and the Midwest Food Products company in Carberry, our major processors in the province.

\* (1520)

For Manitoba, expansion of our potato production has positive economic ramifications. The value of potatoes produced in our province has dramatically increased in recent years. In 1991, the value of potato production at the farm gate was some \$51 million. By 1996, just five years later, this number had grown to over a hundred million, \$110 million. This is value at the farm gate. Add to this the processing of these potatoes, and you have an industry that is valued at some \$260 million here in Manitoba in the year 1996. That is no small potatoes, as my very talented scriptwriter tells me.

The potato industry is also an important source of jobs in our economy. About 1,700 people are currently involved in the production of potatoes in Manitoba, and more than 1,200 people are employed in processing in the aspect of potato production. Not only is the area in Manitoba seeded to potatoes increasing, but it is anticipated that in the next few years, producers will greatly increase the irrigation of Manitoba's potato acreage. Manitoba's total land use for potato production will approach some 80,000 acres upon completion of our potato industry's expansion. Our

province has an enormous capacity for this expansion or any other additional expansion. Soil surveys indicate that there are more than 2.5 million acres rated as good to excellent for irrigated potato production here in Manitoba.

During the next few years, we will be moving towards producing the largest volumes of potatoes in Canada. Today, we are the second, only to Prince Edward Island, in the area of potato production. Aided by our increasing global economy, our province's agrifood industry has successfully penetrated new and expanding international markets. We in Manitoba Agriculture are working with our strategic partners to build on and expand this trend. Recently, as a follow-up to the Team Canada trade mission to Latin America, our department just completed its own trade mission to the Mexican states of Nayarit, Chihuahua, Nuevo Leon, and Jalisco.

I had the opportunity of being a member of our department's team on this follow-up visit. Our Manitoba Agriculture mission was, in great part, a response to an earlier trade visit in October to Manitoba by Mexican cattle buyers, resulting in an initial cattle shipment to Mexico. Also, our short stay in Mexico further supported technology transfer and trade links being developed under agreements with both the Mexican states of Nayarit and Chihuahua.

During our recent visit, it was evident that there are considerable opportunities to market our province's agricultural commodities in Mexico. I visited a dairy operation in the Tepic area with a view to establishing a 2,000-head milk herd, and they want our dairy stock.

There is no reason why our province cannot take advantage of this opportunity by supplying this venture with some of our high-quality dairy cattle. With drought conditions easing and the need to rebuild cattle herds in northern Mexico, there is also a great opportunity to supply this area with Manitoba beef cattle. In the fall of this year, I will be leading a trade mission to the Expointer agricultural fair in Brazil. This trade event is one of the largest cattle shows in the world. Expointer '98 affords an excellent opportunity to showcase Manitoba beef and dairy breed stock to that area's important growing market.

The livestock industry represents a major opportunity for greater diversification and value-added production in Manitoba. In recent years the livestock industry has witnessed an enormous expansion with a sizable increase in livestock numbers. There has been, of course, a dramatic growth within our Manitoba hog sector. Between 1994 and 1997, our production increased from 2.6 million to almost 3.5 million, up 33 percent in just three years. Manitoba hog production is likely to reach between 3.7 million and 3.8 million head in the year of 1998 and between 3.9 million and 4 million head in the following year, in '99.

Manitoba is already Canada's third largest hog producing province with about 19 percent of the national production. Our potential to further increase hog production remains enormous. We expect hog production numbers will continue to rise significantly to meet the demand for fresh chilled pork for export to the Asian market, as well as pork products for elsewhere. In 1997 Manitoba exported pork and pork products to 17 countries around the world.

A recent study conducted by the George Morris Centre that compared five regions of Canada with four in the United States, with Argentina, Chile, Holland and Denmark, found that western Canada, here in Manitoba, and the eastern prairies in particular, possessed the lowest overall production costs for hogs. The study asserts that the major factor for this advantage was the relatively low cost of feed grains. I say relatively because it is our price in relation to that of our trading partners that is important and not the absolute level of feed grains prices. Accordingly, we are very optimistic that our province's hog numbers will continue to greatly increase in the years ahead. I want to reiterate that point, that increase need not occur at the expense of grain producers.

There is room in the relative pricing of competitors around the world and in the country for our grain producers to get adequate returns for their feed grains and still enjoy this market advantage in terms of cost of production. Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation's Diversification Loan Guarantee Program has played an important role in the expansion of the hog industry so far. To date over \$12 million in hog financing has been guaranteed by this program, which, in addition, has

guaranteed about \$7 million in lending to other sectors, such as potatoes, dairy, bison and aquaculture.

We are enthusiastic about recent enhancement to this already successful program that will pave the way for diversification and value-added projects which may require out-of-province investing and the option of being located beyond the farm gate. Both accessibility and flexibility have been greatly enhanced. To facilitate and further encourage the phenomenal growth of our pork sector, the department has been pursuing the Manitoba Pork Advantage in partnership with the hog industry. The undertaking was launched in 1996 to support the growth in production, processing and the export market development of our provincial pork industry. The focus of the Manitoba Pork Advantage is to position the province to meet the expanding demand for pork in the international marketplace and into the 21st Century.

By demonstrating the superior quality of pork available from Manitoba to domestic and international clients, this initiative has the potential to contribute greatly to the Manitoba agrifood economy. The Manitoba Pork Advantage is a new, vital component of our department's partnership with the hog industry.

*Mr. Chairperson in the Chair*

The Manitoba Pork Advantage highlights Manitoba's strengths; its large land base capable of supporting an expanded pork industry, skilled producers, a flexible marketing system that is responsive to market signals, one of the lowest feed costs in North America, a quality product that meets market demand and a collaborative and close-working relationship between the pork industry and government. The Manitoba Pork Advantage has resulted in a number of marketing initiatives. The department was successful in having the Manitoba Pork Advantage featured at the World Pork Expo in Indianapolis in June of 1997. The department has also undertaken a number of trade missions to Europe and Asia. Very recently, department staff returned from a trade mission to Japan, Korea and Taiwan. Plans are currently being made to visit additional countries.

We are pleased to witness the further success of our hog industry in recent months. As you are no doubt

very aware, Maple Leaf meats recently announced its plans to build a new hog processing facility in Brandon. This new state-of-the-art facility will cost some \$112 million to construct and will eventually have the capacity to process up to 90,000 hogs a week. The new Brandon plant will require about 1,150 employees for its first shift and up to 2,200 employees when the second shift is added. The second shift is dependent on a sufficient supply of hogs becoming available. Construction of the new plant is expected to begin—I can indicate has already begun—in early 1998 and to be operational by the late summer of 1999.

\* (1530)

The reason cited for choosing Brandon as the location for the new plant focused on the rapidly expanding production of hogs in Manitoba, our skilled workforce and our relatively low costs of feed grains. It is anticipated that the Brandon plant will add an additional \$500 million to the economic spinoffs to the economy of Manitoba.

I also want to mention that in 1997, Schneider's opened its new pork cutting facility in Winnipeg. The cost for the new plant was approximately \$40 million. Schneider's set the goal of processing two million hogs a year and is making steady progress in that direction, currently cutting about 5,000 hogs per day. Schneider's has plans to add a kill floor when enough hogs become available within our province. I want honourable members of the committee to understand that the issue now is for production to catch up with the processing capacity. That was not the case just a very short while ago and indeed still is not the case, but when this capacity is in place, Brandon facility operating, that will be the demand on our production.

Overall, our pork industry generates major economic activity in Manitoba. Presently, 10,000 to 12,000 people are employed in the industry and over 500 million of farm sales are generated. The economic spinoff to the provincial economy is substantial, approaching the \$1-billion mark. Remember, I remind honourable members, this is coming from a relatively small handful of primary producers, 1,500, 1,600 pork producers in the province, developing a billion-dollar economic benefit to the provincial economy.

Benefits to local Manitoba communities are significant. For example, the economic activity generated within a community by a 600-sow farrow-to-finish hog operation exceeds \$2 million in construction and \$1 million annually in goods and services. For every community, for every municipality that has one of these facilities, that is the kind of economic activity it generates annually in that municipality.

Increasing our hog numbers to 4 million head will result in additional employment opportunities for 5,000 to 6,000 people in Manitoba. Rural employment opportunities generated from our expanding hog industry will keep young people and their families in local communities. By doing so, the local community will become more vibrant. Young families with children support the local schools, the local businesses, which further augment the development of a strong local economy. As well as economic spinoffs for the entire economy, expansion of the hog industry also impacts for our grain farmers.

The production of 5 million market hogs will require one million tonnes of barley, or at 60 bushels an acre the barley produced from over 765,000 acres. This at a time when we are facing unacceptable freight rates as a result of the loss of the Crow, the need, the interest and the expansion of the hog industry is done as much for the grain farmers' point of view as it is for the hog industry's point of view.

Our cattle industry has also witnessed a substantial growth as of July 1, 1997. A new record was set for beef cow numbers in excess of half a million, 560,000 beef cow numbers currently make up the beef herd in Manitoba, a significant increase of 28 percent when compared to the figures of just four or five years ago in 1992. Similar to the Manitoba Pork Advantage our department is working with the cattle industry to create the Manitoba Beef Advantage. We are working closely with cattle stakeholders to generate and communicate information that will highlight the strengths and opportunities of Manitoba's beef industry. This initiative is designed to communicate Manitoba's advantages in adding value in such areas as retaining ownership through in-province backgrounding and/or finishing cattle when economically viable to do so.

This industry possesses many advantages which include low costs of production and a range of

transportation options for moving products. Our cattle industry is currently in a position to encourage off-farm investment. For example, there is evidence of increased activity in co-operative feeding arrangements where ownership of the livestock may reside off the farm. In such situations investors, processors and customers pay farmers on a contractual basis to rear animals to market weight. This option has the potential to encourage further investment into local processing and developing new products for domestic and export markets, generating additional economic activity in the province. With these advantages the beef industry in Manitoba is well positioned to move forward into the future

Manitoba Agriculture is in the early stages in the development of Manitoba's Forage Advantage. This initiative, similar to the Manitoba Pork and the Beef Advantage, would communicate the strengths and the opportunities of our forage sector. The Manitoba Forage Advantage will focus on the competitive advantage of producing and marketing forages. The initiative will highlight opportunities to utilize the abundant land area in Manitoba well suited for forage production. Allow me just to digress from my notes for a moment. This is an exciting aspect of an agricultural initiative in the province. We are sending quality forages to distant lands in the lucrative markets, dairy markets in the United States, and it is becoming a very attractive additional source of income for more and more of our producers.

In addition to promoting the traditional livestock industries, our department has also been supporting the growth of nontraditional livestock sectors. For example, there has and continues to be a great expansion in Manitoba's bison ranching industry. Although at present the Manitoba herd represents only about 3 percent of the North American commercial herd, this percentage will likely increase as the herd has been expanding at a rate of approximately 25 percent per year. Currently some 90 producers belong to the Manitoba Bison Association. Most herds consist of between 25 and 30 head. However, herds range from 5 to as many as 1,300, with the average herd being about 75 animals.

In response to the need of bison producers for financial assistance, Manitoba Agricultural Credit

Corporation recently developed a bison Stocker Loan Program, initiated in January of 1998, the loan program designed to improve access to financing for feeder bison operators. The bison stocker loan has received encouraging comments from producers and other industry and partner players. More recently, Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation's direct loans for female bison breeding stock has been enhanced. Maximum loans for bred cows and heifers have been increased to \$4,800 per animal and two new loan categories for younger stock have been introduced.

We are witnessing the take-off of our new elk farming industry, contributing further to the diversification of our province's agrifood sector. There are now 72 licensed elk farmers with over 800 elk on their farms. When you consider this industry just started off in the year '97, that is a remarkable accomplishment, and I congratulate and commend all them. Two hundred and forty-seven of these elk were dispersed by my department in December of last year as seed stock for the new entrance to the elk farming industry. Manitoba Agriculture and Manitoba Natural Resources are working closely together to allow for the production of elk in a controlled, humane, healthy and licensed manner. Both our departments will continue to do so in close co-operation and consultation with this new growing industry.

At this time, I would like to briefly comment on the new Manitoba Livestock Manure Management Initiative. The priority of this new undertaking is to find technical and commercial solutions to livestock environmental concerns and, where appropriate, to find research and development and to demonstrate projects where results appear promising.

Well, Mr. Chairman, my speechwriter got a little ahead of me. I put it in a simpler form. What I mean by this jargon is that I want to be able to drive on a hot summer evening with my good wife, Eleanor, down a country road past one of these big megahog barns, and I want my wife Eleanor to lean over and ask me, "Honey, what do you suppose is going on in there? Is that a raspberry jam plant?" Well, now, maybe that is asking for too much to convert manure and hog manure to that of raspberry jam, but, if we can put people on the moon and we can circle the globe in minutes, then we can sure as heck take the odour out of hog manure.

That is what the hog manure management initiative is all about, and I have challenged the industry to do just that.

More specifically, this initiative will seek alternative ways of managing odour and manure and mitigating environmental impact. Further, this initiative will keep the public informed of efforts being made to manage this issue responsibly. The Manitoba government has committed \$100,000 from the Sustainable Development Innovations Fund as seed money for this endeavour. In addition, and I am very pleased to note, our hog producers through the organization of Manitoba Pork has committed some \$450,000 over a three-year period for this undertaking. It is anticipated that additional funding will be raised in 1998 under this initiative from the private sector.

\* (1540)

These are some personal comments about where the minister did not do so well, so I will skip over them. In closing, we in Manitoba Agriculture look forward to continuing and building on our close working relationship with our agrifood strategic partners. By working closely together, we can contribute towards creating a more vibrant and prosperous agrifood industry for the benefit of not only just the agrifood industry but for the benefit of all Manitobans. I look forward to discussing our Estimates with the members of this committee. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Chairperson:** We thank the Minister of Agriculture for his opening comments. Does the critic for the official opposition, the honourable member for Swan River, have an opening statement?

**Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River):** Mr. Chairman, yes, I do have a brief opening statement, and rather than repeat all the numbers that the minister has put on the record about the different sectors of the agriculture industry, I want to say that I, too, believe that the agriculture industry is the backbone of the rural economy, and that although there is a very small percentage of people involved in the industry, it is important and sometimes does not get nearly the recognition that it should get for the role that it plays in the economy of this province.

I have to say that although the minister talked about the incomes of farm families, I find that his numbers, although I do not doubt his accuracy, I find that in what I have looked at, although the actual income of farmers has decreased, there may be more money there but higher input costs and other expenses, the net income for Manitoba farmers has decreased.

Although if you take into inflation and all of those other things, then farmers are facing real challenges, along with the fact that—and the minister is right that in 1997 there was extra money coming into farm hands, because there was an increase in direct payments. Those direct payments are now over, and I think that with low grain prices, with subsidy wars that are upon the horizon that we are hearing about, with the challenges that we are facing because of the weather and an end to direct payments that were coming to farmers, I think that many farmers are going to be facing real challenges in the next year.

Some farmers are addressing those well and are diversifying into many areas. We see an increase in hog production, increase in livestock production, and a diversity in the crops that farmers are growing. Even with that, I think that farmers will face real challenges and we will see—unfortunately, I believe that some farmers will be hitting a real crunch this year, and I hope that they will be able to make it through. In some cases, I see people prepared to throw up their hands and say, well, I cannot make a living at this, I am going to sell my farm out to some larger operator.

That does happen, unfortunately. I think we have to be really concerned about that, because every time we lose a family out of the rural community, there is a negative impact on that community if people decide to move out. Now, there should be some opportunities for employment with the diversification that is coming, but those diversifications are not going to be without challenges.

The minister talked about the increased hog production, and I think that the increased hog production is going to be good for Manitoba. It is a way for farmers to continue to make a living, for grain farmers to sell their grain. I hope that it will mean that grain farmers will get a fair return, that it will not mean that farmers, instead of paying freight to ship the grain

to market, will be getting that same price minus the freight, that it will mean that prices of commodities will rise.

The increase in hog production is not going to be without its challenges. I encourage the minister to recognize those challenges that are there. One of the areas that I feel that there has been some perhaps lack of information—as the hog industry grows, the minister is well aware that it has not been without controversy. I believe that the departments, whether it be the Department of Agriculture, Department of Environment, all have to work together, Department of Natural Resources, to ensure that the information, the questions that people have are adequately asked, that there is adequate planning. This could be a very big challenge for our province.

We have a lot of land, there is a lot of room to grow, but we have to ensure that it happens in a sustainable way, and I think there are real opportunities for the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Environment, the Department of Natural Resources to work together to ensure that this growth happens in a sustainable way. We are going to need a tremendous amount of hogs.

The building of the plant, which is coming in Brandon with Maple Leaf, hopefully will mean a better return for producers. Hog producers at the present time, many of our hogs are leaving this province, going to the United States because there is a better price there. Hopefully, that price will be matched, and Maple Leaf and the other packing companies are going to have to do that, because once they build those plants they are going to want to fill them. So, hopefully, it will mean a better return, and a better return means a better living for people in rural Manitoba.

The industry does not come without challenges, as I have said, and the minister mentioned the one about the odour. I think that is a challenge, and I am pleased that the investment has been made into the research. I think that not only dealing with odour, odour is only one of the issues, and we have to deal with how we are going to manage the manure and turn it into a valuable product as well. It is a resource, a newer renewal resource that can be used. I have read about some projects that are going on in other areas where the

wastes, manure are not being spread on fields for fertilizer but are being processed and packaged and sold and providing quite a generous income as well.

I think that the hog industry will grow, but we will have to look at diversifying into other livestock as well. Not every farmer is going to be a hog producer, but farmers have to have other opportunities. So the issue of diversifying into cattle is a good one. Again, challenges, and one of the challenges that the cattle producers are facing is in areas where there is a not enough marginal land; there have been attempts to acquire Crown lands to be used for pasture land, Crown lands to be used for harvesting of natural hay. Bands have been wanting to get some lands that they can expand into, whether it be into the bison or into the cattle industry, and one area when we get further down into the Estimates that I would want to have some discussion with the minister is the whole issue of distribution and the availability of agricultural Crown lands. Certainly we have to look at ways to diversify.

I think one of the areas that I do not believe the minister touched on, and that is the whole issue of crop insurance and safety nets that will have to be renegotiated, the federal government's commitment to agriculture.

The other areas that I would like to spend some time discussing are the legislation that the minister has brought forward, two pieces of legislation that I have some concerns about, one being the farm machineries act. The reasoning behind the changes that are being proposed there and also the changes to the crop insurance bill are ones that we, looking at the bill, do not agree with what the government is doing, and we look forward to having some discussion on these bills to ensure that we get the minister's views on it and put our thoughts on the record as to the reason for these changes.

\* (1550)

As well, I think that there is much more that we can be doing in the food processing industry. The minister talked about the potato industry growing, and that is only one. We grow a large variety of vegetables in this province, and there are opportunities, I believe, for growth in that area. I think there is room where the

government could be showing more support to the food processing industry to help them and help that industry grow in this province.

With those few comments, I want to say that I believe very strongly in the agriculture industry. I believe that there is a strong role for government to play in this. Over the years, we have seen a decrease in support for agriculture on the provincial level. That has not happened this year, but we have seen agriculture basically abandoned by the federal government. When we hear the federal budget or throne speech and just basically, I think, once hear the word "agriculture," we recognize that the federal government does not feel that this is an important part of the economy. I think sometimes the federal government forgets that western Canada and the agriculture industry, the growth of the products in western Canada, played a very important role in putting Canada on the map as a producer of high-quality food, high-quality grains, and that is still important, but the federal government has forgotten about it. It is an industry in which there are many opportunities but also many challenges.

With those few comments, I am prepared to begin the Estimates.

**Mr. Chairperson:** We thank the honourable member for Swan River for her opening statements. I would remind members of the committee that debate on the Minister's Salary, item 1.(a), is deferred until all other items in the Estimates of this department are passed. At this time, we invite the minister's staff to take their place in the Chamber. Does the honourable minister wish to introduce his staff present at this time?

**Mr. Enns:** I certainly would, Mr. Chairperson, present to the committee members the Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Don Zasada, affectionately known in the department and in Agriculture as Dr. Z, Mr. Craig Lee, the deputy minister in Policy and Economics division, and Mr. Les Baseraba, assistant deputy minister, responsible for the Regional Services of the department throughout Manitoba.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. The item before the committee is item 3.1. Administration and Finance (b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, one of the most important issues facing the farm community at this time is the future of farm safety nets. My understanding is that the memorandum of understanding that funds the farm safety nets from the federal government is coming to an end and a new agreement has to be negotiated. We talked about that briefly yesterday in the House.

I wonder if the minister can indicate to this House what is happening with that. Does the minister have a committee that is putting in place a proposal to take to the next round of discussions? Can he indicate who is on that committee, and at what stage his committee is at with respect to developing a proposal on safety nets?

**Mr. Enns:** We have two committees working to assist the department to put forward our positions as we negotiate with the other provinces and with Ottawa, of course, the next generation of safety net programs. We have, first of all, a provincial committee that is a pretty broad spectrum of people who have helped us and advised me personally in the direction of formulation of safety nets as we see them here in Manitoba. I can give you a number of names.

They include people like the former president of KAP, Mr. Les Jacobson, Barry Routledge, Russ Harder, Marlin Beever; the idea of the organizations that they represent, Keystone, KAP; National Farmers' Union; Manitoba Cattle Producers Association; Manitoba Pork; from Manitoba Pool Elevators, Mr. Ken Edie; Keystone Vegetable Producers Association, Mr. Gary Sloik; Ian Wishart from the Forage Council; Brian Fridfinnson from Manitoba Forage Seed Association; Ron Janzen from the Manitoba Corn Growers Association; Kevin Cutting, Manitoba Canola Growers Association; Ken Yuil, Manitoba Sugar Beet Producers Association—we should pause for a moment of silence there, I do not know whether the Sugar Beet Producers Association will be with us much longer.

Wally Klassen from the Manitoba Chicken Producer Board; Harold Froese and Ross Ramage from Manitoba Egg Producers; Bill Swan, Manitoba Milk Producers; Robert Friesen, Manitoba Turkey Producers; Art Bergman, Manitoba Beekeepers' Association; Alan Chambers who sits on the national NISA committee; Charlie Mayer, current chairman of the Manitoba Crop Insurance Corporation; Ken Tjaden, Manitoba Pulse

Growers Association; Graham Ranie and Randy Eros, Manitoba Sheep Association; Dave Loewen, Manitoba Broiler Egg-hatching Commission; Todd Giffen and Doug Connery, Vegetable Growers Association of Manitoba.

So, Mr. Chairman, this committee continues to provide a pretty inclusive sounding board for what the producers want, not just what the government may deem is important, but what producers see as significant and important in the terms and conditions that make up our safety net programs. In addition to that, we participate in the federal committee. There is a federal committee initially that Minister Goodale and now Minister Lyle Vanclief have in place, and our Manitoba representatives on that federal committee is a Mr. Dennis Tully, who represents Manitoba, from Agriculture Canada.

\* (1600)

Quickly, our associate deputy minister here is with us this afternoon representing the department, Manitoba Agriculture, and Mr. Lorne Martin and Mike Lesiuk, also from the departments that put forward our position as strong as we can on the the federal committee that is meeting concurrently with the provincial committee as we move towards resolving what the safety net programs will look like in the future. These committees have a mandate to provide some final recommendations to the ministers' conference, which this year is being held at Niagara-on-the-Lake in Ontario in the first week of July. So it is not very long from now that we will be dealing with this at the national ministerial level.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, can the minister indicate what the recommendations are for his committee? As I understand it, through this transition period, the federal government has been putting in additional money, I believe \$10 million a year, to help with safety net programs. I would like to ask the minister whether he has any assurances that that money is still there, whether the committee is making recommendations that there be additional funds put into the program, and whether the committee has made any recommendations for additional programs other than NISA and crop insurance and the programs that exist at the present time. Does the minister see any need for additional programs? For example, we used to have



GRIP. That helped farmers out, but farmers also are facing the risk of disaster many times. Does the minister see or is he prepared to take forward proposals for any additional programs, and what would he foresee as being in that envelope of money that Manitoba will receive to carry on with safety net programs?

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Chair, what our Manitoba committee, and that is that large group of people that I indicated just a little while ago, have strongly recommended to our negotiators, as we move into the final process of negotiating with the federal authorities, that we certainly maintain the basic and Enhanced Crop Insurance Program as we now know it. As I have indicated on different occasions in the Chamber, I am very pleased that we have in effect in excess of 80 percent of the eligible agricultural seeded acreage covered under some form of the crop insurance program. When I say that I recognize that that includes of course a significant portion of producers who are taking advantage of the relatively premium-free, if you like, 50 percent coverage that was made available when we made the improvements to the basic crop insurance program.

Committee members, my adviser is saying, that is bottom line; you have to keep that in place. They are saying to me that the NISA program, which, by the way, Mr. Chairman, as it is gaining maturity is becoming more appreciated by producers throughout the province. They are saying, therefore, keep the NISA program very much in place, hopefully with some improvements. I am continuing to get some requests from some of the special areas of agriculture, the horticultural group, for instance, that are difficult to provide for under basic crop insurance programs, very often because of the fewness, the numbers of producers, that you cannot mount an actuarially sound program. I am responsible for that. I would like to find some expansion, if you like, to the NISA program to make it more inclusive.

There are some requests for the kind of self-directed aspects of the NISA program to be added onto as a feature of our program. The third recommendation that the producers have, for which I do not have an answer today, is to impress upon the federal government and ourselves to examine some form of a disaster assistance program, which is not there at the present and

obviously would require a significant dedication of additional resources on both our parts, federal and provincial, to make it happen.

Those are the kinds of recommendations that the producer groups that I alluded to earlier have advised the ministry into taking into consideration in their further discussions with the federal government as we finalize the future of the safety net programs.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, the minister mentioned NISA. One of the criticisms of NISA is that many times it is the young farmers, the ones who are just getting started, who need the assistance of the federal government, who need that matching money from the federal government but do not have the ability to put the funds in because they are too busy paying the bank, paying the mortgage, those kinds of things. Although young farmers are told, oh, just go to the bank and borrow the money to make their NISA payments, as the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey) says, it is not that easy. Young farmers are not able to get the money to make the payment into NISA and as a result cannot access that federal money. Does the minister recognize this as a problem, and is it one of the issues that he would look to resolve and find a solution, so we can help our young farmers who are in, many times, desperate need of money?

**Mr. Enns:** Well, you know, as you can imagine I am under constant pressure from young farmers, like the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Downey), on this very issue. It is a problem, and we acknowledge that the entry of NISA, particularly for the young farmers, the start-up farmer, is sometimes difficult for them in those initial years to set aside the dollars to make the contribution. I suppose, Mr. Chairman, that is no different than anybody else. The same can be argued for anybody who is a young person who is starting off life, maybe a young married couple who are starting off life. The smart ones, they establish a savings pattern, they start putting some dollars away or an investment pattern early on, even at the time that they are facing, you know, probably high mortgage payments on their homes or on their vehicles or raising of a young family, and yet if they proceed to continue on that course, find themselves with the kind of security that the rest of us then envy when we find ourselves not having done that in our own personal lives.

The NISA program, as I said a little while ago, becomes more attractive as it matures, as the farm, you know, has established itself to the point where regular and consistent contributions can be made to it, interest can be earned at a reasonably attractive rate in terms of today's interest rate structure. Those producers, who have been in the program, established farmers, speak very highly of the program.

I do not know how—we have looked at it, we recognize what the honourable member says—whether or not we can make it somehow easier for the new entry or the young entry to start up in the program. The answer to that so far has eluded us. I will accept some advice that I will take on to Ottawa to see whether we can include that in the program.

\* (1610)

**Ms. Wowchuk:** I believe it is a really important issue. Still continuing with NISA, I wonder whether the minister or his committee has given any consideration to capping the amount of money that might be able to go to an individual farmer, because, as I understand the way the money from NISA is distributed, the majority of the money goes to a few of the larger operators versus the amount of money that goes to the smaller operators.

I wonder whether the minister or his staff has given any consideration to capping an amount of money and then having the better ability to distribute the money, and perhaps by doing this, there might be the ability to have the dollars that we need to help the beginning farmers get into the program.

**Mr. Enns:** I suppose I am having a little bit of difficulty in the logic of capping, putting a cap on the larger contributors and withdrawers, if you like. I do not particularly see how that would necessarily help those whose contributions and whose subsequent withdrawal opportunities are less, how they impact on each other. It is not a pooled fund. These are individual accounts. I will provide some information that I am just getting from staff, at this particular time, as to how it looks in Manitoba.

In Manitoba, for instance, the number of—[interjection]—I am advised, there is in fact a cap of

\$250,000. But just some basic information, and it is rather interesting, that shows that the size of farm, and I have four categories here, zero to \$50,000 in sales, \$50,000 to \$100,000, \$100,000 to \$200,000, \$200,000 to \$500,000 and then greater. All in all, we have some 18,000 individual farm families enrolled in the NISA program which, again, is pretty high when you consider that we estimate our overall farm family population of some 24,000-25,000.

In the zero to \$50,000, for instance, we have 8,739 participants with average sales of \$28,000, and the average account balance of some \$5,000 or 18 percent of the sales, the eligible sales. Surprisingly, that is very much the same if you go to the higher category of the farm with \$200,000 to half a million dollars with the sales, where we have some 1,500, 1,600, 1,694, about 1,700 farm families enrolled with average sales of in excess of \$300,000, \$327,000. Their average account balance is at \$48,000 or 15 percent of their total sales.

So relatively speaking, the lower-income families with only \$28,000 in sales, only \$5,000 in the account, that figure is 18 percent of their eligible sales, whereas the larger farmer, the half-a-million-dollar farmer with sales in excess of \$300,000, they have in their accounts 15 percent of their sales value. That is not a bad balance, Mr. Chairman, when you look at it in that light, and these are, as I indicated earlier, of course, individual accounts. There is not an advantage to be gained by the lower income farmer by placing any further restrictions or capping of the higher income earning farmers. All in all, all sizes combined, I just again, for information, say that we have some 18,764 subscribers to the NISA program. Their average sales of these 18,000 farms are just in excess of a hundred thousand dollars, \$117,000. The average amount sitting in the accounts is some \$17,000 or 14 percent of the eligible sales.

I can only indicate to the honourable member and other members of the committee that the program is, I would say, gaining in acceptance throughout Manitoba, particularly for those who have matured into the program.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** I wonder if the minister at some point may be able to provide that list of information that we can have for information as to the different levels of

contributions by various members. If it is possible, I would like to have a copy of that.

I would like to ask the minister whether NISA is a national program that is treated the same in each province, or is each province different and are there any provinces that have caps? The reason I mention caps, the minister said it will not make any difference for the young farmers, but, if I understand it properly, all of the program—we get this envelope of money and out of that envelope of money we have to provide whatever safety net programs we can. What I was suggesting is that, if there is a limited amount of money that is available, then is there a way that we can cap the amount of money that goes to one individual to then be used for other programs? In particular, as I had indicated earlier, I am concerned with the young farmers, the beginning farmers, who have expressed an interest in NISA, but, as it stands right now, they do not believe it is a good program because they cannot participate. So I am looking at ways that we might be able to help these people.

\* (1620)

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Chair, to answer the honourable member's question, yes, NISA is a national program, although it has different manifestations in some provinces. Alberta, for instance, has chosen not to participate provincially in the NISA program. In that province you have the federal government picking up the provincial share, but it is taken out of those allocated safety net dollars that are in their envelope for safety net purposes. Again, on the question of capping, there is, as I indicated earlier, an overall cap of \$250,000 sales. We could do some rejigging of those figures to, in fact, enhance the start-up, the young farmer's contribution, and have his account grow faster. That is, I suppose, always a fair argument to make. It is, I must indicate, not a recommendation that I am to date getting from my producers' committee, but that is not to say it will not arrive at some point or other. Generally speaking, we try to watch very carefully, and that is the challenge to my officials, of course, and particularly to my associate deputy minister, Mr. Craig Lee here, that whatever the configuration of support programs are in a given province that we do not lose out in any way our fair share, our percentage of the national envelope, the national contribution. That is a

big concern to us. We have to watch that very carefully.

The other day the honourable member asked me a question here in the Chamber with respect to crop insurance, whether or not we would consider changing to the higher value component of crops in crop insurance, which by the way is what Ontario is pressing for, quite frankly. I indicated to her that would not be in our interest, because it would tend to shift greater dollars of the overall available dollars to provinces like Ontario and British Columbia, which have higher-value horticultural bearing food crops and not recognize the higher risk crop of our prairie agriculture that we have here in Manitoba.

So that is our constant challenge that is before the officials when we negotiate these deals. Certainly, we will be very much kept in the forefront as we go into negotiations during the remainder of the year as we try to bring about, hopefully, another five-year renewal of safety net support programs for agriculture.

On the issue of preparing, I will ask my staff to make note. It has certainly been our practice. We will, without any problem, furnish additional information to the honourable member as she has requested. It has been our practice. We will do that in this case for the kind of figures that I just read into the record with respect to the NISA account holders. All she needs to do is to ask specifically, identify the kind of information that she wants, and, in the course of a few days, this information will be made available to her.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, the minister indicated that we want Manitobans not to lose out. I would like to ask the minister then, is Manitoba being treated fairly now? Are we getting a fair percentage in comparison to other provinces? How is he going to ensure that we do get a fair share of the dollars that we need to address the risks that Manitoba's farmers face? Because Manitoba farmers face much different risks than farmers in Ontario, farmers in B.C. We just see a good example of that this week when we have the frost; in parts of the province, there is a possibility of drought. Our climate is just different. So, two questions: are we getting a fair share now in comparison to other provinces, and how is the minister going to ensure that

we continue to get our fair share and ensure that Manitobans have the protection they need?

**Mr. Enns:** The honourable member has heard me from time to time indicate my satisfaction and, indeed, my pleasure that we have what I term to be very acceptable participation rate by our producers in, for instance, our basic programs of crop insurance and NISA. That possibly is one of the best guarantors of us getting our fair share in the sense that that is driven, our crop participation is high. The federal sharing stays at roughly 60-40—60 federal, 40 provincial—in these programs. I would have to say that we are getting all of our fair share. Some of the other provinces where the participation rate in such programs like basic crop insurance, the rate is considerably lower. They are devising other schemes to get their fair share of the federal safety net envelope.

That is what, for instance, to some extent I think was responsible for Alberta, not the only reason, I cannot speak, I would not want to speak of what motivates the Province of Alberta's Ministry of Agriculture developing their style of safety net programs, but they, for instance, have chosen quite a different program. They call it an all-risk program that clicks in when the overall, all-inclusive income of a farm falls below 70 percent of their five-year average earnings. Then a disaster type support program clicks in.

Now, part of the reason, I submit, why they have chosen that is because they have never been quite as successful as we have been in getting the basic crop insurance becoming as significant to their overall support programs for their producers, but that is just conjecture on my part.

But inasmuch as programs like NISA and basic crop insurance are client or customer driven, if you like, if only 60 percent of my producers are involved in crop insurance, that is a draw-down on the figure of X number of dollars. If it is 70 or 80 percent it is obviously higher. It is in our interest to see that the participation rate is high. I might say that if it is not higher that does not mean that the dollars would be lost to the province of Manitoba. We would look then at some other companion way, and that is why they are called companion, of spending those dollars.

That is why, Mr. Chairman, I might just simply add, even though the honourable member and some members within the agricultural community have had some critical comment about when we were looking at the end of the day, there could be some dollars left on the table, federal dollars left on the table. Rather than see that happen I wanted to, I devised the program for agricultural research and development, the ARDI program, to use those dollars so that I can answer that question fully, the question that the member just put to me: are we using, are we getting our full allocated share of federal dollars and of course matching them with provincial dollars, which we have to do to access those dollars? So we have done that in the current year, and these Estimates reflect that.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** The minister has confused me a little bit. I just want to ask him if he could just explain this in a very short way. My understanding is that we get an envelope of money and that envelope of money has to be spent in the province on either safety nets or companion programs, but the minister seems to be indicating that if we have higher participation, we get more money? Or is it always in the envelope? Then my question, as far as percentage-wise, whether we are getting our fair share, I was asking whether we, in comparison to other provinces, get a percentage, but I do not understand the minister on the envelope, whether we can go over the amount if we have higher participation.

\* (1630)

**Mr. Enns:** I want to indicate to the honourable member for Swan River, it is entirely honourable and appropriate for me to do my best to confuse her because that is the way the adversarial business of politics get played. It is not all that honourable and appropriate when my staff, then, confuse me in trying to find the answer.

What I am suggesting is that this is a bit of a complicated thing. She is partly right and I am partly right when we say because of our higher participation through our agricultural extension work, our Crop Insurance Corporation work. We have done an adequate job in bringing out the education to our producers, and that results in higher participation. We, in effect, get a higher share of the dollars. Out of that

envelope, 180, I am told, for instance, in straight basic crop insurance, out of that \$650 million, that is, the \$600 million that is the federal envelope, \$180 million is dedicated to crop insurance. It is worked out on a three-year average—right about here is where it starts getting confusing.

The honourable member can see that if we have a higher participation rate, we draw from that \$180 million first. Any residual dollars left over get paid out on the basis of cash receipts, you know, on sales. That is not our type of agriculture that much, that favours more the Ontario and British Columbia forms of agriculture, so that we do better by maximizing our access to these basic programs like crop insurance.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** I think we will leave that one for a little while and come back to it later.

I want to ask the minister on another subject. We talked about the increased hog production, livestock production, in this province, and with increased production, we are going to see more people working within the industry. We know that our records as far as farm safety are not good. We have a lot of accidents in the farming industry. I want to know: where does farm labour fit under, is it under labour standards? Who monitors what is happening within the agriculture industry as far as employment, and who has the responsibility to ensure that the workplace on the farm is safe?

*Mr. Peter Dyck, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair*

**Mr. Enns:** We, in the Department of Agriculture, of course, are very cognizant of the fact that, as the honourable member says, farming, regrettably, still maintains an unenviable record of being a hazardous workplace. We co-operate with different agencies to promote farm safety. We have designated a specific employee working out of our Portage office, Cathy Vanstone, who has specific responsibilities in the area of farm safety. We co-operate with private organizations in trying to promote the importance of farm safety wherever we can.

In addition to that, there is, of course, no question that any of the associated agriculture business operations, plants for processing, something like that,

they come more directly under the regulations of the Workplace Safety and Health regulators in the Department of Labour, of which I am not fully familiar with.

There is still that gap. Certainly, this would be true too of some of the different styles and types of livestock operation. Larger barn units that you are seeing developing in the province, where people are hired, there will be eight, nine, 10 people working in the barn. They would more formally come under the normal Labour regulations of the province with respect to Workers Compensation, with respect to unemployment insurance and Workplace Safety and Health regulations. It does not, my understanding is, unless it is done voluntarily, cover the individual family farm unit. My understanding is that my own private family farm, I have to take the initiative. I am not required by law to provide Workers Compensation benefits, for instance, to my son or somebody that is working on my farm. I believe I have the option of voluntarily subscribing to it if I pay the appropriate premiums. So there is that gap that remains, and quite frankly, the take-up on the private individual family farms of what is available to them is not very high, is rather low.

Just a little further on that, the representation of Manitoba Agriculture's farm safety team on provincial, national and international committees is provided by farm safety team leader. This included preparation for the 1998 National Institute of Farm Safety conference is to be held in Winnipeg in June of 1998. This June, we are having a national farm safety conference here in Winnipeg. I invite the honourable member to come and participate in that conference.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairperson, I invite the minister to provide us with details of that conference because I think it is very timely, and I think it is very important that we do address farm safety. It is, I believe, a major issue.

My question was, and I think the minister answered it then, when we have a hog operation that is built and there are employees there, then these people will fall under Workplace Safety and Health, and it will be Workplace Safety and Health that sets the standards that employers are required to meet for the safety of their employees.

\* (1640)

There are no requirements from the Department of Agriculture. Once there are employees there, it shifts over to Workplace Safety and Health, or is it an option that Workers Compensation be provided? I understand the part about the individual farmer not being covered, but I am wondering whether it is a requirement that the compensation be provided or whether it is an option.

**Mr. Enns:** I will undertake to get the information accurately on that one. There is some doubt in the minds of some of my officials and myself whether or not that is the case. It may be by choice, although from my little understanding, I know that once people are regularly employed, and this is what we are talking, you know, they are working 40 hours a week or whatever it is, you are automatically enrolled into such things like the unemployment insurance program.

I believe the employer would be automatically liable for and called upon to make the premium payments to Workers Compensation Board, and the operation would fall fully under the Workplace Safety and Health regulation of the Department of Labour. But I will undertake, I note my deputy minister, Dr. Z, here is making note of this. We will provide that information to the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) when next we meet. You notice that puts a kind of romantic tone to that confrontation—when next we meet.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** I am not trying to wander into areas that do not fall under the Department of Agriculture, but I think it is a really important issue. It is a growing industry, and we are going to see more employees within these kind of facilities. I am wanting to find out what kind of protection and who is responsible for administering. My understanding was that it was found under the Department of Agriculture, and it is the Department of Agriculture that sets the standards on these kind of facilities. That is why I am wanting to check it out.

**Mr. Enns:** I certainly agree with the honourable member, and I do not want not to take this anything but very seriously, and we are in the Department of Agriculture. We have a significant committee working as an advisory council to Workplace Safety and Health.

We are involving people from agriculture producers organizations, we have peoples involved from our community colleges, we have different commodity groups like the Dairy Producers Association.

I am just reading out a list that we are involved with and that Agriculture is very much involved with that has to do with safety on the farm and in agriculture generally. I certainly want to indicate to the honourable member that that is an aspect of agriculture that quite frankly we ought not to be satisfied. I am offended that agriculture is, for instance, more dangerous than mining or than forestry. It is, I think, a call on all of us involved in agriculture, whether it is in the departments of Agriculture or the various agricultural commodity organizations, farm organizations, we ought to all collectively redouble our efforts to make farming a more safer vocation.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** I look forward to getting the information that the minister can provide on that, and after we get the information perhaps it will lead to further discussion. Under this section we have the Information Technology Services, and it says: to ensure that information technology systems are compliant to the year 2000 projects.

We have the various departments listed where it looks to be improvements made to the computer systems. I want to ask the minister, we have this whole new development of desktop and better methods, different systems brought in, and I would like to ask the minister if he can indicate what kind of cost that has been to his department, not necessarily the Crop Insurance and Agriculture Credit Corporation but just the various departments of Agriculture. What has this changeover to the new systems meant? Has it meant a substantial amount? What kind of dollars have been spent on Systemhouse for the desktop contracts?

**Mr. Enns:** The honourable member is correct. Significant funding is associated with the project of bringing our computers' capacity and systems up to speed. The department has identified funding for the transition year 1998-99, but also for the fiscal year 1999-2000. Funding has not quite been finalized. We are spreading the cost over several years. In the Estimates before you, we have some \$488,875 allocated for this purpose. There are some offsetting

reductions of \$179,000, but all in all we will require an increase as identified in these Estimates of some \$309,000.

The full cost, if I want to answer the honourable member's question, is in excess of—it is \$1,145,000. That I am told will make the transition to the new computer system throughout the department province-wide involving in excess of 400-and-some computers in all the various regional offices and convert it all to the system that the government has now adopted.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Can the minister indicate whether that is—we talked about the money—the cost of it is new money that is going to be allocated for this changeover, or is it money that is going to have to be found within the Agriculture budget?

*Mr. Chairperson in the Chair*

**Mr. Enns:** Staff was advising me that we would have been involved in this updating, if you like, or change, in any event. We would likely have taken a somewhat different time frame to do it, maybe spread that over a longer period, five, six years. We are currently compressing it into a period of two or three years. These are dollars that are—I do not know how you describe them—new dollars or old. These are dollars that normally are provided to the department for administration and for capital equipment charges.

The honourable member has not asked me yet whether I think it is improving the information flow any, and that is another question to be debated, but I have tried to provide her with the information that I can.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, I understand that this changeover to a new system is quite complicated and it is going to take a lot of time. Can the minister indicate whether any staff from his department have been seconded to other departments to do work on getting ready for this changeover to the new systems?

\* (1650)

**Mr. Enns:** Well, actually this whole computer conversion is being forced on us by our Director of Marketing, one Ms. Dori Gingera. It is her baby, and

she is kind of responsible for its smooth transition and introduction to the department. If it does not work, I will have quiet words with her sometime in the future.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Is the minister indicating in that comment that I should be asking these questions under another section of the Estimates?

**Mr. Enns:** No, we have two staff that left the department and now work with Systemhouse. One of these SMYs was not wholly dedicated to desktop support prior to the contract with Systemhouse, but the SYs were refilled on a term basis. One of these is assigned to the year 2000 development project and the other works as the department's co-ordinator with Systemhouse, as well as other duties as time permits. In other words, we have staff people working directly with Systemhouse on behalf of our department to make this conversion as smooth as can be.

It is my hope that at the end of the day the system will be in place and we will have a system that—and it is important that we have a modern, flexible and up-to-date system in an increasingly computer-driven world. By that I do not mean just within government, but our clients, our farmers, our people that we are dealing with on a daily basis. You know, computers are very much a part of agriculture, and it is our hope that this will position the department in a way that can respond to these needs.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Did the minister say that there were 400 computers that the department has, then, under the Systemhouse contract?

**Mr. Enns:** We have about 430 I am advised, Mr. Chairman.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Can the minister indicate then, for example, Manitoba Agriculture Credit Corporation or Manitoba Crop Insurance, would those departments tie in directly with Systemhouse, or are there separate systems that are set up within those departments?

**Mr. Enns:** Well, they do not come under the general direction that we in government have come under to convert to Systemhouse. They have their own arrangements. In fact, our knowledge is such that in some instances they have been updating several years ago

and are in the process in some instances right now and are ahead of us, if you like, and are not tied to the Systemhouse contract, in fact are not using Systemhouse.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Can the minister indicate, then, who will provide the services when this whole system is up running? Will there be people within the department who will provide the service—I am speaking about the Systemhouse project—or will there be someone else that is providing it?

**Mr. Enns:** That in fact will be a combination. There will be some ongoing contractual obligations that the department, as the rest of the government, will have with Systemhouse to provide some of the ongoing maintenance and development of the system, but within the department ourselves we will also be doing and are getting much more computer literate. We will have staff people involved in the development of software specific to the programs that are important to us and ones that, from our experience, will be user friendly and of assistance to the farm community. So as we become familiar and experienced with the system, we will have some of our own staff people who will be in that area of providing software and providing developmental work on these computer systems.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Again, I do not have a very broad knowledge of computers, but I want to ask the minister: does he foresee any problems with the Agriculture offices spread out as widely across the province as they are and with the commitment to Systemhouse? Does he see any difficulties in providing the services that will be needed within the offices outside the city of Winnipeg?

**Mr. Enns:** We are confident that with our regional structure, that we have in place and well established over some years now, we will be connected with the modern computer systems that are now being put in place. I would hope that, if anything, the flow of information, communications, flow of data from head office to regional offices, from regional offices to regional offices should, if anything, be improved because one has to ask the question: why is Dori pushing us into this if we are not going to have a better communication system when it is all said and done?

**An Honourable Member:** Because it is good for you, Harry.

**Mr. Enns:** I am not quite convinced about that, but then I am also belying my age. You see, I am still in constant awe when I—honourable members of the committee may not believe me, but I can take this little plastic card, stick it in a machine, push a few buttons and \$20 bills get kicked out at me. I mean it happens. It happens to me right here in Winnipeg. That is maybe understandable, but I can be in Mexico or in Chicago—and nobody knows me there in Monterrey or Chicago—I put this little plastic card in the machine, and I pushed a few buttons. I must acknowledge, it does not always work. Sometimes another little message comes on out there, sorry, not sufficient funds in place, or something like that. I stand in constant awe of the computer age that makes this possible.

So for the honourable member now to come down so heavy on me about whether or not this Systemhouse computer system that we are spending \$1,114,320 on in Agriculture is going to work and going to solve all our of our communications problems, I think, Mr. Chairman, that is being a little unfair. I think that is taking advantage of a senior citizen here.

\* (1700)

**Mr. Chairperson:** The hour now being five o'clock, time for private members' hour. Committee rise.

## IN SESSION

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. The hour being 5 p.m., time for private members' hour.

## PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

### Res. 39—Health Education

**Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson):** I move, seconded by the member for St. James (Ms. Mihychuk), that

“WHEREAS in 1994, the Provincial Government eliminated health education as a required course from Kindergarten to Grade 8 and proposed to eliminate physical education as a required course in high school; and



“WHEREAS since 1994, the Provincial Government has backtracked with directives to split the time between health and physical education as a new curriculum is developed; and

“WHEREAS this has resulted in chaos, confusion and inconsistency in the curriculum taught and time allotted to both health and physical education in our school system; and

“WHEREAS both of these courses are recommended as compulsory from Kindergarten to Grade 12 by a number of studies including most recently the Surgeon General's Report; and

“WHEREAS quality health education and physical education taught in the school system, by professional teachers trained in these areas, should be viewed as a preventative health measure to address various problems from teen pregnancy to obesity, suicide and depression, increased smoking, dating violence, alcohol and drug use.

“THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Provincial Government to consider re-instituting health and physical education as two required courses from Kindergarten to Grade 12; and

“BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Assembly urge the Minister of Education to consider immediately implementing curriculum and teacher training to ensure these programs are available to Manitoba children and youth.”

**Motion presented.**

**Ms. Cerilli:** Madam Speaker, I feel incredibly strongly about this issue and about this resolution. I do not think that there is something that this government has done that has been more backwards in its changes in the curriculum requirements for physical education and health education.

Since they have gone through the number of Education ministers that they have had, they have made a number of changes in this area. They have gone from having a required course in health education from Grade 1 to Grade 9 in this province to now having no

required health education course. They have decided instead to put health and physical education together into one course to develop a new curriculum, and overall this has reduced the time that is going to be spent both on health education and on physical education in our schools.

At the high school level, after being berated across the province by the community, they backtracked on their initial decision to eliminate physical education as a required course. Now, again, they are wanting to combine health education and physical education and, again, reduce the requirements and the time that will be spent on ensuring that students in our schools are given these preventative health opportunities.

Madam Speaker, the rationale that the minister and the government use with this is that they needed more time for the core subjects. They then have increased the requirements in English and Language Arts, and they want to have more time for core subjects. It seems that the government has done this without any research, because all the contemporary research will show that, actually, having healthy, active, young people improves academic performance. It improves concentration, it improves productivity, it improves discipline, and it improves their attention span, their co-operativeness and all those other attributes that you require to have strong performance in academic scoring in academic subjects.

The rationale and the reason that the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) has given when we asked questions on this issue is she always says “where are you going to get the time?” All that we are saying is let us put it back the way it was for the kids that are from six years old to 14 years old, and let us go beyond that. Yes, we are saying let us go beyond that, and let us make a required course for health education and physical education as well in the high schools. By the way, Madam Speaker, that is nothing more than is recommended in the government's own reports. Whether it is the Postl reports, whether it is reports coming out of the Children and Youth Secretariat working groups, everyone is saying you have to have school courses, required courses for health and physical education, right up to Grade 12, and that is what we are recommending in this resolution.

Our rationale for this is we have read the reports, and we understand that if you do want to help academic scoring, if you do want to have kids that pay attention in school, if you want to start reducing some of the problems that we are feeling in this province, you have to have active kids. We are not seeing improvements on the after-school hours. We now live in a culture where there are more video games, there is more television, there are more movies. Kids are less active. [interjection] The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) say kids on an average are watching 22 hours a week. I have read studies where it is as much as 30 hours a week. How do you compete with that? How you deal with that is make sure that kids in school at least have their 25, 30 minutes at the elementary level a day.

This is the same government that also, with a previous minister, wanted to get rid of recess. Not only do they want to get rid of physical education at the high school level and are cutting in half the time for physical education at the elementary level, reducing it by 25 percent I should say, now they want to have 75 percent of the time in an 80-minute per week schedule of physical education and only 25 percent of the time on health education.

Of course, as I have said, in this day and age that is completely going in the opposite direction. We also live in a day and age when a lot of parents are concerned about the safety in their neighbourhoods. They are not as likely to just allow their child to go on the street on their bicycle and have unsupervised playtime outside. There is a lot more structured activity. Kids are losing that time after supper when they would just go out and play and do active recreation and active play, and we have to be aware of that. We have to ensure that kids have good quality physical education programs, as well as supervised recess and lunch hour, so they can have that active playtime as well as have quality physical education and quality health education.

On the health education side, the rationale for that, you do not have to look any farther than this government's 10 years of lost years for kids in Manitoba. It has been 10 lost years.

Too bad for those kids that started school or were born in 1988 and started their life or started their school life in Manitoba. We have the highest rate of children being taken into care in Canada. We have the highest rate of teen pregnancy in Canada. We have seen a 12 percent increase in the last four years on drug abuse in this province by youth. We have the highest rates again this year of child poverty. We have some of the highest rates, particularly in northern Manitoba, for youth suicide. We have the highest rates of violent crime among youth. We have the worst gang activity for youth gangs in the country, and we have some of the highest rates for long-term unemployment of families in this country, high accident rates for youths as well.

All of these things could be addressed to a large extent by good preventative health education, and when you have issues like that, particularly in the area of violence, of teen pregnancy, of drug and alcohol abuse and use, you have to ask yourself: what can we do in a large systemic context to deal with these problems? Not the little pilot projects in different parts of the province, the little pilot projects coming out of the Youth Secretariat, but what can we do in a systems approach to deal with these issues, because they do affect all children and youth in Manitoba. That kind of prevention would be put in place by good quality health education, of course delivered by trained professionals in all of our schools. It could be supplemented, as we said today in Question Period, by suggesting we have nurses in the schools again.

Previously, under a former minister of Education, this government had implemented a life skills course. It was an excellent course. The curriculum contained a lot of good preventative issues in the curriculum that could be included in a good health education course. That life skills course was put in one year. They trained the teachers. They trained the professionals in the school system. They did the in-servicing. Then, a couple of years later, what did they do? They pulled the course. The same thing has occurred. It is no longer a required course, and the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) can chirp from her seat, but I can tell you as well after being in the system myself, that that created a lot of chaos. I know from talking to a lot of teachers that there was training put in place, and no sooner did they finally have all of their school organized so that they could implement that life skills

course that this government, again 180-degree direction turn, and they change their mind, a new minister, pull out the life skills course. They did the same thing on health and physical education.

I have a letter here that the minister's deputy had sent to the then head of the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation where they had to send out a letter to clarify what they were doing because there was so much confusion in the school system.

**An Honourable Member:** Because they kept changing it.

**Ms. Cerilli:** That is right, because they kept changing it, and they had to, by dictum from the Department of Education, try and send out letters throughout the year to clarify it. Still we have chaos out there; still there are no standards. We still do not have the curriculum that the minister has been promising now for two years. I understand it is going to come in for the school year starting this coming September, but we will have to wait and see for that. But in that curriculum who is going to be teaching this course, combined health and physical education? Right now, there has been no attention given at the Faculty of Education where teachers are trained. How are people going to be trained for this new course?

There has been a problem with the decline of specialists in physical education because of the policies implemented by this minister and this government, where we are seeing a decline in the people in the schools who are specifically trained to teach physical education. That is a serious concern because, if we want to see the benefits that I have talked about for having physical education in the schools, we have to make sure that it is taught by people who know what they are doing and understand the challenges for young people learning and benefiting.

One of the other things that this government has done in their approach to physical and health education is they seem to have taken the attitude that the physical education course over the years has not resulted in increased activity by adults and an increased impact. If that is the approach that they are going to take, by then, if there has not been success so far of removing the requirements for those courses, it is completely

backwards. That means that you have to do more, not completely take out those courses or do less.

So, Madam Speaker, I guess I just want to conclude by saying that this government has made a lot of mistakes in its mandate, and I can tell you that this is one of them: the changes that they are making in health and physical education by reducing the time in the schools that young people will have the opportunity for physical education, particularly in those early years, particularly at the junior high age when young people need more opportunities to be active. They need to work with professional teachers who understand that age grouping and can make them feel comfortable. They are going through all sorts of changes in terms of their bodies and their self-image. They need to have those physical education and health education courses.

Also, I want to encourage the minister to read the research, to look at the Surgeon General's report, to read the Postl report, to read the recommendations from the Youth Secretariat, to read the many, many reports that are coming out, whether it is from the Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation or other agencies and to reconsider this reduction in health and physical education for the young people of Manitoba. Thank you.

#### House Business

**Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader):** Madam Speaker, on a matter of House business, I would like to announce that the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources will meet on Tuesday next, June 9, 1998, at ten o'clock, in Room 255 to consider the Annual Reports for 1996 and 1997 of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation.

**Madam Speaker:** To repeat the information from the honourable government House leader, for the information of the House, the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources will meet on Tuesday, June 9 at 10 a.m. in Room 255 to consider the Annual Reports of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation.

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**Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be able to

rise and speak on this resolution. I do not accept all of the assumptions of course that were made in the member's comments. I appreciate her urging me to reread all the things I have already read, but it appeared that she seemed, from her comments, to think that I have not read them, which is an erroneous assumption along with a lot of other erroneous assumptions which we have come to expect and actually come to rather enjoy in an amusing kind of way from members opposite, because it is a challenge to keep up with the number of erroneous assumptions that they make. It is almost as hard to count as the number of false points of order that the opposition House leader constantly rises on. I found it quite amusing this morning when he jumped up—that is physical activity—to acknowledge that we could recite with him his standard patter on his—I think he holds the record for the most false points of order in the history of the Legislature. He gets lots of good exercise and physical activity which is what we are talking about here today of course.

\* (1720)

At any rate, we do appreciate the opportunity to correct some of the false impressions that have been once again left on the record by the opposition about the priorities of the government and the way in which we are proceeding. I think the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer), from his chair of course, is indicating false impressions, knowing full well which they are because they were carefully written out and talked about in their caucus I am sure before they bring them here. Or maybe again, there is no preparation in their caucus for these things, who knows.

We are extremely aware of the need for health education and for physical education for students in Manitoba. The direction that the government has taken is set out in *New Directions*. I think it is very clear for all to read and all to understand that the physical education curricula and classroom instruction will undergo significant changes in order to shift the emphasis to an emphasis on physical well-being. That is aside from just straight exercise. I have said it before in the Chamber, Madam Speaker, that it is not enough to just do straight physical fitness exercises à la the old curriculum or straight rules of team sports à la the old curriculum. It is very important that students know what happens in their bodies while they do these things.

So topics of health which explain how the body can improve by virtue of being physically active—

**An Honourable Member:** This is a keeper.

**Mrs. McIntosh:** The Leader of the Opposition has said this is a keeper, and I think this is great that he understands that, that he understands the link between health education and physical fitness.

When students understand how the circulation of the blood flows through the body, what that does to the brain, the oxygen that comes forward, their learning does improve. But they understand as well not just what the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) has said, that physical activity will lead to improved learning, they understand why as well.

#### Point of Order

**Ms. Cerilli:** I just wanted to clarify the record. I am the member for Radisson, not the member for Transcona, and maybe the minister can tell us if she does not agree that children learn by doing.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Radisson does not have a point of order.

\* \* \*

**Mrs. McIntosh:** Of course, I get them all mixed up over there, the member for Radisson. Madam Speaker, the member for Radisson has said children learn by doing, and she is absolutely right. They learn by doing physical activity how to do physical activity, but they do not automatically learn from that what is happening inside their bodies while that activity is taking place.

The member for Radisson made strong points about how physical activity leads to an enhanced ability to learn, and she is correct in that. It is important for students to understand why that happens as well, so that their physical well-being will be lifelong and not just for the duration they are in school. That is why we talk about lifelong learning. Understanding why they learn better is an important piece of physical education, one the member does not acknowledge or want to see occur for children.

This emphasis on physical well-being will mean that aspects such as knowledge about health and fitness, including nutrition, stress management, prevention of health problems and issues, safety and violence protection, as well as fitness and exercise, will be the focus of an integrated physical education curricula. Physical education will be designed to lead students to lifelong fitness and to emotional and mental well-being through a healthy lifestyle. We feel that that direction set out in New Directions is an important one to underscore.

The development for the new curriculum for integrated health education and physical education started in the fall of 1996, and the intention of the integrated curriculum is to provide every student with the opportunity to learn about well-being in a holistic way and not as a separate, isolated entity. In this way, students can learn about healthy productive ways and means with which to offset life's stresses in a positive, preventative fashion and so carry this knowledge with them throughout their lives. Students will be involved in leisure development, in fitness development, in sport development.

The health component, as planned, will be permeating all subject areas such as in health science and social studies, and there will be outcomes for these subjects. For the core subjects, there will be standards testing so the health outcomes will be tested. There will also be supplementary health courses.

The integrated approach places the emphasis on prevention, not intervention. I hope the member is listening because it is her resolution, and I thought she felt it was important enough to listen to the debate on it.

**An Honourable Member:** We are listening. We are hanging on every word.

**Mrs. McIntosh:** Well, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) says he is hanging on every word, and I note the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) is now turned around to listen as well, so this is very good.

**An Honourable Member:** We have been listening all along.

**Mrs. McIntosh:** Well then, would you like to have a little test to see what you recall from what I said, the member for Radisson? Do you want a standards test on what I have said so far? You were not listening properly, my dear. Oh, well.

The focus will be on physical well-being, community health, safety, social/emotional well-being, dental health and nutrition, with emphasis on areas such as family life in middle years, drug awareness in Senior 1 and Senior 2, decision making, conflict management, and learning to say no, for example, will also be part of the instruction.

Consistent with New Directions: A Foundation for Excellence, the curriculum development process involves educators and stakeholders. A curriculum development team and a review panel were established in December of 1996. Committee work began in January of 1997. The department has indicated to its educational partners that until the new curriculum is introduced, schools are to continue using the existing curriculum. The curriculum development team will be meeting for a total of 10 days throughout this current school term, and the review panel will meet again four times to review the work of the curriculum development team. Additional external and internal consultation will also be held.

The division of time, Madam Speaker, under the new framework is expected to move to 25 percent for health education and 75 percent for physical education from Kindergarten to Grade 5 and maintain an even 50-50 split for the Senior 1 and Senior 2 levels. Schools have the flexibility to extend or reduce the time allotted for any subject area as long as they adhere to the minimum requirements of the instructional day. Therefore, a local decision may be for a school to choose additional time for either physical education or health education depending upon their own school plans and their own perceived school needs.

\* (1730)

In the new framework, there will be a clearly defined vision and direction that shall be taken for the development of physical education and health for Manitoba's school system. As well, general learning

outcomes will be stated along with specific learning outcomes for each year.

There are different models for education. One is health oriented, the other is sport oriented. For instance, in the United States, the Centers for Disease Control has a concern about the physical inactivity of students in the 21st Century, thus there is a trend in curriculum development in the States towards using sport to teach about physical activity, promote physical activity and develop movement skills or sport skills. This is a shift from focusing on the sport itself to using sport to teach competencies and well-being. Sports will still, of course, be part of the curriculum but they are for a different purpose, that of physical activity and participation.

Concentration on one sport, of course, will continue to be possible for those students who wish to effect such concentration, but such concentration will not be part of the instructional programming. By focusing instead on activity and participation, all students will be included in physical education.

The other western provinces, including our two NDP neighbours in Saskatchewan and British Columbia, are also proceeding this way in physical education. The desire is to help students develop, be motivated to have a healthy, active life and get students excited about physical activity that they understand and that will be lifelong. A skills-based curriculum will be used. For example, the movement of throwing overhead can be used in a variety of physical activities and sports including throwing a ball to someone, serving in tennis or pitching a baseball, things of that sort. Research shows that the movement must first be taught before the student can use it for a sport, and research shows that students must be given a choice of activities so that they become comfortable with their level of participation.

We wish to instill in our children a sense of positive self worth. We want them to have a solid sense of self esteem that comes from a keen awareness of well-being and a knowledge of how to apply those principles in their everyday lives. Madam Speaker, we believe the thrust that we are taking does more than simply teach calisthenics or rules of particular team sport. The approach that we are taking that helps students to

understand why the activity is important for the strong development of the body and the intellect is the best for the students of Manitoba. We are agreed with this by our NDP counterparts in Saskatchewan and British Columbia as well as by our Tory counterparts in Alberta. Because we believe this is a much better approach than the outdated one of yesterday that the members of the opposition wish to cling to, we cannot say that you can separate an understanding of well-being from physical activity.

So, therefore, with regret, although I believe the member is well intentioned, we cannot support her resolution, which is supported by the opposition as well. I would urge her to start thinking to the future rather than relying on the past. There are good things coming from the past. We will not throw those out. But we do need a fresh approach for a new millennium and a generation of children who are not naturally active as they were in days gone by. So I thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

#### Committee Changes

**Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli):** Madam Speaker, I would like to make some committee changes.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Gimli, with committee changes.

**Mr. Helwer:** I move, seconded by the member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources (for Tuesday, June 9, 10 a.m.) be amended as follows: the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) for the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau); the member for Brandon West (Mr. McCrae) for the member for Riel (Mr. Newman).

**Motion agreed to.**

#### House Business

**Mr. McCrae:** Madam Speaker, on a matter of House business and for clarification, the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources that will be meeting next Tuesday at 10 a.m. will be considering the Annual Reports of Manitoba Public Insurance for the year ended February 28, 1997, and February 28, 1998,

which is, I think, the same thing I said before, only a little different.

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**Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek):** Madam Speaker, I am really intrigued by this whole episode as far as this resolution, and there are some good things that are in this resolution.

What really strikes me as interesting is the fact that they have gone to the trouble of introducing this resolution, thinking it through, and I am sure that this is one that has been given a lot of thought on their part with a view to find some criticism with what the government is doing, the direction that the government is going.

What does strike me as amazing is that the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) introduces it but she does not seem to have any support on that side. She does not have anybody to come to this Chamber and speak in support of it. [interjection] No, they want to pass it; they want us to talk to this. They want us to put our comments on the record. They do not have a view on this because they are not addressing the issue.

It is clear to me anytime that I introduce a resolution in this Chamber, I have people over here that are going to speak to it and communicate what my views are on that. I think it is important that we as legislators convince other people rather than just throw this out there and then ask somebody else to defend it for you. The opposition have demonstrated that today.

Madam Speaker, there is merit in what some of the resolution is indicating here, but I do take strong exception to the fact that the second WHEREAS and the third WHEREAS, since 1994 the provincial government has backtracked with directives to split the time between health and physical education as a new curriculum is developed. That is totally wrong. In the third WHEREAS, "WHEREAS this has resulted in chaos, confusion and inconsistency," the inconsistency and the confusion has come from that side of the House.

I think that most people know where I stand in terms of health and physical fitness, the importance of those,

and I do agree with the fact that whereas quality education and health education taught in the school system by professional teachers trained in these areas should be viewed as a preventative health measure to address various problems from teen pregnancy to obesity, suicide and depression, increased smoking, dating violence and alcohol and drug use. A lot of those things are going to be interrelated, but this is not going to be a catchall as far as people taking physical education or the phys ed program in school that they see as not being provided.

I do not know where they get the idea that phys ed is not part of the curriculum in the province of Manitoba. It is something that if you take this thing through kindergarten to Grade 10, it is part of the curriculum. That has not changed and if they get the required credits as far as phys ed is concerned by the time they complete Grade 10, then they do not have to take phys ed in Grade 11 or Grade 12. I would hope by the time they get to Grade 11 and Grade 12 that these young people would have learned the responsibility by that time that they would do this on their own. I realized the benefit of that, maybe not at the same level that we are talking here, but I will tell you, I learned the appreciation and the necessity of physical fitness and health care as far as my way of life. I would think that the people, the young students, when they get to the point of going through the programs that are offered through our curriculum today, would be able to achieve the same thing.

So I do not agree with the fact that we are in a situation of chaos as far as the provincial government in terms of backtracking with directives to split the time between health and physical education. I disagree with that totally, and it has resulted in chaos and confusion. As I said, the chaos and confusion has been created by the members on the other side of the House and that is really too bad.

\* (1740)

I always have difficulty with anybody who tries to elevate their own importance or their own credit by beating somebody else down and the opposition are really good at that. They are trying to do that, but, you know, that does not work today. It is not effective, and that is what this resolution is doing. It is trying to find

fault with the system, and the system is to suit everybody. Well, we as government cannot be all things to all people because the people who are going to be taking a proactive approach with their physical fitness and their health, taking responsibility for those things, are the ones that are going to benefit by this. Those who do not want to do this, I do not care how much government we have, they are still not going to do it and we are going to put a lot of money into it in order to get them to do it.

They have a different approach on the other side. They take more of the police-state kind of attitude in saying: look, here it is, this is for you, and you have got to do it. Whether they want to buy into it or not. I have difficulty with that. I think it is a matter of education in terms of the people who are going to subscribe to this, and I think it is important that that be instilled in the minds of the people who are going to benefit from this. It is not going to be on the same premise that this resolution is suggesting.

The other thing I wanted to address was the fact that my involvement in sports activities in terms of counselling athletes—the importance of putting the right attitudes in the minds of people who are going to achieve certain goals. Any one of us here today can be anything that we want to be. I say to all the athletes that I am involved with in my other life outside this Chamber: look, it is all in how you focus in what you want to do, because you can be anything that you want to be, and it is 90 percent attitude towards the goal that you want to achieve and 10 percent talent.

It is all in what is in your head. If we are going to put these ideas in the minds of the teachers that this is not good, or the students, and that is going to translate into the minds of the students, then we are going to be in real serious trouble. We are going to have a police state or a socialistic approach to this whole thing, and that is never going to work because people are not going to take responsibility for something that government is going to do.

That is where we have come in the whole approach as far as this government is concerned. Business has taken responsibility for the business community; teachers taking responsibility—rather than just working with a particular curriculum, coming up with their own

ideas, being innovative, making it interesting for the students. I mean, we sit here as legislators and bring in curriculums and all those things that we think that these young people should be working with and learning, but there is more to it than the textbook. There is more to it than what is drawn down as far as recreation and health.

Everybody is a person unto themselves, and they have to take responsibility for the things, the challenges that they are going to face. We are all different, Madam Speaker. We all have different challenges. But the honourable member, with this resolution, is trying to put everybody together. They are all the same. It just does not work. What might be good for one person may not necessarily be good for another. That is the difficulty that I have with resolutions like that and the mindsets that the members across the way have. I would hope that they would have a better understanding of what people do or what they are capable of doing for themselves. It is a lot better if people do these things on their own, rather than saying you have to do these things.

I think it is really important that governments understand that. Certainly this government has looked at this and realized. That is why I am here in this Legislature, Madam Speaker, because of this 16 years of socialistic rule in this province that we are still feeling the pains of that socialistic mentality. It is only now in the last few years that people are understanding and appreciating that we as government have to be facilitators, not being the people who say this is what you have to do and setting the laws the people do not want.

Madam Speaker, I think that if the honourable member were to think this resolution through with the idea of giving the students, the teachers, the communities, the education communities, the responsibility of doing what is best for the young people and the people who are going to grow on and live with the idea that physical education and physical fitness is important to their own well-being, it is certainly not going to come by saying to the students that this is what they have to do. Because as soon as they finish that, then they figure they have completed that, they have reached that stage in their life and they



do not have to do it anymore. That is something that we have to do for the rest of our lives.

It was really gratifying for me today to go out to Unicity and to attend the seniors, the Manitoba Society of Seniors event at Unicity and to see the elderly people going through physical fitness and exercises that they are learning to do because they realize the importance of that. I daresay that many of those people who went through that, who were out there today, they probably did not even have physical fitness in their curriculum, but now they have realized this and they realize the importance of it. It is an individual thing, and I would hope that the honourable members over there could finally see the light: do not take the responsibilities out of the hands of the individuals but give them the opportunity to do things on their own rather than having things stuffed down their throat.

Madam Speaker, I cannot support this resolution, and I will not support this resolution and the thinking that is coming from across the way with this resolution. Thank you.

**Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina):** Madam Speaker, it is interesting the members opposite talk about talking at a resolution when they bring out the resolution onto the floor and in fact are not prepared to put their own comments on the record. [interjection] Well, they are saying they want to have a vote. We need to have more information coming from the opposition as to what to vote on. Obviously, they are not prepared to debate this resolution so we need to continue to talk about this to get the correct information on the record. So thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to be able to speak about things that are important to all of us, which are health and physical education.

\* (1750)

Madam Speaker, before I get into the more meaty part of the resolution, I just want to indicate that the schools that I represent, being Morden Collegiate, which is in Western School Division, and Garden Valley Collegiate in the Garden Valley School Division, put a very, very high emphasis on physical education and on the well-being of students.

In fact, I had the opportunity on Monday of this past week to be able to participate in the awards night which was held at the Morden Collegiate. If the number of students who got awards and who were presented with

certificates is any indication of the priority that they are putting on in this area and the schools certainly, it is a very high priority. Many of the parents, and of course staff and students, were present at this gathering. It was great to see the opportunities that were being given to the students out there specific to the whole area of physical activity within the school and within the classroom.

Further to that, Madam Speaker, tomorrow morning I have an opportunity to go to the Morden Collegiate and do the ribbon cutting for a tennis court which is being funded by the local community. The parent advisory council went out and raised monies in order to be able to upgrade and to update the outdoor tennis court. So it is great to see what the communities are doing in the schools specific to physical education which, of course, is a great part of the healthiness of an individual.

But Garden Valley Collegiate had the official opening of their outdoor track three weeks ago. I had the opportunity to run on this track, to be involved in the—we did not do the ribbon cutting, but we tore the ribbon by running through it on the track.

**An Honourable Member:** Ripped it to shreds.

**Mr. Dyck:** We ripped it to shreds, as an honourable says here, and absolutely right. But I enjoyed that. It gave me an opportunity to, first of all, be a part of this official ceremony but also gave me an opportunity to run.

As the honourable member here for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine) has indicated, it is important for everyone to be physically fit and to be able to, in this way, enhance their own lifestyle. I know, also, and I have indicated this before, that he is a runner and does an awful lot of running and certainly puts me to shame in that area. But I admire people who have the self-discipline to do that on an ongoing basis.

Madam Speaker, this government clearly recognizes that if our students are to achieve a good sense of personal and physical well-being, physical education and health issues are not enough. They are important, but much more is needed to support the development of our students' sense of well-being. I want to just elaborate on that a little bit. As I indicated in my comments that when students have everything in order,

being their own physical well-being, being education, being health, when all of these mesh in the proper way, this adds to the sense that students have of themselves and their own well-being. As educators and as schools, certainly, this is something that we foster and that we want to see take place in the lives of our students. We can teach them all the chemistry and all the physics and math that is out there, and the English, but we need to support this also with the physical aspect which is specific to their own well-being.

First and foremost, it is important to understand that a student's sense of well-being is affected by many factors. First of all is the personal background, and I think that all of us here would agree that we feel good. It is a part of our being that we feel good about where we come from and what we have done. Now certainly not everyone feels that way, and it is unfortunate, but this is something that we want to continue to foster as we continue to educate our students. Family background is a big part of it as well, where we come from, what we have done, and this is also what we are trying to instill within our students. The honourable member mentions family values and certainly very important that we continue to foster this that we continue to encourage our students to develop what they have. If there are deficiencies that they see within their own families, this is maybe something that they can help to improve in their own families as they grow up and as they establish their own families.

Madam Speaker, the learning environment is another one. Certainly, as educators within our education system, we are trying to establish an environment within our province, within our local communities, an environment that is going to be conducive to learning. Having been involved in the school board in Garden Valley for many years, I know that this was a great emphasis that we placed on our school division and within our schools that we had an environment which was conducive to learning, which was conducive to the well-being of students. This would give them the opportunity to be able to mature and to be able to be people who could contribute in the local community and, of course, in the province and the world abroad.

This government believes that students' personal and social development is a responsibility shared by the school, the family and the community. For this reason,

the Department of Education and Training has ensured that students, parents, educators and other partners can participate in this regard.

Second, *Renewing Education: New Directions*, this government has clearly identified the outcomes of this personal and social development. Manitoba graduates will be expected to, and I just want to enumerate a few things that they are expected to do at this time.

First of all, they need to demonstrate personal and social responsibility. They need to demonstrate positive attitudes and habits for lifelong learning. They need to set goals and priorities and personal worklife. They need to plan and manage personal resources to achieve these goals. They also need to demonstrate creativity and an entrepreneurial spirit, demonstrate initiative and persistence to complete tasks, to demonstrate positive attitudes towards and understand the meaning of responsibilities and benefits of active citizenship at a local, provincial, a national and international level.

That is what we as educators but also within our schools are attempting to teach our students as they grow up, as they mature, and then of course as they graduate and then go into the world. The honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) talks about a task force that went out and did a survey of the communities specific to education. I would just like to suggest to the member for Concordia that certainly it was a good report. I think it clearly identified and indicated what the sense was out there in the communities. So it certainly reflected the mood and the feelings that were out there. Certainly I am proud of the fact that we came up with a good report, but I must get back to my text here.

Students also need to understand and apply expectations for ethical and moral behaviour. They need to demonstrate a sense of self-worth and self-confidence; respect human diversity, including individual and cultural differences. Madam Speaker, just to again elaborate, at noon today we had the—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Pembina will have five minutes remaining.

The hour being 6 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. Monday next.

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, June 4, 1998

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