

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, 26 June, 1986.

Time — 2:00 p.m.

OPENING PRAYER by Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER, Hon. M. Phillips: Presenting Petitions . . . Reading and Receiving Petitions.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. D. SCOTT: Madam Speaker, I beg to present the First Report of the Committee on Statutory Regulations and Orders.

MR. CLERK, W. Remnant: Your Standing Committee on Statutory Regulations and Orders presents the following as their First Report:

Your committee met on Tuesday, June 24, 1986 at 8:00 p.m. in Room 254 of the Legislative Building to consider:

Bill (No. 2) - An Act to amend The Real Property Act (Air Rights); Loi modifiant la Loi sur les biens réels (droits aériens).

Your committee elected Mr. Scott as Chairman and agreed that the quorum at all future meetings would consist of six (6) members.

Your Committee has considered:

Bill (No. 2) - An Act to amend The Real Property Act (Air Rights); Loi modifiant la Loi sur les biens réel (droits aériens).

And has agreed to report the same with certain amendments.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. D. SCOTT: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Elmwood, that the report of the committee be received.

MOTION presented and carried.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Attorney-General.

HON. R. PENNER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I beg leave to file the Annual Report of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board for 1985-86.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: Madam Speaker, I beg leave to table the Supplementary Information for Legislative

Review for the 1986-87 Estimates, Department of Municipal Affairs.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Highways and Transportation.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Madam Speaker, I have a statement.

Madam Speaker, the statement is quite lengthy and I have provided the Opposition critic with a copy a few minutes earlier.

Today the Federal Transport Minister tabled an extensive package of legislation respecting the reform of transport regulation.

The changes proposed in the trucking, rail, air and marine modes are many, varied and complex; in the next few days, we will be closely reviewing the new legislation to determine the extent to which the Federal Government has addressed Manitoba's concerns. Over the past year, our government has expressed grave concerns with respect to the "Freedom to Move" proposals. We have appeared before the Standing Committee on Transport to present an extensive submission. We have pressed the Federal Minister to make changes to the proposals to better protect those regions and shippers of our unique nation who do not have the benefit of competitive forces. We have urged recognition of the role of transportation in regional economic development, and we have emphasized that it is vital to Manitoba to maintain and expand its historic role as a centre for transportation and distribution.

In the case of extra-provincial trucking, the Provincial Transport Boards actually administer the regulations pursuant to delegated federal authority.

Madam Speaker, we acknowledge the need for fundamental reform measures in extra-provincial trucking. However, we have consistently argued that reform must proceed cautiously and responsibly, with adequate study of potential adverse effects and adequate measures to protect against or ameliorate adverse consequences. In furtherance of these basic premises, I signed the Memorandum of Understanding of February 27, 1985, together with all provincial Transport Ministers and the Federal Minister, undertaking to implement extensive reforms and to give further study to others.

At the meeting of the Council of Ministers responsible for Transportation and Highway Safety held in Vancouver on October 3, 1985, I expressed concern regarding the potential for domination of Canadian trucking by American giants, and the potential for undue exploitation of those employed in trucking, in a completely deregulated environment. I requested further studies in these areas, and made specific reference to the need for enforceable hours of work legislation and appropriate safety measures. I also sought a reconsideration of the timetable for implementation of the reforms agreed to date. As well, I urged that the regulation of trucking be considered a trade issue, Madam Speaker, and form the subject of a bilateral trade agreement with the United States.

Our government has urged that the new regulatory regime, which does provide for change to present regulations as agreed to by governments and the industry, be given a chance to work for a five-year period, during which a legislative review would be conducted. The legislation could provide that, at the conclusion of this period, the Federal Cabinet, in consultation with Provincial Ministers, industry and labour, and in light of the review, could make further regulatory changes.

However, Madam Speaker, the Motor Vehicle Transport Act amendments tabled today by the Honourable Don Mazankowski automatically sunset the economic regulation of extra-provincial trucking three years from January 1, 1988. There is no legislative review mechanism. The legislation completely prejudices the issues and anticipates the unknown conditions which may prevail in 1991. The legislation completely ignores a number of potential adverse consequences of deregulation. It also ignores the fact that studies of the issues are presently being conducted, and anticipates the results of these studies.

If the Federal Government proceeds on its present course, we may see the cost of service to small and remote communities in Canada increase and its quality deteriorate; we may see trucking industry wages drop dramatically, and working conditions worsen; we may see our trucking industry completely dominated by Americans, and a major movement of trucking infrastructure and expenditure by trucking companies from the province; and we will not be in a position to do anything about it.

We have urged the Federal Government to immediately begin negotiations with the United States to achieve, Madam Speaker, a bilateral agreement that would recognize Canada's unique reliance on transportation. Such an agreement would allow us to take reasonable measures in our national interest without fear of retaliation, to ensure adequate service to small and remote communities, an appropriate level of Canadian control of the nation's highway transport capacity, and an appropriate balance of trade in trucking services.

This issue is of particular importance to Manitoba. We have nine of the 15 major national carriers based in Winnipeg, and 9,000 Manitobans employed in the trucking industry. Our position as a major exporter of trucking services and a transportation centre is threatened by this legislation, Madam Speaker.

Within the past week, I have met with the Manitoba Trucking Industry, with labour, and with the shipping representatives, through the Canadian Industrial Transportation League, and I am pleased to say that the position of our government is recognized as responsible and appropriate by all concerned, and has general support throughout the province.

In conclusion, the Government of Manitoba considers it in the interests of all Manitobans to continue our opposition to this form of deregulation.

The legislation represents a complete abandonment of the established practice that reforms in transportation should be determined by the provinces and the Federal Government on a consensual basis. It also represents a departure from the federal-provincial agreement signed on February 27, 1985, whereby the question of complete elimination of economic entry control was to

be given further study before any decision on the issue was made.

Accordingly, we will continue to press our position and work to change this proposed legislation before it becomes law. We are calling on the Opposition in this House and all Manitobans to join with us in standing up for the interests of Manitoba. We must promote a responsible course of regulation in the trucking industry, one that recognizes Manitoba's unique role in transportation and its contribution to our economic well-being.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Minnedosa.

MR. D. BLAKE: Madam Speaker, I thank the Minister for his statement. We all share the concern in maintaining a strong trucking industry in our province. We know what it has contributed over the years. Winnipeg, is a major distribution centre in the trucking industry, and it has been important to us all.

The truckers, I am sure, are naturally concerned about the condition of our deteriorating road network and, with the Minister's concern, I'm sure he could have maybe shown some consideration to the trucking industry by way of tax on motive fuel or various other fees that they are required to pay, to assist the trucking industry in that way.

Madam Speaker, we have not seen the White Paper that was tabled in Ottawa today, and when we have a chance to peruse that a little more thoroughly, we'll have a better chance to assess the Minister's statement and ascertain if the alarms that he expresses in his statement are indeed justified and, if they are, we will naturally be lending support, to provide whatever support we can to maintain a strong trucking industry in Manitoba.

At the present time, it remains to be seen whether all of these fears will be justified or not.

MADAM SPEAKER: Notices of Motion . . .

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

HON. R. PENNER introduced, by leave, Bill No. 34, The Constitutional Questions Act; Loi sur les questions constitutionnelles; and Bill No. 35, The International Commercial Arbitration Act; Loi sur l'arbitrage commercial international.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Manitoba Hydro - Dominion Bridge contract re Limestone

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Lakeside.

MR. H. ENNS: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I direct my first question to the Honourable Minister of Energy and Mines, responsible to this House for the affairs of Manitoba Hydro.

Madam Speaker, allow me to express at the outset our support and appreciation for the fact that the recent

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\$19.6 million award to Dominion Bridge will ensure jobs and business opportunities for Manitoba suppliers, but could I ask the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro, what precisely are the tendering guidelines now applicable at Manitoba Hydro? For instance, was there, in this particular tender call, a Manitoba job content included in the original tendering document?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Energy and Mines.

HON. V. SCHROEDER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As I understand it, I could be corrected, I'll check up on it, but my understanding of it is that each organization submitting tenders was asked to indicate, in its supporting documents, what portion of the work they expected to do in Manitoba and what kind of employment it might generate in Manitoba.

MR. H. ENNS: A supplementary question, Madam Speaker, to the same Minister. How will the Minister be able to determine whether or not future tenders for this kind of work are indeed reasonable, fair and acceptable, if firms like Canron Incorporated, Western Bridge Division, no longer tender projects of this nature of Manitoba, as they've indicated the other day?

HON. V. SCHROEDER: Well, Madam Speaker, there's a number of firms who are prepared to tender and I'm sure there will be discussions with Canron to convince them that we are not like their home province of British Columbia, where our people are entirely shut out when their province puts bids out, and that we are open to bids.

I'm told by the Hydro people that the recommendation accepted by the board is the one made by the senior management of Manitoba Hydro. There was not any interference from the outside on that. It was the bid which ended up being the lowest.

I want to tell the member and other members of the House that after tenders closed, Manitoba Hydro did receive enhanced benefit proposals from a majority of the firms who had submitted their original tender bids, and given the timing and the importance of these enhanced proposals, Manitoba Hydro did consider them in the final evaluation. That is the way it happened. I asked staff at Hydro to tell me whether this was something that was unprecedented. They came back and they said, no, that it had happened on generating station construction some three or four times in the past.

MR. H. ENNS: Madam Speaker, can the Minister tell me, what was Dominion Bridge's original tender?

HON. V. SCHROEDER: I'd have to take that question as notice. I don't know the exact numbers of any changes.

MR. H. ENNS: Madam Speaker, a final supplementary question. If the Minister is taking that as notice, the purport of my question is, would it be a correct statement to make that the participation by Canron Inc., Western Bridge Division, in this tendering process indeed saved Manitoba taxpayers several millions of

dollars? I just want the Minister to confirm that is a correct statement to make. The fact that we encouraged other Canadian firms, indeed other world firms, to participate in the open tendering system that, in this instance, their participation in the tendering process saved Manitoba taxpayers several millions of dollars?

HON. V. SCHROEDER: Madam Speaker, this reminds me of when we were in this House just a little more than a year ago and people opposite were saying that because we had arrived at a contract with CGE — which we were required to negotiate and couldn't tender because of an agreement with the Federal Government respecting a previous loan — that that would cause retaliation and so on, and this was going to be the end of the process and, since then, we have dropped the price of Limestone fairly substantially from where we were at the startup.

As that has gone on, we have increased the Manitoba content to the extent that, overall, we're somewhere in the range 80 percent. We have today more than three times as many Native Northerners working at that site. We are very consciously using this project to ensure we can do everything possible to enhance the Manitoba economy and, at the same time, we are coming in far lower than we expected. Any suggestion that one particular company has somehow saved us \$2 million and will not do so in the future is nonsense.

HON. H. ENNS: Madam Speaker, I'm not suggesting that, it's the spokesperson for that particular company that indicated that he and his company are no longer willing to participate in tender calls of this nature in the Province of Manitoba.

I ask the Minister, would he take as notice, the one question he accepted as notice, what was the original Dominion Bridge tender call, and then to be able to determine what precisely the participation of Canron Inc. involvement in this tendering call saved Manitoba taxpayers?

HON. V. SCHROEDER: Madam Speaker, I certainly will take that question as notice. I would be very surprised, very surprised, indeed, if there would be any information coming back to me from Hydro, or from anyone else, that would in any way substantiate the notion that we saved money somehow because of Canron's involvement, and Dominion Bridge, as the member rightly noted in the beginning, is a very substantial significant corporate citizen in the Province of Manitoba, with Selkirk Rolling Mills, with the operation on the Dublin plant.

As I've said before, while we have been open here and we've had bids all over the world, and we've accepted them, as an example with the general contractor, a company from the U.S. and a company from Japan, and so on, we have been open to awards outside the province. I just point out to members, in contrast, what the ministry of transportation in British Columbia does to our company and our workers here in Manitoba. From their specs, all the materials and supplies used in and about the construction of the works shall be manufactured in the Province of British Columbia. That's how Dominion Bridge is treated in British Columbia.

Universities - lack of gov't funding to programs

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for River Heights.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Education. The University Grants Commission indicated that 5.7 percent minimum amount was required to maintain existing levels of programs at our universities, however this government has granted only 3.2 percent for programs. My question, Madam Speaker, is how can quality education be maintained at our universities when the Faculty of Arts at the University of Manitoba has had to cancel 86 courses in their course offering for the 1986-87 academic year.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Education.

HON. J. STORIE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In light of the award I received yesterday, I will attempt to keep my answer brief. Madam Speaker, the universities in the Province of Manitoba received funding increases approximately 3.8 percent. Those funding decisions are made on the basis of information that's received from the Universities Grants Commission, information that the government has in terms of its potential revenue growth over the coming fiscal year, in terms of the many other legitimate needs that exist in the Province of Manitoba. I've indicated on many occasions that our support over the last four years to post-secondary education institutions needs no defending. Our record is solid, it has been beyond inflation and the universities, as they know, will have to deal with their course programming, as they see fit.

University of Manitoba - women's studies courses

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: A new question, Madam Speaker, to the Minister acting for the Minister responsible for the Status of Women. In 1985-86, 900 students were enrolled in women's studies at the University of Manitoba. In the upcoming academic year, 1986-87, this department will virtually disappear. Their budget has been cut in half, there will not be course offerings that are multi-disciplinary in women's literature, history. The question is will the Minister meet with the University of Manitoba in order to facilitate the re-establishment of this department?

HON. J. STORIE: Yes, Madam Speaker, I am trying to ascertain at this time, the extent to which the university — in setting their own priorities — has chosen the women's studies courses as a target for reduction. The other statistics that the Member for River Heights has quoted — I'm not sure that they are entirely accurate either — but I am certainly concerned about the reductions in the women's studies area.

While the priorities have to be established by the university community and the board of governors and the administration, I have already indicated, on other occasion, that is of concern and I would be prepared

to meet with the university president and administration to discuss the necessity for those kinds of reductions.

MRS. M. CARSTAIRS: A final supplementary. Will the Minister urge his colleagues in Cabinet to fulfil their obligation, to ensure that co-chairs of women's studies exist at both the University of Winnipeg and the University of Manitoba, as part of the shared provincial-federal program which resulted in a half million endowment in the prairie provinces to women's studies?

HON. J. STORIE: Yes, Madam Speaker, I can assure the member that we are pursuing that matter, however I feel some of the decisions that have been made, if they had been reported accurately, tend to fly in the face of that commitment.

Flyer Industries - den Oudsten's takeover

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Morris.

MR. C. MANNES: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I direct my question to the First Minister. This morning, in committee, under questioning, the Minister of Finance indicated that should den Oudsten of Holland, and the union officials representing the labourers at Flyer Bus, not be able to come to some agreement on changes in the present collective agreement, thus scuttling the proposed contract between MDC and den Oudsten, and given that no other buyers could be found for Flyer, that this government will allow Flyer to wind up its affairs, rather than underwriting more losses? Can the Minister indicate whether the Minister of Finance's words on this matter are government policy?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, every effort is being made by the Minister responsible for Flyer Industries, as well as by the Minister of Labour, in order to facilitate an agreement between den Oudsten and the union with an appointment of a mediator, Mr. Fox-Decent. I think at this stage, we are best to leave this matter to the mediator, to the efforts that have been undertaken, because it is important, Madam Speaker, that there be success, as a result of the negotiations that are taking place, which are delicate, which are important to the Province of Manitoba. I think we would be better, Madam Speaker, to leave the discussions, the efforts to those that are presently engaged, in order to better assure the success in those discussions that are taking place. It would be in the public interest to do so.

MR. C. MANNES: Madam Speaker, I know the First Minister doesn't have to give me an answer. This morning the Minister of Finance did not hedge. Again I ask the First Minister for a straightforward, definitive answer to my question.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Finance.

HON. E. KOSTYRA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. That question was responded to in committee this morning.

The Government of Manitoba has been working for some time to provide a satisfactory resolution to the long-standing problems with respect to Flyer Industries and to divest Flyer into the private company of den Oudsten, so that there can be a viable long-term future.

At the present time, there are some sensitive discussions ongoing. There was a full review of this matter in committee this morning, Madam Speaker, as there was earlier this week. I think we ought to allow that process to continue so that we can have a successful conclusion to the divestiture of Flyer Industries for the good of the Province of Manitoba and the people of the Province of Manitoba.

MR. C. MANNESS: I have a question to the Minister of Finance. Will the same very generous package, as detailed in committee over the last two sittings, or some variation of it, be offered to other companies; for example, Motor Coach Industries, should den Oudsten and MDC not be able to negotiate or finalize the contract as it's presently written?

MADAM SPEAKER: That is a hypothetical question.
The Honourable Opposition House Leader.

MR. G. MERCIER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It has often been the practice and the tradition in this House for members to ask members of the treasury bench questions which would relate to the contingency plans that the Minister of the government may have, in the event that some sort of an event occurs. It has happened, Madam Speaker, in terms of hospital strikes and various strikes of that kind, and is a very valid question.

MADAM SPEAKER: Would the Honourable Member for Morris like to rephrase his question?
The Honourable Opposition House Leader.

MR. G. MERCIER: Madam Speaker, if you're asking the Member for Morris to rephrase his question, would you please make a ruling with respect to this matter?

MADAM SPEAKER: The question as it was — (Interjection) — Order please, order please. Would the Honourable Opposition House Leader please withdraw his final comment which reflected on the Speaker?

MR. G. MERCIER: Madam Speaker, I suggested that there should be a ruling with respect to this matter, in the light of my argument, that does not muzzle members of the opposition in asking questions.

MADAM SPEAKER: May I remind the Honourable Opposition House Leader that I heard his statement. It is the Chair's role to interpret the rules to facilitate the proceeding of the House. To suggest that those are being done in a way which muzzles any member, I suggest is a reflection on a decision of the Chair. I did say to the Member for Morris that his question, as it was phrased, was hypothetical. I had made a decision on that. I did ask the Member for Morris to rephrase his question. Now I am asking the Honourable Opposition House Leader to withdraw imputations that the Chair is not proceeding in a fair fashion.

The Honourable Opposition House Leader.

MR. G. MERCIER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would withdraw the term "muzzle," and substitute "unduly restrict."

MADAM SPEAKER: I'm afraid that is not satisfactory.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please. Would the Honourable Opposition House Leader please withdraw any imputation that the Chair is interpreting the rules in any way other than a fair manner?

MR. G. MERCIER: Madam Speaker, I withdraw that term for the time being.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Government House Leader.

HON. J. COWAN: Madam Speaker, I believe the rules in this area are more explicit and more clear than they are in any other area with which this House deals. In order for this House to function effectively it cannot have members of the House reflecting upon rulings by the Speaker or making suggestions that the Speaker is not at all times treating us with the utmost impartiality and fairness, and for that reason, I would suggest, Madam Speaker, that the withdrawal, as proposed, which indicates the member still holds out on his own the initiative to reflect upon your impartiality in the future is not sufficient.

MADAM SPEAKER: May I call on the Honourable Opposite House Leader to withdraw, without any qualifying remarks, any imputation that the Chair is acting in any other way but a fair and impartial way.
The Honourable Opposition House Leader.

M. G. MERCIER: Yes, Madam Speaker, I so withdraw.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you very much.
The Honourable Member for Morris with a supplementary.

MR. C. MANNESS: Madam Speaker, Motor Coach Industry, some period ago, showed some interest in Flyer Bus. I ask the Minister of Finance whether they would be given an opportunity, similar to what was given to den Oudsten, given that July 15th an agreement cannot be struck?

HON. E. KOSTYRA: Madam Speaker, as was indicated some time ago and responded to in Committee over the two days of hearings that we had with respect to the Annual Report of Flyer Industries, there was discussion over a long period of time with a number of candidates looking at the divestiture of Flyer Industries.

We have spent a lot of time and a lot of effort attempting to ensure a long-term future for Flyer Industries in the Province of Manitoba, at the same time, insuring that there was protection of jobs and an end to the drain on the taxpayers in the Province of

Manitoba. In that regard, there were discussions with a number of specific companies including the one that the member mentioned. At the present time there is only one offer, one share purchase agreement being entered into, and it's our expectation that agreement will be finalized in a way that will be satisfactory to the government, to the purchaser, and to the collective bargaining agent.

MR. C. MANNES: Supplementary, Madam Speaker, and I direct it again to the First Minister.

Will the government seek to convince the union leadership that for the sake of the longevity of some 200-plus jobs, that some moderation should be taken with respect to some of the issues under negotiation with den Oudsten?

HON. E. KOSTYRA: Again, we're going over the same ground that we have in Committee and I'll repeat what I stated in Committee.

The Government of Manitoba, and representatives of the Manitoba Development Corporation, on behalf of Flyer Industries, have been working for some time with the new purchasers and the collective bargaining agent to come to a satisfactory understanding with respect to issues related to the takeover; that has been going on for some considerable time. We have always ensured that there has been communication between the parties and with this present difficulty we have asked for — and the Minister of Labour has concurred in — the appointment of a mediator, an outside party, to help facilitate those discussions. We will do all we can to encourage both parties to come together and bring about a satisfactory, successful, mutually agreeable understanding and agreement.

Urea-formaldehyde insulation - extension of deadline re removal

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Ellice.

MR. H. SMITH: I have a question for the Minister of Housing.

September 30 is the deadline for grants for homeowners who must remove urea-formaldehyde foam insulation. With the boom in housing construction and home renovation, most Manitobans are having difficulty finding contractors to remove the foam before the deadline. Could the Minister press the Federal Government to extend the deadline so that citizens will get the health-threatening foam out of their homes?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Housing.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Yes, we're quite concerned about the September 30th deadline. The problem is that there are only 30 licensed contractors in the province that are able to do this very unique kind of work. There are people that have registered in 1983 to have the work done which would allow them to receive the grant who have not, through any fault of their own, been able to have this work completed during the deadline that is established.

What we will be asking the Federal Government is that they extend this program so that all of those people that were registered at the appropriate time will be able to get the work done whenever the licensed contractors are free and available to do the work.

It's a good program; we want all the urea-formaldehyde removed from the homes. This is an incentive and we would like all the people who have asked to have this accomplished to be able to have it done.

Versatile Farm Equipment Company

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Norbert.

MR. G. MERCIER: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question is to the Premier, Madam Speaker. Could he inform the House or confirm that the Board of Directors of John Deere are meeting today to consider their position with respect to the acquisition of Versatile, in light of the Department of Justice ruling in the United States to defer the approval of the acquisition for 90 days?

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, certainly John Deere is discussing the purchase of Versatile. Whether there is a Board meeting or not today, I can't confirm that, nor can the Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology confirm that. We can further check that out.

MR. G. MERCIER: Madam Speaker, I would urge the Premier and the Minister to maintain close communications with John Deere and Versatile with respect to this matter, and I would ask the Premier if he, or his Minister, have developed any contingency plans to deal with this situation in the event that the acquisition by John Deere is not followed through?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology.

HON. V. SCHROEDER: My department is keeping in constant contact with Versatile to ensure that if anything further can be done by us — and the Premier mentioned yesterday, the contact with the Federal Government, the contact with Deere — if there's anything further that can be done by us to help we are standing ready to help. Versatile has informed us that they have been very appreciative of the support given by the Province of Manitoba and have told us that they don't believe there is anything that we could have done beyond what we had been doing up until now. If there is anything further to be done, we stand ready to do it.

MR. G. MERCIER: A final supplementary question, Madam Speaker, could the Minister then indicate whether his department has developed or is developing some contingency plans to assist a future purchaser of Versatile in maintaining the plant here, in the event that John Deere does not follow through with the acquisition?

HON. V. SCHROEDER: Yes, we are discussing with Versatile the contingencies and, as the member is

probably aware, there's only one other 4-wheel tractor manufacturer. There's not a great number of people presently in the industry to contact so that is not taking a great deal of time. Whether Case is interested or not should be known fairly quickly.

Beyond that, we are still looking at the overall case and, specifically what it is, that the Department of Justice of the United States is asking for. Are they asking for this company as an example? We're not sure. Are they asking this company to go out and have people look at the operation who are not currently in that industry, or possibly in the industry, but not in the 4-wheel tractor industry.

As I say, we're doing whatever we can with Versatile. We're working closely with them and if there's anything that they will ask us to do, we will do it beyond what we are already doing, in terms of communicating with John Deere.

Sports facilities - funding to

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Charleswood.

MR. J. ERNST: Thank you, Madam Speaker, through you to the Minister responsible for Sport. Can the Minister inform the House whether the money offered to the City of Winnipeg for amateur sport facilities of a few weeks ago — baseball stadium and soccer pitch, along with some others — if that money has been withdrawn?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Sport.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Madam Speaker, I'd like to thank my honourable friend for the question.

I'd like to first start with a correction. At no time was money offered to the City of Winnipeg. The money that was offered was to construct sports facilities. The situation was that we had a request, sometime in January, to work with the city for the construction of a baseball stadium with the assurance that if it was done at a certain date, they had a guarantee that Triple A Baseball would be brought to Winnipeg. This we delivered within two weeks.

One of the conditions — the Mayor apparently is talking about the conditions — one of the conditions was that we said the first priority would be facilities for amateur sports. If it could help to bring professional sport here, so much the better.

There were negotiations between the two levels of government. Some of the conditions were agreed on and that was finalized. Since then, we have said on numerous occasions that we would be ready to continue because a committee had been set up for presenting the province, the City and the Manitoba Sports Federation, to look at . . . were agreed on and that was finalized. Since then, we have said on numerous occasions that we would be ready to continue because a committee had been set up for presenting the province, the city and the Manitoba Sports Federation, to look at the facilities that were needed and to have a construction program, and we haven't heard from the city at all since then.

MR. J. ERNST: Can the Minister confirm then that the funds would be available to the City of Winnipeg for

amateur sport facilities, and could he further confirm to what extent would any restrictions be placed on that money?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Madam Speaker, first of all, the restrictions we're talking about. There were some conditions that it would not be something for Triple A baseball alone. That was a condition; that was agreed by the two partners.

It was also a condition right from Day One that the three levels of government should be invited to participate. I was told that had been done and then I was informed by the Federal Government that this had not been discussed with the city. The principle still stands. We were interested in facilities for amateur sports. Now I would have to go back to Cabinet for the amount because one of the main reasons, apparently, was that Triple A baseball, apparently, is not coming to Winnipeg.

The principle still stands, we would be interested, as well as facilities all across Manitoba.

MR. J. ERNST: A final supplementary question to the Minister. As there appears to be some confusion with respect to whether the money's available or not and what it's available for, could the Minister advise, enter negotiations again, confirm to the City of Winnipeg if the money is available and upon what conditions, so that there's no mistake made in that regard?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Madam Speaker, I've received a letter from the president of the Sports Federation who apparently has written to the city requesting a meeting to discuss that, and I've accepted immediately.

As I say, the principle is still there, we're ready to discuss and certainly do our share to build these much needed facilities in Winnipeg and I don't know of any conditions.

A MEMBER: We'll have to name it Desjardins.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: No, I was thinking of the Blake.

A MEMBER: You're among friends now, Larry.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Among friends; you can fool me, Madam Speaker.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

Legislative Assistants - app't of

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Pembina.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is for the Premier and I hope he is among friends.

Madam Speaker, the Premier has just appointed four Legislative Assistants and a number of his back bench to various board positions. My question to the Premier is, why would he have rebuked the services of the veteran MLA from St. Vital in the appointment of Legislative Assistants, and appointments to the various Crown Corporation boards where the Member for St.

Vital could have brought, indeed, a lot of competence and a lot of credibility and experience to any of those appointments?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Pembina with a supplementary.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Yes, Madam Speaker, the First Minister seems reticent to answer why he passed up the services of a veteran MLA.

MADAM SPEAKER: Does the honourable member have a supplementary?

Order please. The Honourable Member for Brandon West on a point of order.

MR. J. McCRAE: May I ask for some instruction from the Chair. How can you ask a supplementary question when there was no answer?

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member certainly rightfully points out that a supplementary follows on the answer. If there's no answer, there can very little be a supplementary.

The Honourable Member for Pembina has a new question?

MR. D. ORCHARD: Yes, Madam Speaker. I was going to pose a question, but I almost hesitated because you might have ruled me out of order. I appreciate you allowing me to pose a new question to the Premier.

Madam Speaker, to the Premier. Because he has made a number of appointments of his back bench, notable in the absence from those appointments is the Member for St. Vital, a member of considerable experience in this House and, indeed, the Member for

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Yes, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Is this a new question? We've never heard it before? May I remind the honourable member that a question should not repeat in substance a question already answered or to which an answer has been refused.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Madam Speaker, I thought the Premier might not have heard my question because he didn't rise to answer it, and so I would just repeat it for the First Minister in case he didn't hear.

He's made his appointments to the Legislative Assistants and notable exceptions are the Member for St. Vital, a veteran member, and the Member for Elmwood. Would the First Minister indicate why those exceptions to his appointment list were made?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Pembina with a new question.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Madam Speaker, my new question to the First Minister is: does he intend to appoint the Member for St. Vital and the Member for Elmwood to the two remaining Legislative Assistant position that are open and available to him, after the Session is up, to avoid any potential controversy?

VIA Rail - transfer of positions to Montreal

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Kildonan.

MR. M. DOLIN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Transport.

According to information I have received today that 42 positions have been transferred out of Winnipeg

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. M. DOLIN: . . . from VIA Rail, 23 of which are in the accounting department. These jobs, I understand are being transferred to Montreal.

I am wondering whether or not the Minister has been in touch with VIA Rail, whether or not something can be done about stopping the transfer of these position out of the City of Winnipeg.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Highways and Transportation.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Madam Speaker, we do certainly share the concern of the Honourable Member for Kildonan in this issue.

We have persistently made representation to VIA. We have met with them as late as June 12, with the local senior representatives here in Winnipeg, and have telexed the chairman of the board in Montreal, as well as the Federal Minister, expressing our concern about the transfers of the positions in the accounting division here in Winnipeg. Of the 40 positions, 34 were to be eliminated, 23 of them transferred to Montreal, as the member has pointed out, and there have been additional statements made recently.

That is very disconcerting because we want to keep in context, Madam Speaker, that Winnipeg is indeed a transportation centre and this is contrary to the commitments that we've received from the Federal Minister in the past that Winnipeg's role would be enhanced. So we are continuing to express our concern and demanding some compensatory action by the Federal Government, particularly in VIA, as a result of the cancellation of the VIA Maintenance Centre and these transfers. We are asking for work to be done in Manitoba, Madam Speaker, in lieu of that transfer.

MADAM SPEAKER: May I remind Honourable Ministers to keep their answers brief.

The Honourable Member for Kildonan with a supplementary.

MR. M. DOLIN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the Minister contact the Federal Minister to protest this action and inform the House of the response?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Madam Speaker, I have contacted the Federal Minister. I have not received any response to the demand that we've made that, because of the loss of the VIA Maintenance Centre in this province, as well as these transfer out of jobs, we want Manitoba manufacturers to have first chance at the jobs that will

be created because of the new equipment that is being purchased by VIA and that the contracts will not be all let in Eastern Canada. That's the request that we have made, Madam Speaker.

MR. M. DOLIN: A final supplementary, Madam Speaker, to the same Minister. Can the Minister contact VIA Rail and ask them to, in writing, give us the reasoning behind this so he can inform the House?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Madam Speaker, I have also contacted, in addition to meeting with the VIA officials, I have contacted them asking them to ensure that Manitoba gets its fair share of any consolidations that take place in their operation, and again, that they not be transferred east; as well as requesting that jobs created as a result of additional equipment be let to firms here in Manitoba, that the contracts be let here in Manitoba and that jobs will result here in Manitoba as a result of that work.

MADAM SPEAKER: The time for Oral Questions has expired.

NON-POLITICAL STATEMENT

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Riel.

MR. G. DUCHARME: Yes, Madam Speaker, I wish to ask leave to make a non-political statement.

MADAM SPEAKER: Does the honourable member have leave? (Leave)

MR. G. DUCHARME: Madam Speaker, I wish to congratulate Sister Marie Bonin, S.G.M. on her retirement June 28, 1986 as Sister Superior. Sister Bonin has been provincial superior of the Sisters of Charity of Montreal, Grey Nuns, St. Boniface Province. I would like to thank Sister Bonin on behalf of all members for her dedication and lifelong commitment to improving the quality of health care in the community.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Yes, Madam Speaker, the members of the government certainly would have no problem, we'd be very pleased to join with the members of the Opposition to congratulate Sister Bonin. There was a reception not too long ago, and to make sure that I would get paired, my honourable friend accompanied me and we presented the government's congratulations and good wishes to Sister Bonin and her outgoing council and the new council.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Vital.

MR. J. WALDING: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. My point of order arises from your ruling of Wednesday, June 18, in which you express your concern about speech content and some of the language used in debate. You remind members of their responsibility to bring breaches of that language to your attention.

In Hansard, on Page 1274 of yesterday, Wednesday, 25 June, reports that a member used the expression "a form of blackmail" in referring to the actions of another member. I bring that to your attention, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: May I remind the honourable member of Beauséne's Citation 323 dealing with unparliamentary language. (2) "The proper time to raise such a point of order is when the words are used and not afterward," and at the time that the words were used there was no member that raised the point of order after the words had been spoken.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Government House Leader.

HON. J. COWAN: Madam Speaker, I move 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.

We will be beginning Municipal Affairs Estimates in review in the House in the Chamber today, and continuing with Community Services in the Committee Room. Seconded by the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

MOTION presented and carried and the House resolved itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty with the Honourable Member for Burrows in the Chair for the Department of Municipal Affairs; and the Honourable Member for Kildonan in the Chair for the Department of Community Services.

CONCURRENT COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY SUPPLY — COMMUNITY SERVICES

MR. CHAIRMAN, M. Dolin: Committee will come to order. On Page 34, Resolution 32, Item 4.(b) Child and Family Support — the Member for Rhineland.

MR. A. BROWN: Yesterday when we finished our discussion at 4:30, I had asked the Minister a question and I asked her whether there had been any internal study done as a result of the death of the child, the one that was sexually assaulted, and the Minister said that she was waiting for the results of the inquest; yet it would seem to me, Mr. Chairman, that surely there must have been some sort of internal inquiry going on. Can the Minister tell me whether this indeed has taken place?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister of Community Services.

HON. M. SMITH: Yes, the process followed in such a serious case is there is the police investigation that goes on. At the same time, the provincial coordinator carries out his study. He's completed his interviews and is drawing up the report, which will then be forwarded to the agencies. That report may constitute part of the information that is tabled in court, so it's a very carefully

done document. We have, as you know, in addition to review the overall issue of child abuse, put in the external review to look at the system issues. As a short-term measure, we have prepared a directive that requires that people involved in child abuse cases, should there be any disagreement among members of a multidisciplinary team, that it may be referred to the director or the Child Abuse Coordinator for mediation. In other words, the onus is on anyone in the field with a concern to bring it to the attention to the next level of responsibility.

MR. A. BROWN: Have any corrective measures been taken to date to make certain that this type of thing is not going to happen again, when the father of the child expresses his concern and nothing is done as a result of this? Have any corrective measures been taken?

HON. M. SMITH: The specifics on the case, I think I've already described how they're being dealt with. We have met with the board of one of the agencies. We have appointed the external review. As I say, if there are any further measures that become evident, we are prepared to take them.

I think the strongest interim measure that could be taken has been taken in alerting people in the field, if anyone has any concern that a disposition of a youngster in a child abuse situation raises concern, if there's disagreement, the onus is on that worker to raise the issue for review and mediation. The child would not be put in the contentious situation prior to that review having been completed.

MR. A. BROWN: Has anyone been disciplined as a result of the actions taken?

HON. M. SMITH: We'll have to wait till the results of the investigation, but we have no hesitation in disciplining if that is what is indicated.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for St. Norbert.

MR. G. MERCIER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to ask some questions with respect to this whole area of child abuse but, first of all, acknowledge that the Minister responded to my letter of November 22, 1985 in a letter dated June 16, 1986. In doing so, she stated that: "It seems to me there is now recognition that child abuse is a deep social problem which will only be resolved through all of us working together in a spirit of cooperation and open exploration of alternatives, and in this spirit of reconciliation, she provided me with this response.

I want to say to her that I accept that letter in that spirit of reconciliation and, hopefully, with the review under way, that this major problem will be seriously addressed and some of the problems that have occurred in the past will be resolved.

However, her letter does raise some questions and does not answer all of the questions that I raised, and therefore I have some further questions.

I had asked, Mr. Chairman, in my question No. 4, what are the numbers of instances of re-abuse of children? I'm advised of a situation where an abused

child has been returned on three occasions and abused each time. What is the policy in regard to requiring workers to report incidents of abuse to the Abuse Committee? I am advised that all cases are not reported.

In her response to that specific question, the Minister indicates that in 1985, there were 55 cases reported to the Child Abuse Registry, as alleged suspected, for which there was a previous allegation or suspicion. The Manitoba guidelines on identifying and reporting child abuse in Manitoba, Regulation 60/86, require consultation among Child and Family Services Agencies, police, and medical personnel. In most of the province, agencies do this through participation in multidisciplinary committees, but committees are not, at present, used for all cases.

My first question to the Minister, Madam Speaker, is that it may very well be a detailed or lengthy answer that is required, but I'm concerned that there were 55 cases reported to the Child Abuse Registry in 1985, as alleged suspected, for which there was a previous allegation or suspicion.

Could the Minister indicate the type of abuse that occurred for the second time in each of those 55 situations?

HON. M. SMITH: The issue of recidivism, of repeat offence, is one that is always of a very great concern, because it always suggests that maybe if we had done things better or been more wise, we could have prevented.

The department has analyzed in considerable detail the 55 cases. I'll give you the reasons why they were allowed to remain in their home or family under agency supervision first; and then I will give some other breakdown statistics.

In those cases where children were allowed to remain in their home or family situation under agency supervision, that was 36.4 percent. The reason cited for the decision include: (a) Insufficient evidence to proceed with either family court or criminal court measures. Again, the member will recognize that we operate under the law and under court process so we are bound by rules that are often set in the judicial system that we don't have complete control over. Possibly some of the amendments that are being proposed now in the Crombie bill will help this situation.

The second reason, lack of corroborative evidence to substantiate the victim's statement, coupled with the alleged suspected abuser's denial. Again, changes proposed to accept the uncorroborated evidence of the child may assist us in these areas.

The third reason, the alleged or suspected abuser no longer resided at, or was removed from the family home and the victim was at no immediate risk, again recalling that our new act permits the removal of the abuser. That was not a power that we had before.

The next reason is that the presenting trauma was deemed to be of a minor or a limited nature, precluding any extensive investigation.

And the final reason, delays in the criminal justice system resulting in recanting on the part of the victim, allowing for no further basis to keep children in care under The Child and Family Services Act.

Now some of the overall statistics: The child abuse statistics for the calendar year 1985 show there was

a total of 55 cases, child victims, reported as repeaters, or 8.5 percent of the year-end total of 646, compared with 56 cases or 8 percent in 1984; 50.9 percent of the repeat cases were where the previous abuse report was within one year; 12.7 percent where the previous report was within two years and 36.4 percent where the case was reported prior to or during 1982.

Again, there are five more sub items here, or six more. I could read them and also distribute or I could just suspend reading and make that information available shortly.

MR. G. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, I think members of the committee would appreciate receiving a copy of that because they're important statistics and information and it's difficult to get it all down, so if we could have copies.

HON. M. SMITH: Yes, we can make them available very shortly.

MR. G. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, could the Minister indicate whether in these cases of reabuse, how many cases there were where a child was abused a third or a fourth time or whether there were any?

HON. M. SMITH: Yes, we will in future have the capacity to give you that information. Right now we just have one year on the computer. There is a tougher action taken, though, if there is a second allegation directed against the same abuser. The police will charge whereas they won't always on an initial allegation where the evidence doesn't seem to hold up.

MR. G. MERCIER: Is the Minister saying that her records do not indicate whether there are any situations where abuse occurred a third time? That sort of information is just not being kept?

HON. M. SMITH: We will have that capacity. We now have one year of reporting in the computer. We could secure that by a manual count but it would take us a couple of weeks to pull out that information at the present time.

MR. G. MERCIER: Could I ask the Minister to do that then? That seems to me to be extremely important.

Where the difficulty in dealing with this whole issue is, is that you're not dealing with statistics; you're dealing with normal, healthy, happy infants and that's the area I particularly want to discuss now.

There is another aspect of child abuse which I will want to discuss later that relates to teenagers, and perhaps some flaws in what occurs in that area.

In the area that we're addressing here — we're talking about individuals, normal, healthy, happy infants who are abused. Once is bad enough; when we're talking about twice or three times, we have to be addressing that problem, I think, in the most serious way possible.

HON. M. SMITH: We agree that the question raised is of the utmost concern. It's our intention to pass that request on to the study. They will have some research capacity and could look into that historical pattern as part of their research effort.

MR. G. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, the Minister may wish to, if she concurs with my view, in this report she's distributed, the summary report on the rate of recidivism for physically and sexually abused children in Manitoba, in point No. 5 it says: "Of the 55 repeat cases, only 5.5 percent involved child victims aged one to three years." The use of the word "only" again just raises in my mind an attitude that I don't think should be there, "only 5.5 percent."

I think, to the Minister, and to the people who work in this area, each individual child should be of their highest concern. To use a statement like that — only 5.5 percent involved child victims aged one to three years — causes me some concern.

Mr. Chairman, to raise an incident which she may wish to review with the review committee, and I can appreciate there may very well be a number of matters that we discuss in these Estimates that she wishes to have reviewed by the review committee, Dr. Sigurdson and Professor Reid.

It has come to my attention, and it's certainly been reported in the newspaper, that a three-month old baby is in the hospital brain dead and that this may be the result of child abuse. The mother of this child had a previous — this part has not been reported — that the mother of this child may have had or had a three-month old baby die of abuse in Calgary previously and that there is a further abused child in the family.

Could the Minister indicate whether that whole matter is under investigation, and could she indicate whether any Child and Family Service Agency received any information of the previous conduct of the mother prior to the injury being inflicted upon the three-month old baby that is now brain dead in the hospital?

HON. M. SMITH: The first point that the member made about the inclusion of the word "only," I agree completely with the point he made.

With regard to the other situation of the infant, this was one of the four that was being investigated in detail. The information we have to date is that a mother came from Calgary, that the agency in the Alberta sent information to one of our agencies; the day after they got the information — they received it on the 8th — on the 9th, they made four attempts to locate the mother at the address given and found no trace of her. The next day the baby was in the hospital, and the other facts that there was some history are accurate, but the information communication from one agency to another took place in the time pattern that I've told you. I guess these are the regrettable things.

I am hoping that in time, as we link up both within our province and across provincial boundaries, the potential for this type of incident, I would like to see it go to zero. I don't know whether we'll ever get that close to 100 percent safety, but it won't be for want of trying.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN, S. Ashton: The Member for St. Norbert.

MR. G. MERCIER: Mr. Deputy Chairman, I thank the Minister for that answer. With respect to the overall statistics that she raises — and it's a matter that certainly I suggested last November has to be done

— when she refers to, I think it was 36.4 percent in the cases that children were returned because of a court order, is that correct?

HON. M. SMITH: In the cases where children were allowed to remain in their home family situation under agency supervision, that was 36.4 percent and there's five reasons given. They aren't further broken down.

MR. G. MERCIER: Mr. Deputy Chairman, I think there are two aspects of this that she may wish to refer to the review committee. The first aspect is with respect to training for child abuse workers. No one questions — let's put this on the record right at the beginning — certainly, I don't question the good intentions of everyone who works in the system; but, as I understand it, speaking to some people in the police department, there are various degrees of training that workers working in this field have received as a result of which experienced workers or trained workers can quickly identify the kind of evidence that is required to successfully prosecute a charge of child abuse and therefore are very helpful in bringing the proceedings to a successful conclusion.

But, on the other hand, when you have a worker who doesn't have the training in child abuse and is not familiar with the type of evidence that's required in the court proceedings and some of the challenges, etc., that may be used, that in itself causes some cases to be lost and children to be returned to a bad situation.

I take it from the Minister's comments previously that with some of the expenditures that have been made there will be an overall program of training all workers in the various agencies with respect to child abuse, and I take it, from the terms of reference of the review committee, that the review committee will meet with police authorities.

It's important that they do so because there is a difference in the way, for example, the RCMP treat a matter of child abuse and the Winnipeg City Police treat a matter of child abuse. City Police have a special unit to deal with that, but when you deal with the RCMP, you deal with a particular unit out of whatever it is, Lac du Bonnet, Steinbach, wherever. You're not dealing, as I understand it, with trained child abuse policemen and it has made a number of those situations more difficult.

Will the review committee be reviewing this whole aspect of the training of the workers, the required training of the workers, and reviewing with the various law enforcement agencies what they feel is required in order to successfully prosecute these cases in terms of the training that should be undertaken?

HON. M. SMITH: Yes, the member touches on the very difficulty we've all had in dealing with child abuse in that we started with virtually no people trained in the area. There were a few special people who started to identify and develop expertise, but what we're in the process of is moving from that situation to where we have general skills throughout the entire network of people who come in contact with this.

Now we have allocated two trainer positions to work with the new Winnipeg coordinator to develop the training programs in the Winnipeg setting. The review

committee will be looking at the training and education issues as well. Things that have been done, because I wouldn't want anyone to think that we haven't recognized this need or been very active in the field, we've been providing public awareness programs and professional and community education programs for children, teens and parents, as well as offering crisis and interdisciplinary resources.

We've been directly involved in over 30 workshops give by the provincial coordinator for professionals, major community in-service groups and students, reaching over 2,300 participants during the calendar year of 1985. The major conference on sexual abuse of children, treatment, victims, offenders and families, sponsored by Children's Aid Society of Western Manitoba, took place in October 1985.

There's been a series of abuse workshops in the Dauphin and Parklands region. There have been community workshops by Anishinabe Child and Family Services on child sexual abuse. Workshops have been held for counsellors, day care workers, the deaf community, new careers, boys and girls club, homemakers, corrections, home-school/parent-teacher associations, Manitoba Society of Criminology, University of Manitoba and sexual abuse survivors. We've been providing for the ongoing distribution of guidelines, protocols, program information and relevant articles, along with films, filmstrip and video cassette material for professionals and students through the province.

There's been ongoing planning and involvement with the child abuse program consultant for the Department of Education for workshops, policy and procedures development affecting schools and staff along with the draft of the parent-teacher home-school child abuse resources package.

We've developed an inventory of agency resources in regards to training, education, treatment, and prevention with a view to having a liaison network throughout the province to complement and collaborate with other departmental networks.

We've been involved in planned public awareness in regards to child abuse and family violence with a continuing emphasis on the multi-disciplinary approach to physically and sexually abused children and their families. There continues to be a renewed shift towards community or regionally-based, multi-disciplinary, family-oriented abuse teams and committees working towards greater comprehensiveness, compatibility and cooperation in all the phases of child abuse; the identification, the intervention, and treatment.

Reflecting the growing professional and public awareness and concern, there will continue to be a major need to respond to the number of abuse cases reported, especially in the area of sexual and physical abuse in terms of treatment and prevention.

MR. G. MERCIER: Mr. Deputy Chairman, my real question was will the review committee be reviewing the procedures and type of evidence that's required, etc., with law enforcement agencies?

HON. M. SMITH: I did say they'd be looking at the training issues and the interface among different systems. The police, teachers, counsellors, social

workers and the health workers have all been part of these multi-disciplinary teams. Again, we're broadening the circle of involvement and trying to deepen the knowledge and skills of people as they work in the field.

One other aspect that the review committee will be looking at is interface issues. What is the relationship of these different types of skilled people in the field? How do they work together? What are their mutual obligations? What kinds of information do they share?

MR. G. MERCIER: Mr. Deputy Chairman, the Minister has referred to the multi-disciplinary committees. It's certainly been reported to me that there are many situations where the committees are not used and decisions are made that perhaps are not appropriate.

Is it mandatory for multi-disciplinary committees to be used in all incidents of child abuse? I'm told that in some jurisdictions in the United States, there's not just a directive or a guideline from the department, it's a law. It's a statute passed by the State Legislature in a number of instances.

HON. M. SMITH: The guidelines that were developed, the protocols of a couple of years ago that were publicly supported and endorsed by the Ministers of Education, Health, the Attorney-General, and Community Services put an obligation on people to report. Cases do require involvement by the medical people and the police.

One of the problems we think may be out there and asked the review committee to review for us is the mutual understanding that the different disciplines have as to the mandate and the procedures that their respective disciplines operate under. Sometimes, people trained in the medical expertise won't understand the mandate that the child and family service workers have.

For example, a medical person might think that a child should be taken away from a family, but the child and family service worker must work within the judicial system and the law, because there's the rights of families as well as the responsibility to protect children. With stronger law and better trained people, hopefully we'll be able to improve in that area in our ability to deal with these cases. But the gearing up from the time a few years ago when there was a concerted effort to deal with this problem, to the present time not all of those issues have been fully resolved.

When I look at what's being done across the country, a lot of them, they're back a few steps from where we are. They just say we don't know what to do. We're into the next stages where we're using the committees and building both from the prevention end and the treatment end, but as the numbers of cases grow and the complexity of the cases, getting that system to function smoothly and effectively, is I guess the challenge to us now and we're looking forward to the report of the review committee to help us.

We haven't sat idly by though waiting for that report. We've put out our interim directive to require that any professional working with a youngster, in any kind of team way, if they're not satisfied with the decisions being taken, they have the responsibility to report and get it mediated. We figure that's one line of protection until we can address some of the other issues.

MR. G. MERCIER: Fine, Mr. Deputy Chairman. As I understand it now then, if a member of a multi-

disciplinary committee thinks, for example, a child should not be returned to a particular home and the decision is being made contrary to that person's feeling, that person could then appeal the decision to the acting director of child welfare, who will make the final decision until the review is completed.

HON. M. SMITH: Yes, the line of reporting would be first to the agency director, and then if not satisfied, to the director of child welfare. So, it would be first to the agency director and then to the provincial child welfare director. They not only may report or approach, but they should; they're really obligated to if they have a concern.

MR. G. MERCIER: If they have that concern they shall appeal?

HON. M. SMITH: Should.

MR. G. MERCIER: Maybe it should be shall.

HON. M. SMITH: The onus is with them. It's a directive. I don't know if we're going to chop their heads off, but for the different members of the teams to be accountable we have to have some ways of working out how they work together and what the respective mandates are.

As I say, sometimes there may be a genuine need for the review. In other cases sometimes, the mandate of the respective people is not fully understood by the other member and sometimes there's an overstepping of mandate lines, but those are the issues that we must have resolved.

MR. G. MERCIER: Is it mandatory that these cases have to be reviewed by a multidisciplinary committee? Is the Minister satisfied that all of them are being reviewed by a multidisciplinary committee, and that one person or perhaps one worker is not making decisions without the matter being reviewed by the multidisciplinary committee?

HON. M. SMITH: The multidisciplinary committees are, as I think I described in the training, developing throughout the province, but we don't have fully operative ones throughout as yet.

The guidelines which were put out a year or two ago require the consultation among the health, police and Child and Family personnel where the allegation is substantial. In other words, I guess it's clear that we're getting a great many allegations, and some of them there don't seem to be any of substance whatsoever. There has to be some evidence to move it to the next stage.

Under Manitoba law, the agency has the legal responsibility to make the decision. We have the committees. We will have them all over the province in time, but there are increasing numbers of them. What is at issue and what we hope the review committee will give us some guidance on is the decision-making process and responsibility, because there's an area where health people have the right and responsibility. There's an area where the Child and Family Service people do; there's an area where the police do. It's to

work out the fine points of that and what is done if any of the parties feel that there is a dangerous situation persisting.

In British Columbia, where they've been here and there developing a local committee — I know we had an extensive report on one that had developed in the Richmond area — they never review individual cases. They might once a year review a case as a type of educational program. They spend their time on learning what the respective disciplines do. It's a communication model, if you like, but the social workers are making the decisions. We've gone somewhat further.

Let me just read what was a guideline when we put it out a couple of years ago, and which became a regulation under the new act. It's 3.2 under our new regulations: "On receipt of a report or referral of suspected or alleged abuse which may have resulted in physical injury to, or sexual exploitation of a child, an agency shall: (a) where there is a preliminary opinion that serious physical injury or sexual exploitation of the child has occurred, immediately arrange for a medical examination of the child allegedly abused and, where believed necessary, any other child in the family by a duly qualified medical practitioner or at a medical child abuse facility; (b) consult immediately with the local police as to the particulars of the case; and (c) continue the confidential and mutual sharing of all relevant information with the police, medical and hospital professionals and other agencies or professionals involved in the investigation and treatment of the case to ensure the best course of action is taken."

MR. G. MERCIER: I've read that regulation, Mr. Deputy Chairman.

Are there not multidisciplinary committees certainly available in all areas of the City of Winnipeg for the City of Winnipeg?

HON. M. SMITH: There are three committees that sit regularly in the City of Winnipeg, one at the St. Boniface Hospital, the Physical Abuse Committee and the Sexual Abuse Committee, as a means of effecting that regulation.

MR. G. MERCIER: Would the Minister consider at least, if she's not prepared to do it, having the review committee look at this question of requiring the use of a multidisciplinary committee decision-making process where there is a substantial allegation made, so that we could be assured that there is a spokesperson who's sole concern will be the protection of the child?

HON. M. SMITH: That is what we have asked them to do.

MR. G. MERCIER: Can you make it mandatory, not should but shall?

HON. M. SMITH: The regulation says "shall." We, therefore, expect that the review committee will examine to see whether there's any strengthening or refining that is required to make it clear. I think we're on the same wavelength on this.

Again, there will be certainly opportunity for the member to review the report and, if there's any

strengthening or variation that he thinks will increase the protection of the children, I'd certainly welcome hearing.

MR. G. MERCIER: Mr. Deputy Chairman, in the light of the reports, the first was by Dr. Ellis, that there were some 20 children in high-risk situations, and then subsequently there were statements made in the media by Dr. Ferguson that there were 30, I believe, children and infants in high-risk situations. He referred in the media, in the press reports to an instant where he had told a social worker not to return a child to a situation because I think, in his words, the infant was going to be killed if it persisted. He referred to a continuing practice of that kind.

Since the issuance of the directive in this matter, have there been, first of all, any matters which have gone to the acting director of Child Welfare to resolve? Can she assure members of this committee that, whether it's 20 or 30 or whatever the accurate number are, those children, those infants are being looked after properly and are not in danger?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

HON. M. SMITH: I can table the interim directive tonight. With regard to the other situation, one of the reasons that the numbers vary is that the health authorities keep records of numbers for their purposes, to identify people who may be readmitted to a hospital.

There has been no automatic information sharing to keep the numbers all reconciled between the Child and Family Service people, who keep their numbers in a different way and for different purposes. That's one item that we've asked the review committee to give us advice on.

In some cases, the medical people express a concern, but they don't realize that Child and Family Service workers cannot just go in and take a child, that they have to go through certain legal procedures. They have to come up with appropriate evidence. They have to satisfy the rules of the court. That's why we're so pleased to see the change in the Crosbie Bill, at least as it affects children. It should increase the ability of the court to deal with these issues. Training of workers also will help over time although, again, I doubt if we'll reach perfection.

What we're often dealing with is situations that are difficult. If there's not visible evidence, it's difficult to establish, and there are the rights of the abusers, which also have to be protected. There are false allegations, as well, and that's the dilemma.

The Child and Family Service workers work within the context of the legislative mandate, through The Child and Family Service Act. Some of the things that doctors want them to do, they would be charged as overstepping their mandate.

The reason we put the directive out is that we felt that if there was a particular concern, mandate or not, by one professional vis-a-vis another's actions, it deserved a second look at a senior level. Perhaps there would be some other way to establish protection for the child if the concern was great.

As I say, I think these are issues that will come up as the system evolves because we run into more and more complex situations.

MR. G. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, could the Minister assure us that the children, whether it's 20 or 30, or whatever the number is, that their situations have been examined and she can assure the committee that they are in situations where they are fully protected?

HON. M. SMITH: The meeting that I held in my office a couple of weeks ago, of the chief actives in the area, the executive directors of the agencies, the Health Protection Centre, people from St. Boniface, the coordinators, that issue of the numbers and the youngsters involved, came up. I must tell the member that there was considerable disagreement as to those numbers and how they were arrived at. In individual cases, there had been actions taken that were not acknowledged by all parties.

Without judging who was right and who was wrong, it alerted me to the fact that we had to have much clearer rules and guidelines as to how multidisciplinary groups work together, and that we had to put the onus on individuals who had concerns, to move their concern to another level if they weren't satisfied.

In this case, that wasn't occurring. We were getting a blanket statement that there were large numbers of youngsters at risk, and no action had been taken to raise the issue to another level that could have looked into it. Again, I'm not blaming; I'm just saying that that was the situation.

By telling the group that we intended to not only have that longer term system interface review, but also to put in the interim directive, we let them all know that our expectation is that they act as professionals and raise the issue, where they have a concern, for immediate attention, rather than letting it drag on and on and, you know, sort of muttering behind the scenes, because that isn't helpful to anyone.

There will be legitimate differences of opinion but, surely, by having a second review and having the case laid out better and developing better understandings of how the different systems work, we should be able to get an effective multidisciplinary system working.

MR. G. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, has the acting director of Child Welfare been required to make any decisions as a result of this directive which she's going to table a copy of tonight?

HON. M. SMITH: There have been no cases. Of the 34, or the 20, we went round the room, for the 20 people who are the front-line people in that area, and asked them if there were any cases at risk, to their knowledge, as of that day. We got a variation from zero to three. No one would corroborate the 34 or the 20.

We did get an explanation as to where those numbers came from. They were youngsters who had been admitted to hospital for some physical or sexual abuse symptom and, in a sense, they'd stayed on hospital records. We gathered that part of the use of that is to pick up those youngsters if they reappear, but that there was no systematic communication flow back and forth between the medical and the child and family. Each discipline, I guess, has had its own traditional ways of keeping numbers and protecting confidentiality. What we may be facing is a need to further define confidentiality and information sharing in the light of

multidisciplinary committees. That's one of the specific items we asked the review team to give us advice on.

MR. G. MERCIER: That raises the whole question of the provincial law as it applies to child abuse cases. The Minister has acknowledged there have been certain improvements in The Criminal Code as a result of Mr. Crosbie's bill.

Will the review committee, and I'd suggest it would be a good idea, will the review committee be asked or given the resources to examine existing provincial legislation? In the light of the experiences that will be brought to their attention by people who work in this field, particularly now, and I'm talking about the infant cases, make it extremely difficult, in many of these areas, to successfully obtain guardianship of the child in an abuse situation.

Perhaps there are some changes that should be made in our existing provincial legislation that, frankly, would not put, as it appears to be — the onus is all on the people trying to carry forward the case, the Child and Family Service Agencies. In many of these cases, they're up against skilled lawyers on the other side and they're very difficult to prosecute successfully.

Will they be asked to review existing legislation and make a recommendation as to whether or not any changes should be made to the existing provincial legislation?

HON. M. SMITH: Again, the member asking the questions is the lawyer here so I am going to give you my best effort interpretation. If you have a further enlightenment to give me, please do so.

The Child and Family Act in Manitoba operates under The Manitoba Evidence Act. Whether it's by convention, necessity or constitution I don't know but The Manitoba Evidence Act is kept in parallel with The Canada Evidence Act so that if the Crosbie bill results in change at The Canada Evidence Act, I think we can expect parallel changes here in The Manitoba Evidence Act.

With regard to our Child and Family Services Act, we've just gone through a major overhaul that took three years in consultation and refinement. Having said that and having worked hard on the regulations and the various modes of making it effective, once an act is passed it then becomes subject to improvement and we will be looking for any areas of improvement.

Again, I invite the member with his legal experience or any of his colleagues who have suggestions for improvement, to discuss them with the review committee and/or submit them directly to me because it is an area where we will keep refining. If we find that we need and could profit from some new elements we would certainly look at them.

MR. G. MERCIER: So it would be quite open to the review committee in carrying out this review in the event that, as a result of their representations or submissions that are made to them, that they could make some recommendations if they so deem fit to change existing provincial legislation to . . .

HON. M. SMITH: We put no limits on their mandate in terms of what they could recommend and if legislative change is deemed appropriate, we would certainly expect that they would make that recommendation.

MR. G. MERCIER: Sir, I have a number of other questions but I don't want to monopolize the time. Perhaps the other members may want to ask questions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for River Heights.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. According to the maintenance of children, it was my understanding in the review of the literature leading up to the disbursement, if you will, of the Children's Aid Society into a number of agencies for the city of Winnipeg, that one of the strengths of the new agencies was that they should be able to reduce the number of children in care. Therefore I was somewhat surprised to read of an increase of \$1.1 million in the area of maintenance of children.

Has it become apparent that, in fact, the agencies will not be able to reduce the number of children under maintenance?

HON. M. SMITH: When the new agencies were established closer to the grass roots of the community, they did in fact start to come in contact with more children. There will be a breaking-in period of time where we pick up youngsters who perhaps were being missed before.

The increase, at least the statistics we had when we did the review late last Fall, had shown an increase on the children in care side of 11 percent and increase on the family service caseload of 75 percent. A lot of the 11 percent can be attributed to the agencies being closer to the ground and therefore getting in on the cases that probably some of which might have been missed before.

Also, the parallel tightening up and increase in reporting on the child abuse side has produced, in a sense, a more serious trend of reporting, so we have two trends that are bucking one another.

The other area where we are noticing a serious increase in difficult cases has been the adolescent area. We've tried to get as much explanation for why that is occurring as we can. It seems to be a phenomenon of social change, single parents, unemployment, poverty, cultural mixes and so on — a great many contributing factors — general unrest in the society.

We try to keep an analysis going of what the context issues are but the Child and Family Services system alone can't deal with the solutions to all of those problems. We can be catalysts in the field and help to get other relevant groupings together, we can certainly play our role, but there are many contributing factors.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: Mr. Chairman, if we move into the actual details of maintenance of children, can the Minister tell us whether there has been an increase of per diem for the foster care?

HON. M. SMITH: Yes, in the foster rate care, last year there was an increase of 3.5 percent. This year we haven't pinned it down to the precise amount but it will be substantially in the same area.

In addition, we have developed a special foster rate over \$1 million. A couple of years ago there was no such rate at all. That's to handle particularly difficult adolescents; in some cases youngsters with severe developmental problems.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: Has the department seriously considered the option of adoption of foster children by the foster parents with payments to continue?

HON. M. SMITH: In general, in adoption we don't subsidize. There have been a very few very special cases where there has been some subsidy given. These would be for multi-problem children.

There's a fiscal problem. We don't get cost-sharing from the Federal Government for subsidized adoption. There has been a philosophical position that when you adopt you take the child into your family as though they were your own, and if a family has income problems then that should be dealt with through the social support systems that exist for all families.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: I think that everyone is concerned with the lack of stability which is frequently afforded to foster children, in that as they become more difficult, as all children tend to do as they enter adolescence, foster parents frequently choose not to foster any longer.

Has the Ministry considered that the subsidized adoption of children who had been in foster care with those individuals for a certain length of time, and where those individuals could not adopt because of the additional financial burden, that in fact greater stability might thereby be afforded to the foster child?

HON. M. SMITH: Our response to that particular problem has been at the front end where we have introduced permanency planning, a model that is going to require agencies to come up a permanent plan for young children. They will be expected to do this within a time frame of the young child coming into care.

That way, we hope to forestall, as much as possible, long-term foster care situations, because we agree that the belonging and the permanency aspects are particularly important. In the past it's been a bit loose in terms of how long youngsters could stay in foster care.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: Can the Minister explain what kind of residential care is involved in the item that gets \$13 some-million of the budget? It's under 4.(b)(3).

HON. M. SMITH: The change year-over-year is made up of several factors. There's been an increase on a couple of items. We've reclassified a few level 2 beds to level 3. Again, we tried to monitor what the demand level is of the previous year in order to budget for the subsequent year, to keep some flexibility.

There's 24,000 more gone in because of a slight increase in use of level 4. There has been \$1,028,800 reduction overall in use of residential beds. That's basically bringing into this year's budget the reductions that were realized in the previous year, and an increase in operating funds for agencies of \$255,700, resulting in a net decrease in the budget of \$700,900.00.

It's basically a reflection of our department's continued effort to maintain children in the parental home wherever possible, with appropriate supports, and thus reduce the number of residential care beds in use.

There was a net closure of 22 residential care beds in the province over the last year. Where we've made

some increase is for group home beds for sexually abused girls; and we have two special foster homes with four beds. We do have a list of all the homes which can be distributed now.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: Thank you. That's really what I was looking for, rather than the decrease or increase, was actually what kind of institutions we were looking for under this particular situation.

Likewise, can the Minister explain the kind of funding that is given under the Family Support?

HON. M. SMITH: Yes, this is an area that has undergone considerable increase, 193,400 to accommodate homemaker volume increase; 700,000 for specialized child care staff; 88,900 general operating increase for agencies, a total increase of 982,300 to provide additional funding for homemaker services, parent-aid and extended support to foster or natural families and to residential care facilities and for specialized child care staff services to children in foster homes, residential care facilities and natural homes.

There's been a 54.9 percent increase in demand for these services experienced in our current year. \$250,000 was previously allocated to exceptional rate care and is now transferred to this area.

A further 471,500 was identified as being related to situations which would have otherwise increased the volume and price of foster home for special rate care. That is, had we not had this program, our foster home and special rate care costs would have been higher, so it's a flexible type of service which can be stacked on top of the basic foster home and special rate care.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: Can the Minister tell me if there has been any consideration to the similar emergency crisis nursery that has been established in Calgary and several other places across Canada, as much to prevent child abuse of infants and as well as provide that outlet for parents who are feeling extreme stress and frustration?

HON. M. SMITH: I'm not directly familiar with the Calgary model, but we have actually been doing quite a bit to meet this particular need here. We've worked more on a model of helping families place youngsters in care where not all the needy ones are together.

A special needs youngster can be placed into our day care. There's quite a variety of day care, as you know. The agency just works out an agreement with the parent, and the range of options, there's foster homes that sometimes don't have many youngsters and could take one. The family day care is used for this type of purpose fairly often, and group day care also has some capacity to deal with these youngsters.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: I think that this particular situation, and I have given your staff the clipping, is with regard to an immediate crisis situation that confronts a family in which they can take a child under the age of six for up to 72 hours in order to provide that kind of relief from pressure that they might be feeling. I just raise it for the Minister as something that her department might wish to look into.

HON. M. SMITH: I think I'd like to state more strongly that we feel that the type of service and the range of

service we have is actually ahead of this type of crisis nursery. We're more flexible in terms of length of stay based on need, and we have a greater variety of placements available to us.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: I don't think this is the place for argument, but I think it's an entirely different thing than what we're doing in this province. Well, perhaps I'll let someone else ask some questions for awhile.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Kirkfield Park.

MRS. G. HAMMOND: Mr. Chairman, will the review committee be consulting the front-line social workers, the workers who are in the field?

HON. M. SMITH: Yes.

MRS. G. HAMMOND: Will they have confidentiality?

HON. M. SMITH: Yes.

MRS. G. HAMMOND: Are any of the agencies presently developing specialists?

HON. M. SMITH: Yes.

MRS. G. HAMMOND: Could the Minister indicate which agencies and in what areas?

HON. M. SMITH: Virtually all the agencies do, in fact, have a consultant or a coordinator to deal with these issues. There may be a couple of the smaller rural ones. They would still have to name someone who was the main contact person. In the city, all agencies have a coordinator/consultant person. Central and Northwest also each have a family therapist. Each agency was given one specialist from the old Children's Aid.

The interim guideline requires that each agency have an internal structure, a process that must be followed in a child abuse case. In addition to the worker being involved, the supervisor and the executive director must review the cases.

MRS. G. HAMMOND: When I was talking about specialists, I wasn't just referring to a coordinator or a consultant. Like, say, in Central and Northwest, how many social workers would be on staff?

HON. M. SMITH: There is variation among the agencies, because of their caseload size. The numbers I'll give you of staff are total numbers. They exist in the agency in the ratio of four professional staff to one support staff, approximately. There's roughly the four to one ratio. So I guess, if you take a fifth off, then you'll have the number of social workers: Central, 67.25; Northwest, 66 — there are decimals here, I'll round them off — 67; West, 38; Northeast, 34; South, 32; Eastern, 17.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The time being 4:30, it is time for Private Members' Hour. I'll interrupt the proceedings. We will reconvene at eight o'clock. The Member for Kirkfield Park can be first on the list.

SUPPLY — MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

MR. CHAIRMAN, C. Santos: This section of the Committee of Supply shall be dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Municipal Affairs. We shall begin with a statement from the Minister responsible for this department.

The Honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I would like to present the Estimates for the Department of Municipal Affairs for the fiscal year 1986-87. Members will already be aware of the supplementary information which accompanies the Municipal Affairs Estimates, and I believe by now it's been circulated.

The past year has been a productive one for the Department of Municipal Affairs, and the department has made strides in several important areas. In the past year, substantial progress has been achieved towards the implementation of assessment reform. This area has been and will remain the highest priority for the Department of Municipal Affairs, as the department continues to collect the massive amounts of information and to lay the extensive groundwork necessary to bring about a successful implementation. The department will continue to work actively to design a system that is fair, that is up-to-date, and that is understandable to all Manitobans.

In the past few years, assessment reform reports have emphasized the absolute necessity for proper adequate information as the basis for any new systems of assessment. Several critical steps towards this end have been taken in the past year.

The most complex and lengthy step in the reform process, the one which will ensure that information is both manageable and readily accessible, is the task of developing a computerized process for assessment. Computerization of the assessment process in Manitoba will allow assessments across the province to be completed, analyzed, and updated simultaneously, therefore for more accurate and up-to-date levels of value to be established.

I'm pleased to be able to inform members that the computer staff have now completed the first phase of this project, the needs analysis phase, which is critical to the establishment of a proper foundation for any new system. As a result, the requirements of the new system have been thoroughly examined and defined.

Computer staff are now well under way on the second phase, the design system. The requirements established by the needs analysis are being conceptually linked to form technical specifications. These specifications will, in turn, form the basic road map of functions in the computerized system. All of these functions will be tested to ensure that the system will perform as needed.

While the primary emphasis is on system design at present, we are at the same time planning for the last two phases of the computerization project, programming and system testing. I'm pleased to report that we have chosen our Portage la Prairie Assessment District Office as a test site for our computerized system, and we've already purchased and installed the appropriate computer equipment.

Over the next two years, we will be introducing the various elements of the program and testing them in

the Portage area. Once successful test results have been achieved, the system will be expanded to the other nine assessment branch offices.

I'm also pleased to report that my department has completed several tasks that will perform greater fairness in property assessment throughout the province by establishing uniform standards and procedures. I should have said "promote," rather than "perform."

During the last Session of the Legislature, Bill 83 was approved by the House. It rewrote the assessment appeal provisions, repealing the appropriate sections within The City of Winnipeg Act to allow the new uniform provisions in The Municipal Assessment Act, to govern appeals throughout the province. Bill 83 was a first major move toward a single piece of legislation that would govern assessment right across Manitoba, including the City of Winnipeg.

Throughout the next several years, we will continue to rewrite legislation, to promote greater fairness, greater equity, and a more understandable system of assessment in Manitoba. Significant headway has already been made toward the development of new uniform standards and guidelines for the actual assessment of property.

At the instigation of the Department of Municipal Affairs, the first province-wide joint procedural manual has been developed by the staff of my department, working in close cooperation with staff from the City of Winnipeg. This represents the first time in 30 years that staff from both the province and the city will be using the same manual for rating property. Assessment guidelines in the province will now be consistent between Winnipeg and rural Manitoba. The information contained in the manual is current to 1984. It is presently being field tested in both rural Manitoba and in the City of Winnipeg.

Additional joint procedural manuals for the valuation of commercial buildings and for the valuation of land are currently being developed, again by department staff, working closely with city staff. Completion and field testing is expected within the next two to three months.

As part of our efforts to promote a greater understanding of the assessment system and what assessment reform will mean to Manitobans, my department continues to be concerned about public education. In addition to the series of pamphlets on assessment reform that were issued last year, a videotape has been produced this year. This videotape was used to inform all municipal councils of the new procedures regarding the establishment and conduct of a board of revision, in keeping with the 1985 amendments.

It is our intention to produce additional videotapes and pamphlets on various aspects of assessment, over the next several years, as significant changes are made in the assessment process, and to keep the people of Manitoba informed about the progress of assessment reform.

I would also like to comment briefly on a final area of assessment reform commonly referred to as "classification and portioning." Members, I am sure, will recall that the Weir Committee recommended that property classes be defined and that prescribed portions of value be assigned to each of these classes to reflect their desired level of contribution for taxation

purposes. Bill 105 was passed to allow the province to implement this recommendation of the Weir Committee.

My staff and their counterparts at the City of Winnipeg have been spending a considerable amount of time trying to categorize the over 500,000 roll entries in Manitoba into identifiable property types. Their efforts have now resulted in the initial definition of nine distinct property classes and the coding of all properties directly under the provincial assessment jurisdiction into these classes. This material, together with comparable information from the City of Winnipeg, which we've just recently received, will be used to develop the portions that would be prescribed as percentages of value for the entire provincial assessment base.

When I've had an opportunity to study the information being assembled, and there has been an opportunity for discussion with the departmental assessment staff involved in a development of classification and portioning, I will be in a better position to provide more detail. Obviously at that point, we will be meeting with municipal officials to discuss the various aspects of classification and portioning.

During the past year, the Department of Municipal Affairs assumed a new responsibility, that of the Surface Rights Board. Since then, we have made several changes in the workings of the board to improve the service to the parties involved, in surface rights disputes, and to provide closer administrative support to the board. In addition, a new chairperson has been appointed, Mr. J.D. McNairn who is well known to members as the former Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs and as a former chairperson of the Public Utilities Board.

I look forward in this year to meeting with representatives from both the Surface Rights Association and the oil industry to discuss a number of concerns, including the issue of compensation to landowners and occupants.

Members are well aware that Municipal Affairs has a long tradition of consultation. That tradition has been maintained and strengthened in the past year and I certainly intend to continue the practice of active consultation with municipal officials, as well as with their organizations.

I would like to make special reference at this time to consultation with our largest municipality, the City of Winnipeg. The city is currently under a court order to reassess all properties by the end of December, 1986. Considerable speculation exists as to the tax impact on Winnipeg ratepayers that will accompany this reassessment. Although this topic falls somewhat outside the realm of the Department of Municipal Affairs Estimates review, I do want to assure all members that as the Minister responsible for the assessment process, I am eagerly awaiting final information from the city's new assessment statistics.

It is my intention, once the Department of Municipal Affairs has been given an opportunity to analyze this information, to sit down with the City of Winnipeg officials and to discuss whether provincial involvement or relief is appropriate and, if so, to what extent.

While still on the subject of consultation, I would like to thank the Union of Manitoba Municipalities, the Manitoba Association of Urban Municipalities and the Manitoba Municipal Administrators Association for the

cooperation and mutual efforts over many years. That cooperative effort and attitude has enabled the department to consult on various programs and to share in the development of wide-ranging discussions of mutual concern and interest.

The overall Estimates for the Department of Municipal Affairs are down slightly — 1.3 percent — the most significant difference being the reduction in funding to the Main Street Manitoba Program.

Main Street Manitoba has been one of the most successful programs ever offered by the province, generating over \$12 million in direct economic activity in 41 rural communities across the province.

My colleague, the Minister of Finance, said thanks to "Perfect Pete," my predecessor who initiated the program in 1982.

The capital amount of \$2 million is provided to allow the completion of the various ongoing projects. While no new commitments are being made under this program in the coming year, I am proud to say that Main Street Manitoba is meeting its goals of revitalizing rural communities and, at the same time, providing jobs to many rural Manitobans, proving that the provincial, municipal and private sectors can cooperate to enhance downtown areas in a varied and imaginative fashion while generating significant economic activity.

Its place will be taken by a more far-ranging program of assistance which is presently being developed to assist municipalities in rebuilding their basic services. Holding back new commitments until a new program is ready will allow the best possible use of the available funds.

I am pleased to report that the ceiling has been removed from the Urban Transit Grants and that the City of Brandon will this year receive an increase of 9 percent in assistance to this very valuable service.

Members will note that the salary amounts for the Department of Municipal Affairs reflect the current collective agreement figures agreed upon with the MGEA. Certain minor adjustments reflect conditions of vacancy, reclassification, maternity leave, etc.; otherwise, the staffing situation remains basically stable at 297 staff years.

Members will note some minor adjustments in the Municipal Advisory and Financial Services section. Basically, the grants in support continue as before. The amount provided for grants in lieu of taxes represents a 3.75 percent increase over last year's actual expenditure. However, as members are well aware, these figures are always variable depending upon the municipal mill rates, acquisition of property by government, etc.

The reduction in the Centennial Grants figure reflects a decrease in a number of communities making centennials this year. Members will be aware that a great many centennial celebrations have already been held. The figure reflects those which are anticipated during the coming 12-month period.

I am pleased to advise members that the village of Binscarth will be making its centennial this summer and that the R.M. of Gimli and Ochre River will be celebrating their centennials in 1987.

Members will note the Police Services Grant amount reflects the formula currently being utilized. The existing cost-sharing and grant arrangements have been developed through consultation with representatives

from the two municipal associations in the province. At present, rural municipalities in our province are making a contribution toward the cost of a service that benefits them. Any changes to the existing arrangements will be made through the same consultative process. More detail about the formula is provided in the Estimates Supplement and I would refer you to that information.

In October, municipal elections will be held throughout the province. No doubt, new faces will appear to carry on the traditions of progressive local government in the province. Some old, familiar faces will enjoy retirement from the constant pressures which municipal government imposes on the elected representative.

I would like to pay tribute at this time to the great service provided by local government officials in this province. Theirs is the least publicized level of government. It is also one which deals most directly with the local taxpayer and, as we know, these dealings can be very, very rough and immediate.

Manitoba has a long tradition of sound progressive municipal government. In 1986, we recognized the 100th anniversary of the passage of The Municipal Act which provided for government at the community level throughout the province. Students of government will recognize the enormous potential and responsibility that has taken place over that 100-year period. As the province has grown and matured, so has the provision of local services by municipal government.

I would also like to recognize the contributions made by the appointed officials in the local government field. They provide the specific day-to-day services which are frequently taken for granted by each of us, and I pay tribute to them now.

In the fall, the Department of Municipal Affairs will once again be embarking on a series of seminars for the municipal representatives. Seminars will be held for newly appointed municipal representatives, as well as for officials involved in the mechanics and procedures of the municipal elections. After the new year, the department will again be hosting seminars designed to assist and inform newly elected, in fact, any members of municipal councils who are interested in attending.

I'm particularly pleased to report that, once again, these seminars will be hosted by the town of Gimli. We have found in the past years that the seminars are well supported and that the feedback has been extremely positive from newly elected representatives. We look forward to these activities as an opportunity to begin the process of consultation and cooperation early in the careers of newly elected municipal politicians. Municipal Affairs has traditionally pursued cooperation and consultation with local governments across the province. Effective lines of communication, coupled with recognition of the mutual interests and concern has enabled my department and the people involved in local government to meet many challenges together.

In the coming year, I'm confident that the Department of Municipal Affairs, its representatives, and its programs will continue to work with local government in Manitoba to meet new challenges for the benefit of all Manitobans.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Opposition critic.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I rise to respond to the Minister's opening statement having heard parts of it before at some of the municipal meetings that I was able to attend — no thanks to the Minister's cooperation — and I guess that as a new critic, I had looked forward to some cooperation in working to put every effort to put forward some positive suggestions, to hear the kind of very thing that the Minister talks about; communications and working relationship.

Mr. Chairman, by his actions, it's very obvious that the Minister is not as anxious to cooperate as we are, that we had made a very common-sense approach to the Minister, to his Whip which was responded to by their Whip, that it was it was a common-sense approach that I should have the opportunity to proceed to a meeting by or with them, to some degree, to convenience the Opposition. However, we know what happened in that particular case, so I guess the stage is now set for the kind of criticism and the kind of activity in which he expects to have pursued.

As well, Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the Minister at the outset that, hopefully, he could respond as to when the supplementary information for the legislative review was prepared. You know, it seems strange that at two o'clock in the afternoon of the day the Estimates of the Department of Municipal Affairs is to open, that we now have a table that I'm supposed to be able to use as a cross-reference to the Estimates Book which we've had for some time. I ask the House and I ask the public of Manitoba, is that a fair and reasonable approach for the Opposition critic to have it laid on his desk at two o'clock in the afternoon and by three o'clock having to . . . (inaudible) . . . is that asking for cooperation or asking for a little bit stiffer criticism, Mr. Chairman? I, being the fair-minded person that I am, will not dwell a long time on it. — (Interjection) — I would have thought that the Minister who is relatively new in the role in which he has now found himself — (Interjection) — would have been a little bit more anxious to show some kind of a new example from the previous Minister who, I guess, behind the scenes maybe still is directing the Ministry of Municipal Affairs to the tune of \$55,000 to the taxpayers of Manitoba, the former Member for Springfield, who was soundly defeated by our new Member for Springfield and pleased to see that he has joined us in this Assembly; soundly defeated then, the people of Springfield spoke out very loudly and clearly, and I'm very happy that, in fact, took place.

Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the members of the government would wait their opportunity to speak in this committee so that I can have . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please.

The Member for Arthur has the floor.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The whole issue of the department and the information which has been slow in forthcoming will take a few minutes for some of us to have the opportunity to go through, but I want to make some general comments and there's very little in the Minister's opening statements which I have to work from except the whole area of assessment is one which, I guess,

if one were comparing it to the kind of action that the municipalities think should take place, speed has been somewhat less than desirable.

The Weir Report which was brought down in the 1980-81 period, completed just about the time that this government took office, we thought and the municipalities thought that there would be some swift and decisive action. Well unfortunately, they're in their second term of office, and we now still see very little action and the desire from the municipalities to see again this government move a little more swiftly.

The Minister keeps talking about how great things are happening and the fairness and equitability. He makes reference to the fact that they're now going to be working off the assessment book, the same assessment guidelines or book will be used by the City of Winnipeg and the rural parts of Manitoba. Well, I have a question there as well, Mr. Chairman, as to whether or not the businesses in rural Manitoba will have the same assessments as those in the City of Winnipeg? I think the consideration of the traffic that is exposed to those larger centres has to be taken into consideration versus those ones in the smaller communities. I hope that's taken into account. I would hope that the kinds of services that are provided in some of the larger centres have, in fact, something to do with the assessment in those larger centres and not imposed on those smaller communities that may have to carry the same load. So, even though I'm sure the Minister in his comments is thinking he is trying to equalize it and be fair, there can well be some inequities there that have to be watched for. I note that he said it would be watched and on a trial basis, I'm sure that the people who are paying the taxes, the rate payers, as we will be watching very closely, that it is administered and used in a very fair manner.

As far as the system set-up — he talks about the computerization and that's like almost he says it's a major part of the assessment change — it's really putting in place a tool that should help the department. As far as helping the taxpayer, and helping the ease of the burden of taxation or creating equity, it's really a monitoring system and a tool which should be able to keep them up to date, but as far as any revolting thing dealing with the general public, I don't think it has, you know, a lot of implications as far as taking some of the burden off. We'll get into that in a little bit more detail as well.

I, as well, think, Mr. Chairman, that the fairness and equity, and I'm going to use some figures here throughout the province, has to be addressed and addressed immediately. If the numbers that I have heard are accurate, and I think that they are — I have no reason not to think that they are — 40 percent of the taxes on the Cities of Winnipeg and Brandon, education taxes are borne by those ratepayers on their properties, that compares to something like 70 percent, 65-75 percent of the rural taxpayer of their total tax bill. Now, I stand corrected. If my numbers are wrong, then I would hope the Minister would correct me, but it is my understanding, in a general sense, that's the way it is. I don't consider that fair and equitable and there is almost a doubling of the amount that the rural communities are having to pick up as opposed to the larger centres. Now, I'm saying that, I think, I would like a clearer explanation from the Minister as to those kinds of differences. I made reference to the manual.

I want to as well make reference, Mr. Chairman, to the point that the Minister made dealing with the implementation of the Weir Committee Report. I would hope that he takes a little bit more action than he has in the past. Surface rights is a major issue. It's a major issue in the area in which I represent, an issue in which the Member for Virden represents and anyone else dealing with the development of oil and oil properties in this province. That specifically is an area which I will be prepared to spend some time.

But you know, there's an interesting thread that runs through the philosophy of this government. When it comes to the interests of those people who are sitting in the Treasury Benches and the development of resources that will put money in the coffers for them to use and use in a way in which they think is in the best interests of the province — I'm certainly not in agreement with the way in which they spend a lot of it, but the way in which they think it is — but the landowner does not have the same consideration as the landowner if there was a development of a city or a town. You know, if a farmer wanted to sell or any individual wants to sell a piece of property for the development and expansion of a city or a town or a village, then he has to go through a multitude of hoops. He or her, whoever it is, have to go through a multitude of hoops, because what is it going to do? It is going to take that precious farm land out of production so that we don't any longer have a basis for cheap food.

But let an oil company come along where there will be some revenue direct and more revenue flow to the province, yes, they can take four acres out of every 40 acres to put an oil well on it and use other properties. That's 16 acres out of a quarter section or 10 percent of that quarter section of land. How long does it take to happen? Not very long, Mr. Chairman, not very long. In fact, the system that is set up, and it's been pointed out to me and there are strong accusations made by the farming community that in fact the oil companies have benefited more from this government and their legislation than the farmers have, the very people who asked for the legislation.

Another example, and I'll tie the thread to the development of Hydro in the North. I'm sure the Native community, of which I also have the responsibility to be critic for, would support me in my comments in this. Mr. Chairman, there is the thread that when it comes to the political betterment and what is perceived to be the political betterment of the province and, of course, with that goes the political betterment of the NDP Party, when it comes to flooding the properties and taking away of some of the privileges of the northern Native communities, they aren't quite as anxious to protect those individuals as they are in other cases.

So they have certainly, to me and I think to many Manitobans, pointed out when it comes to the political betterment, the financial funding of the province where they can use the money to politically better themselves, the average individual, whether it be a Native in Northern Manitoba who loses their home or their livelihood or trapline or whatever or the oil properties, the farmers who live on those oil properties in the southwest, they get the same treatment and consideration from this government.

I am not impressed, Mr. Chairman, at all as a critic for rural people and for Municipal Affairs. I want the

Minister to take a very careful look at that, because it's a principle on which I think we're going to be spending a certain amount of time in bringing to his attention.

There are some other areas that I want to let the Minister know of. I'm sure that even though he probably has been informed, there's an issue which has been raised during some of the municipal meetings. That is the cost to the province, and we all know where the Union of Municipalities stood on the bilingual question in Manitoba. They do not particularly need every act of the Manitoba Legislature sent to every municipality in both languages, volumes of paper which they in fact don't feel they need. Yes, they would like a copy of each bill in the second language, but the multitudes of paper that each councillor would get, they don't feel that they need it in both languages. It was put forward at at least one of the municipal meetings that I was at, and I would hope that the Minister would pay attention to these people because they are pretty strong grass-roots people. — (Interjection) — Well, the Minister from his seat says he never had a chance to stay in the afternoon.

This whole question of pairing, Mr. Chairman, is so much of a hoax and a sham that it makes me ill. They, Mr. Chairman, have a four-seat majority in this Assembly. Can they not organize their affairs to have their Minister of Municipal Affairs away without a pair? There are still three of a majority, Mr. Chairman. It only takes one to beat us if there's a vote. So it's a hoax; it's a sham; and it's a bunch of garbage, Mr. Chairman, and we won't tolerate it any longer. I won't, Mr. Chairman. It's time the public knew just how much of a smoke screen and a phony baloney issue they're really raising. Four of a majority, and they say the Minister of Municipal Affairs can't leave. What are we talking about, Mr. Chairman? So much hoax. I'll tell you — (Interjection) — yes, it is balderdash from the whiskered gentleman from back in the rafters, Mr. Chairman.

I would tell you that the public won't accept it any longer, because we're going to make sure they understand. Four of a majority, and they have to make a big issue about not getting a pair and have to be back. The Minister of Municipal Affairs could have sat through them all. He knew darned well that there were members here anyway out there — not sensitive about it at all. Just that kind of cooperation and basic lack of understanding of just actually trying; it degrades the amount of intelligence that the member really has. It will wash, and we will use it to wash.

The concern has been brought to me by a reeve from the constituency of my colleague for Minnedosa, where there are some proposals or possible proposals to change the boundaries of municipalities not in the best interests of those municipalities, because the individual made the case to me that a municipal councillor, in most case, rather than looking after the concerns and the affairs of people as we do, look after more of the infrastructure of municipal roads, the more physical natures of municipalities. There should be more of a relationship or should continue to be the relationship of area representatives rather than the old principle of representation by population total. He makes a good case.

For example, if a municipality has one small village at the top end of a municipality, they would control the

determination of the destination of the south end of that community, and in fact could eliminate the kind of representation that in fact would be in their best interests. It's an issue which we will get into a little bit more in detail. I have proposed to have a meeting with them, and I know the individual has brought it to my attention and, I'm sure, would like to meet with the Minister and his Deputy to discuss it. I would hope that the Minister would be prepared to sit down and, in some depth, give those individuals a fair and open hearing.

Well, you know, we hear about the whole area of Main Street Manitoba Program. Again, I guess one has to say we need the proof. You know, we need the proof. He says it's tremendous job creation. Well, I can tell you the kind of job creation that I saw take place in our local community, and I'm sure that the local councillors will probably be upset in some communities for me saying this. But I guess, Mr. Chairman, I'm elected to represent the people of the constituency. I don't always expect to be in full agreement with them 100 percent of the time.

But I find it strange, Mr. Chairman, that they'd go around with heavy jackhammers and tear up concrete that's as thick and as solid as the floor in this Legislature to turn around and put in a zipper block of some kind, the kind that in about five years if there are people walking down there that don't have either an elderly person or a lady with high-heeled shoes or a man with a high-heeled shoe or something like that could well turn their ankle or whatever. I, for some unknown reason, can't understand why every six or eight, or nine inches, you have a crack in the cement and have them all through, like a jigsaw puzzle, that gives you better strength and better stability than a solid slab of cement from one end of a street to another? I have a hard time, in my mind, seeing the need for the use of taxpayers' money in this direction.

The town that I'm well familiar with, 10 years ago tore out the trees that were running up and down Main Street because their leaves were bothering people, and now the Main Street Manitoba Program replanted trees. You know, that's progress, I guess. We created jobs. That's certainly creating employment.

I would like to know, and I'll be asking the question of the Minister, who provided the product? There's certainly a supplier of a certain product in this province, and I'm sure that he's quite happy. I don't know whether it was tendered for, whether one person supplied it all, how it was developed, but there are many questions in that whole area.

Tell me what the long-term job is that is created? I know many towns and communities that would have been better off to have that money spent on hospital renovation, or improvement in beds in their hospitals, personal cares. — (Interjection) — Yes, the communities made the choice, the Member for The Pas says, because the government laid the money on the table. Anytime you get one level of government laying money on the table, it's enticing to the community to take advantage of it because it appears, in a lot of people's minds, that it's free money.

But there's only one taxpayer. I would have thought that an interest-free loan or interest-free grant of the same amount of money from taxpayers would have been better to create long-term manufacturing or employment in that direction.

That's daft, Mr. Chairman, and the Minister of Agriculture should check out what the program is. It doesn't create one job. After you lay a new cement sidewalk, how many jobs does it create, whereas if you help an industry that does something year after year, building or processing or manufacturing something, creates employment. I'd sure like to see how you're helping small business, with the payroll tax and the kind of tax load on the land and everything that you're putting on. With help like that, the people of Manitoba don't need many more helps like that.

So there are many questions being asked by the average person, so I just am telling the Minister, I get a little bit sick of all this overlap of a program that really was questionable as far as the taxpayers' expenditure.

I'll challenge; I'll debate with any municipality. I'll debate with them. — (Interjection) — Sure, remember it, use it all over Manitoba, and tell them that the Member for Arthur, the Municipal Affairs critic stood up and said, that it would have been better to spend money in well-needed personal care, hospital beds, and the people area, instead of laying concrete that hasn't got the solid slab. Tell them that. Tell them I'm interested in spending money, repriorizing the expenditure. Yes, please do. I'd sooner spend it on hospitals, personal care beds, than I would on the make . . . and I'll tell you something else to tell them, that I'd sooner have an interest-free program, or a loan program, to help an industry in that community. Please tell them that that's my priority. But don't do what you did in Fork River. Don't do what you did in Fork River and only tell part of the story. No, don't tell them part of the story.

The first thing you should have told them in Fork River was you didn't need a pair, because you have four seats in the Assembly. Why did you need a pair? So it's the first untrue statement that you made. You didn't need a pair.

Secondly, you wouldn't give a pair because you were to take the Opposition critic with you. That was the request. An unfair, a real common sense. So let's let the record be straight. The Minister is going to maybe have to take a little time during these Estimates and listen to a few things that might help in his operations within the department. The first thing he'll learn is that truth goes a long way and cooperation goes a long way, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I'm going to be very interested, and I hope the Minister of Municipal Affairs has quite a bit of detail dealing with the new program that he's talking about, that being the Water Upgrading Program for towns and villages and rural communities, and the bridges, and the culverts and the roads. Now it was very scanty; it was an election announcement that was made.

I would like to know how it fits in with the Water Services Board. Are the Water Services Board doing the administrative work or are we going to have a dual system now? Or is the former Member for Springfield, is that going to be his slush fund to become re-elected during the next election, or to try to become re-elected during the next campaign? Is that really the whole objective behind this new program? Is that the former Member for Springfield's slush fund so that he may, in fact, try to get re-elected?

Well, all the slush funds in the world won't get him re-elected, Mr. Chairman. The people of the constituency in which he came from, and many others, will make sure of that, and I can guarantee you that the present Member for Springfield is well set there for many, many years.

Mr. Chairman, the whole area I didn't get into as deep as I would have liked to, the whole area of surface rights, but we will deal with that. I would ask that the Minister, and I haven't seen them, they may have been introduced — I wonder if the Minister has prepared any form of regulations or guidelines which the board can operate by and if they are in fact in place, I would appreciate the Minister indicating to me that they are. If they are not, I would like to know at what stage they're at. I would like to know if he is proposing or has developed to any degree the whole area of the surface rights board.

Mr. Chairman, the whole area of staff, I'm pleased that the Minister put forward the comments dealing with staff. I look forward to the work that comes from his department because it's the reflection of the Minister, the policies of the Minister, that reflect the ambition and the work that comes from his staff, and if the Minister is up and going and vigorous, and wide awake at all times, I'm sure his department will be the same. If he doesn't set the example, maybe someone in there will.

I think it's important to note, and I'm pleased that he did note that it's 100 years ago that The Municipal Act was brought into place in the Legislative Assembly. It would be interesting to know who some of the past Ministers were. I know that probably some of them have gone on to many other things.

I am pleased, Mr. Chairman, to say that I look forward to the . . . What are five fingers, Sir?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Five minutes.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Oh, thank you. The whole area of responsibility, and I take it on as a major responsibility as the critic, and I look forward to some active and aggressive debates. I look forward to the Minister to come forward with many, many hopefully new ideas to help the rural community and those urban centres for which he is responsible.

I do compliment those people who have dedicated their lives to service in municipal councils. It is a heavy and onerous load because there are many times that they are directly in contact with the constituency which they represent unlike, to some degree, some of the provincial Ministers who get themselves into offices and forget that they came from the same territories. I do believe that it's important that the direct contact be made. It is a heavy and onerous load for those individuals.

I have a letter of response that the Minister sent to a reeve in my constituency which I'm anxious to delve into, to some degree. He, for some reason, feels that he doesn't have the kind of responsibility that he should have for the education taxes on farm land. Yes, he can say that he isn't directly involved, or it doesn't fall within his jurisdiction, but, Mr. Chairman, he is the Minister of Municipal Affairs. The municipalities have to collect the heavy tax load that goes towards our education.

He does have to speak out on behalf of those municipal councillors.

Ah ha, there's one concern that I have, Mr. Chairman, that when one looks at the teaching profession of the Minister and says, well, are we really going to get the kind of sincere input that we need, because he's been traditionally on the other side of the fence. He's been a receiver of the funds that come from the municipalities and the municipal funds collected, so he will be again challenged and gauged by his enthusiasm to represent those municipalities and look after them.

One of the major concerns of every local municipal government is the heavy levy of education taxes on them. We were committed, during the last campaign, to remove initially some of those taxes.

I want this Minister to commit to the same kind of action on behalf of those municipal councillors. I don't want a false statement or some promise that will never be lived up to. I want to know what his position is.

Mr. Chairman, I understand that my time on my opening statement is coming to completion. I just look forward to the Minister giving us full information. I know that many of my colleagues have questions of the Minister and I'm sure that over the next few days we will hopefully be able to get some of the direction, and particularly some of the policies that he will be implementing when it comes to the infrastructure, to support some of the municipalities.

That I think is going to be essential before we pass. I think we've got to have some answers on assessment; we have to have answers on surface rights; we have to have answers on program projections and policies dealing with the monies that are going to be spent by his department.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I hope the Minister is prepared to answer some questions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: At this point in time, we now invite the members of the staff of the Minister's department to take their respective places.

Deferring budget Item No. 1.(a), relating to the Minister's Salary, to be the last item for consideration by this Committee of Supply, we shall commence now with the consideration of Item No. 1.(b)(1) Administration and Finance, Executive Support: Salaries—the Member for Arthur.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, I'm just wondering, when we get into each one of these, if the Minister wants to deal specifically with each line-by-line or does he want to make a general comment when we're dealing with these, to give us a little bit of an outline of it, or what is his proposal to explain how he'll be expending the money that's in this appropriation?

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: I'll just wait a second until our staff arrives and I'll introduce them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If the members so wish or the Minister will agree, I will call the items by blocks. I will call the item, let's say, Item 1.(b)(1) and 1.(b)(2) together, for Executive Support.

MR. J. DOWNEY: I have a question, Mr. Chairman? I wonder if the Minister would, under the different

departments, introduce the staff which he has supporting him, so that we have an idea who we're dealing with in dealing with the department.

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased to have with me the Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs, Gerry Forrest, I'm sure all of you know; and we have the Director of Municipal Advisory Financial Services, Mr. Dennis.

The member's question was with respect to Executive Support. You wanted to know what that salary represents? That represents 8 SY's and we also have 8 SY's in the 1985-86 Adjusted Vote.

MR. J. DOWNEY: So he's just saying there is no change in the staff complement in that area.

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: There is no change in the staff complement.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 1.(b)(1)—pass; 1.(b)(2)—pass. 1.(c)(1) Human Resource Management: Salaries; 1.(c)(2) Other Expenditures—the Member for Arthur.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, what are the basic duties of this section of his department?

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: It is basically the personnel department, hiring of the staff, plus the whole area relating to personnel.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Pass.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 1.(c)(1)—pass; 1.(c)(2)—pass. 1.(d)(1) Research: Salaries; 1.(d)(2) Other Expenditures—the Member for Arthur.

MR. J. DOWNEY: What type of work does the Minister carry out in research? Give us some examples, not only examples, possibly he could give us the projects which were carried out last year and those that are proposed to be carried out this year, how he goes about hiring individuals to do it. The other question is: where is the contract? Is he responsible for the contract dealing with the former Member for Springfield?

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: The research staff consist of four people. That's the same number that we had in 1985-86. They're involved in a number of areas in the area of assessment. They're looking at the Fire Services Report, research into policing cost studies and this does not involve the services of Andy Anstett who's working on the fund for rural development.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, were those the ones for the work that they're doing. He mentioned the police costs, the assessment. Are there any other projects that are under way carried out last year and if so, can we have copies of the research work that was done and what is proposed for this year, what areas? How many research projects have been carried out and who has carried them out?

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: I'm advised that those were the only areas of research in the past year and I'm

sure we can provide you with copies of the research reports that were done in those areas that have been completed.

MR. J. DOWNEY: You made reference to the policing costs. What work is being done? What kind of activity? Are there going to be some changes. Is there a change of formula dealing with policing costs?

I know that there have been some concerns about inequities in that whole area. Does he have any update to provide the committee with, dealing with the policing costs within the province?

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: The policing report that I've made reference to is the report. That was completed; that was referred to the municipal associations for their review and comment and which has resulted in some contribution by the rural municipalities towards the policing costs in their areas.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 1.(d)(1)—pass; 1.(d)(2)—pass. 1.(e)(1) Financial, Communications and Administrative Services: Salaries; 1.(e)(2) Other Expenditures—the Member for Brandon West.

MR. J. McCRAE: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask the Minister how many SY's are involved in this branch or division?

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: Yes, that particular line or Section 1.(e) Financial, Communications and Administrative Services involves nine staff and five weeks, is how we read that. I should perhaps refer you to Page 10 of the Supplementary Information and the breakdown of staff in each of these sections is provided on that page, Page 10.

MR. J. McCRAE: Mr. Chairman, we just received these this afternoon, so it's very hard for us to have a detailed look at it. So you'll forgive me if I ask questions that might be answered in here.

Mr. Minister, of those nine staff years, how many are involved in financial, and what do they do?

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: Of those nine staff in that section, I am advised that four are involved in the financial end of preparing financial statements, I presume paying bills and so on. There is one person who is involved in communications and library services. I believe there is one that is involved in keeping track of the physical assets, I suppose, of the department. The other three would be clerical.

MR. J. McCRAE: Mr. Chairman, these three clerical staff, do they fall under the whole appropriation, or are there so many clerical in financial and so many in communications, how are the duties of those three distributed?

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: Yes, I am advised those three clerical provide services on a shared basis to the other six members in that section.

MR. J. McCRAE: The person who is charged with responsibilities for communication and library, what is the salary of that person?

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: The individual who has been described as communicator also has responsibilities for the library services, has been with the department for I understand four or five years, and her title is information writer. Her salary is \$27,200.00.

MR. J. McCRAE: Mr. Chairman, you'll forgive me if I bounce the Minister back to Item (b), Executive Support, because it does have a bearing on the questions that I'm asking.

The information writer — could you tell me more — exactly what that means and what that person does?

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: As I indicated before, the information writer, that individual does have the responsibility for the library services. In addition, she would spend some of her time with the writing of the publication from the department — the "Informat" — helping write pamphlets, writing new releases, occasionally assisting with some of the material that I may be able to just present in speeches, that type of responsibility.

MR. J. McCRAE: Does no one in the group, under the heading Executive Support, help the Minister write his speeches?

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: Mr. Chairman, the answer to that is no.

MR. J. McCRAE: Mr. Chairman, how many speeches does the Minister make in a year?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Does the Minister want to answer this question?

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: I'm not sure, but after I've been in that position for a year, I'll be able to respond. Certainly, I would think that I would seek every opportunity possible to be able to meet with municipal officials or those persons in rural Manitoba to whom Municipal Affairs is an important area. But, certainly, in the past couple of months I've had a number of speeches that have been written and then I may have rewritten, but certainly the basis has been provided by our communications person.

MR. J. McCRAE: Mr. Chairman, could the Minister tell us what the other expenditures of \$210,000 are for?

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: I would like to refer the Member for Brandon West to Page 20 in the Supplementary, and you'll note that the expenditure of 246.1 — I'm sorry — 249.9 will have 257.1 in salaries and there is an allowance for staff turnover of 7.2 for a total, personnel, 249.9.

MR. J. McCRAE: Mr. Chairman, I understand the Minister a few minutes ago told me that the communicator is in charge of publications, Informat, pamphlets, news releases, etc. Would that be under the heading of Public Information on Page 20 of the booklet?

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: Yes, it would be.

MR. J. McCRAE: The public information budget is what — \$73,000 this year. Does it show on here? Is the \$100,000 figure to the left the figure for last year? If it is, could the Minister tell us how they needed \$100,000 last year but only \$73,000 this year?

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: Yes, that is the correct interpretation. Last year \$100,000 was voted for for the purpose of public information; this year it's been decreased to \$73,200.00. The reason that the expenditure in 1985-86 was higher than this year is that there were quite a number of pamphlets that were published on the matter of assessment reform. I think there were about six or eight in a series. The costs were quite considerable.

Now that Manitobans have some idea of what is taking place, we did not feel that there would need be as large an effort; however, the \$73,200 represents the cost of the Informat and some of the development or some of the brochures that we intend to develop as the assessment reform process moves along. So there will be some additional information published this year.

MR. J. McCRAE: How much of the public information budget last year was spent to tell people about assessment reform?

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: We don't have that information handy, but I'll certainly obtain that information and bring it back here as soon as I can.

MR. J. McCRAE: Then maybe the Minister could tell us what the assessment reform was last year?

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: I think, perhaps, to best explain what the pamphlets were about, one could perhaps distribute samples of these. The purpose of the pamphlets was to develop an understanding amongst the public as to what we mean by assessment and what is involved in our assessment reform so that as implementation takes place within the next two to three years, the public will have a good understanding of what the existing problem was, what steps have been taken to deal with that problem, and what the assessment reform will mean in terms of their property taxes.

MR. J. McCRAE: Mr. Chairman, if the assessment reform the Minister is talking about is going to happen two or three years down the road, does he not agree with me that if people receive pamphlets telling them about it last year, that by the time it happens they will have forgotten all about what they read in the pamphlets. And if that's true, then why would we bother making those pamphlets?

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: Clearly, the Member for Brandon West doesn't have the same background that I do. We talk about public education, and education means that you have to develop an understanding and it can be done in a number of ways. One of the pamphlets last year I believe dealt with how was farmland assessed so that people could develop some understanding.

I think the Member for Brandon West will agree with me that the issue of assessment is an area which is

not well understood by many Manitobans. One of the recommendations or the whole thrust of the Weir Committee Report was that assessment be such that it be fair and that it be understandable.

Through our public education program, through our pamphlets, through our speeches, through our Informat, through whatever communications we have, we are trying to develop an understanding of what I think is to most people a difficult subject to comprehend. But we are working at that and we'll continue to work over the number of years. It's not a one-shot effort; it is developmental.

MR. J. McCRAE: Mr. Chairman, I hope with his comment the Minister wasn't making any derogatory comments about my own background when he referred to mine not being the same as his. I'm not sure just what the Minister's background is, but I'm sure it must be quite different from mine judging by the budgetary policy of this government which he supports.

Mr. Chairman, not too long ago, as a member of the council of the City of Brandon, the department made available to councillors a certain pamphlet about assessment boards. Those types of pamphlets I thought were very useful; it certainly helped me to become accustomed to what was going on in my own city. But I still wonder about the wisdom of making available pamphlets, and the Minister hasn't told us just to whom those pamphlets went, whether it was to every homeowner in the province or to whom.

But when it comes to public information, there is a fine line sometimes, Mr. Chairman, about what is information and what is propaganda. In this department and in other departments, I think it's our duty as Opposition members to be very vigilant when we're examining departmental estimates.

I was asking the Minister about the other expenditures in this area and I'm not sure if he's given me — oh, it's here on Page 20.

I'll yield to another honourable member for the moment, Mr. Chairman.

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: Mr. Chairman, I should perhaps clarify myself. What I meant when I made that reference to my background being somewhat different than the Member for Brandon West, I meant my teaching background where I think I do have some understanding of the learning process; and while my honourable friend from Arthur made some rather negative comments about having a teaching background and being the Minister of Municipal Affairs, I think in this particular situation it serves as an asset.

MR. J. McCRAE: Mr. Chairman, just on that, now that I do know what the Minister's background is, I assure him I'm not here as a member of this place to be lectured to by the Minister; but I am in here to ask questions and have those questions answered without derogatory personal comments.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Morris.

MR. C. MANNES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Following along the line of questioning by my colleague, the Member for Brandon West, I think he

brings forward a very good area of discussion because we just assume, and I know, particularly, if you've been an educator, you just assume that if you write something down and you send it out that indeed it will increase the level of awareness.

I ask the Minister whether his department has done any surveys to see whether the public at large has a broader or better understanding now of this whole assessment process than they did a year ago before that pamphlet was set out, or does he just assume that Manitobans now have a better understanding of that process?

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: I think the member has raised a very valid point. I know only too well how difficult it is to communicate some concepts. Assessment is a difficult concept and, certainly, publishing of pamphlets and distributing, whether it be done through municipal offices or done through the mail, is not the total answer to developing the kind of understanding that I would like to see in the public.

We will be reviewing our efforts in the area of public education and trying to determine what is the most effective way of developing the kind of understanding that has to take place for people to fully appreciate what assessment reform means.

MR. C. MANNES: Well, I'm glad to hear that answer in part, Mr. Chairman, because my assessment of this government for the last five years, they just automatically assume that the more information you put out that the more the people become aware.

I would hope that, particularly within this area, before they would attempt to gain to throw out general mailing by way of tax statement or however they did the last one, I forgot, that indeed they do attempt to analyze whether or not they, meaning the government, is receiving any value for that exercise because it's costly and I daresay that maybe we could direct those very limited funds to a better way of directing the message to our population.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 1.(e)(1) . . .

MR. H. PANKRATZ: No, I'm still on the same one in regard to Communications.

Could the Minister indicate to us in this . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: May the member take his place please? It has always been the rule in the House that I can recognize people only in their seat.

The rationale for this is that we don't want questions to be coming out from unexpected places.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. CHAIRMAN: We are just following tradition, and I think it's better to follow tradition than not.

The Member for La Verendrye.

MR. H. PANKRATZ: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I must say I have learned another item today in this Legislature, and I'm really happy for that.

The question I would like to ask the Minister: in light of all this information that we are getting, would we

be able to get a guideline from you, Mr. Minister, which will indicate when and how you are going to proceed through this assessment, all the way through?

Because I think what's happening to date with our assessment, the general public is getting more confused than they ever have been because we have received the Weir Report. We don't know whether this government, or what parts of it and how you will react and what you will do with it. And I think that's the information that we're looking for. For instance, as any farmer or even the town of Steinbach or whatever, what are you attempting to do, or how will you react? I would like to see that your information or your pamphlets that you will be distributing in the future will tell us what you will do and the actions you will take instead of putting it in the form of — I would almost say it's more confusing because really the general public is not aware of assessment. I think I have to go along with you when you stated earlier — with this, they're asking questions which we have difficulty, at least we had very much so on the municipal level, to come back with any answers because we don't know what you will be trying to enforce.

I would wish, Mr. Minister, that I could ask you that your information would outline what your intentions will be and over what time frame for us.

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: I wish I could give an answer right now, but unfortunately life is not that easy. As the member is well aware from his municipal background, a very serious problem was brought to light in the late 1970's which resulted in the Weir Commission, or the Manitoba Assessment Review Committee, being struck in 1979 to take a look at the whole issue of assessment reform. Contrary to what my honourable friend from Arthur had said, that particular report was never tabled until, I believe March of 1982. So there was about a three-year span just for the committee to become aware of what all the problems were, to sit down, analyze those and make recommendations.

Following that, I believe, again a number of members opposite, and certainly from this side of the House, as members of the municipal committee, travelled around the province hearing views of municipal officials as to how they felt about the report. Eventually a position was adopted by government and we are moving in the direction of assessment reform. But as I indicated in my opening remarks today, complying with the recommendation of classification, all properties in rural Manitoba have been defined into one of nine different classes. That information has just recently been provided to us by the city, and keeping in mind that when we talk about portioning, we will be looking at classes on a province-wide basis, and it is taking considerable time to amass all this information. It is going to take considerable time to evaluate this information to give some thought as to what the percentages will be in the portioning exercise, and once that has been done, we'll be in a better position to indicate when actual implementation will take place.

But as the member recalls, the Manitoba Assessment Review Committee recommendations had indicated that it was anticipated that implementation could be brought about by 1988-89. Generally, we are on that same time line and so the question is, can we provide a guideline,

sort of a pamphlet outlining when we hope to implement it. At this time it would be rather difficult, not having had the opportunity for staff to analyze all the information that we have for myself and the government to make a number of critical decisions, but certainly it is progressive, and I would hope that within the next two-three years, or whatever, that implementation based on the adoption of many of the Weir Committee recommendations will take place.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 1.(e)(1) — the Member for Brandon West.

MR. J. McCRAE: Another significant expenditure on Page 20 referred to as "Other" and being new here, maybe the Minister can tell me what "Other" stands for. It's \$68,900, down some from last year, but what is included in "Other?"

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: That expenditure of \$68.9 thousand would be in respect to a number of small items such as operating supplies, rentals, professional services, hotels, meals, I believe computer-related charges might be part of that, publications — (Interjection) — I'm sorry, this would be subscriptions for the library, and another item, employee educational assistance. It's a number of small items.

MR. J. McCRAE: Mr. Chairman, I'm just wondering, professional services, what kinds of services is the Minister talking about there?

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: In that \$68.9 thousand is a 5,000 figure that's been put in for the eventuality we may have to hire someone on a consultative basis to provide us with a report or whatever.

As an example, I'm told that last year the department hired, I believe a staff person from Myers, Norris and Penny at Brandon to look at the issue of taxation of farm residences when it comes to the question as to whether the income was greater off-farm than it was from the farm. That type of study that normally you wouldn't have the departmental staff at the time to do.

MR. J. McCRAE: Mr. Chairman, is that part of the "Other" budget about the same as it was last year?

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: Yes, it is.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 1.(e)(1)—pass; 1.(e)(2)—pass. There will be no resolution on this segment of the budget until we consider the Minister's Salary.

The time being 4:30 p.m., I'm interrupting the proceedings of this committee for Private Members' Hour. The members of the committee shall return at 8:00 p.m.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MADAM SPEAKER: Debate on Second Reading, Public Bill No. 6? Debate on Bill No. 6?

HON. J. COWAN: Stand.

MADAM SPEAKER: Stand.

RES. NO. 12 — NORTHERN AND NATIVE PROGRAMS

MADAM SPEAKER: On the proposed resolution, the Honourable Member for Thompson.

MR. S. ASHTON: I move, seconded by the Minister of Northern Affairs, that:

WHEREAS the Federal Conservative Government has cut programs affecting Northerners and the aboriginal people of Canada in particular; and

WHEREAS these cuts have already included a cut of from \$761,000 in 1985 to \$409,000 in 1986 in the "Challenge 86" job creation budget for Northern Manitoba; and

WHEREAS the "Nielsen Task Force on Native Programmes - Operation Buffalo Jump" recommended cutting more than \$300,000,000 from Native programs; and

WHEREAS that report recommended the closing of hospitals, introducing deterrent fees, reducing funding for health care and education, delays in land claim settlements, and other cuts designed to de-populate reserves; and

WHEREAS aboriginal people were only made aware of this plan through a leaked document; and

WHEREAS that report has been replaced by another report entitled "Improved Program Delivery: Indians and Natives," which confirms that the Conservatives intend to follow these same cuts; and

WHEREAS the Federal Conservative Government now proposes that unless reserves can pay for water, sewage, electrical and road services, they would simply do without even though below-minimum health standards would result; and

WHEREAS there is further concern that funding for economic development will be cut back; and

WHEREAS there is further concern that social programs for Northerners, and Native people in particular, will also be cut; and

WHEREAS aboriginal people and Northerners cannot afford these cuts which are to be brought down on them.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the Federal Government to immediately abandon the plans to cut Northern and Native programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly pressure the Federal Government to deal more openly and more honestly with the aboriginal people of Canada; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the Federal Government to live up to the principles of its treaty obligations and its constitutional responsibilities to the aboriginal people of Canada.

MOTION presented.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Thompson.

MR. S. ASHTON: Madam Speaker, the resolution that I have introduced today I think addresses a number of key problems in the present situation facing

Northerners, and Native people in general, and certainly I will address that in my remarks today. But I would also like to address, what I see as being the possible future directions for the North and for Native people in particular, because I think that's also something we should be discussing and debating in this Legislature.

The situation in Northern Manitoba and across Northern Canada today is unfortunately not a very positive one. We're seeing, Madam Speaker, indication after indication of the economic and social difficulties facing Northerners in general, and Native people in particular; whether it be in terms of education in Manitoba or other provinces, where only 45 percent of Native people graduate from high school, compared to 70 percent of the population generally; whether it be in other areas in terms of income, where Native people make only two-thirds of the income of Canadians in general; whether it be in terms of housing, where 50 percent of Native families live in crowded housing conditions; and whether it be in terms of other indicators, particularly in terms of sewer and water, where less than 50 percent of Native houses are fully serviced with sewer and water compared to the national rate of over 90 percent.

Madam Speaker, I could continue. There are some other distressing indicators of the situation facing Native people today, Madam Speaker, including the fact that infant mortality rate is 60 percent higher than the national rate. But these are all perhaps cold statistics, Madam Speaker. I think anyone who has been to the North, anyone who has been to Native communities knows of what I speak.

Madam Speaker, that's the present situation, and I think it's clear to anyone that the programs that are in place today are inadequate to deal with that situation. But, Madam Speaker, we're standing here today not to debate necessarily strictly expanding those programs or improving upon those programs, but unfortunately we're in the situation of having to debate the cutbacks in those programs that are taking place. That I think is a shameful comment in terms of our national policy for Native people, whether it be in Manitoba or elsewhere in Canada; and cuts there have been and proposed cuts there are. I am convinced that if we don't fight those existing cuts and those proposed cuts today, those cuts will come into place, Madam Speaker.

Just to begin with, just to give you some idea of some of the cuts that have already been brought in. In the last Budget, Madam Speaker, a total of approximately \$60 million was chopped from the Department of Regional Industrial Expansion program, which particularly impacts on Native economic development. What the Federal Government did, Madam Speaker, was take an allocation of \$345 million which had been intended for expenditure over four years, and stretched that money over a five-year period, resulting in a cut in each of the years of approximately \$60 million. I think that's shameful, Madam Speaker, given the present situation, the present need for economic development in Native communities.

Here, in Manitoba, we've seen another cut, a cut which I outlined in the resolution itself, Madam Speaker, a cut from \$761,000 in job creation funding in 1985 for the "Summer Challenge Job Creation Program," to only \$409,000 in 1986, in the North of Manitoba. Madam Speaker, that's in an area where unemployment

in many communities can be as high as 90 percent and yet this Conservative Federal Government chose to cut funding by 45 percent for young people; another shameful cut.

It goes further, Madam Speaker, it goes further. I believe what we are seeing in these cuts is the veritable tip of the iceberg because the Federal Conservative Government has also released the Nielsen Report, a portion of which related to Native programs. Just to give you an idea of how severe that report would have been for Native people and would be if it was adopted today, Madam Speaker, I quote from the Nielsen Report that they are talking proposals for change in the report which outlines "savings" of approximately \$169 million.

Just to give you some idea of what that report talked about, Madam Speaker, it talked about the introduction of a user-pay principle to partially fund any community infrastructure built above minimal standards in economically stagnant communities along with associated operation and maintenance costs.

It talked very clearly of trying to discourage people from living on reserves in Canada — something that I also consider to be quite shameful. Well, Madam Speaker, that was subsequently replaced by the further report, which is also referenced to in the Resolution, the Report on Improved Program Delivery for Indians and Natives, but those proposals have not been repudiated — that is what concerns me. There have been cuts, there is talk of further cuts, and there has been no repudiation of those cuts by the Federal Government.

You know, Madam Speaker, it goes even beyond that. It goes even beyond those specifically outlined cuts I mentioned and those proposed cuts. In effect, many bands in Manitoba have been faced with de facto cuts in recent years, cuts that they indicate are as high as \$32 million. This was recently confirmed in an auditor's report that was conducted to investigate the claims of Native bands in Manitoba that they were being underfunded.

Madam Speaker, that report did clearly indicate that there are problems in the Department of Indian Affairs that have led to cuts in the amount of funds that Native bands and communities have received. I quote just one brief section of the report which I think summarizes it. It says, "In summary we believe there is support for most of the allegations raised by representatives of the Indian groups." Those are allegations of \$32 million in cutbacks over a period of 12 years.

There are many specific examples, Madam Speaker. They involve many different bands in Manitoba, many different Native organizations. While I don't have the opportunity given the time available to go through some of those examples, I would certainly be willing to provide a copy of the auditor's report or I'm sure my colleague, the Minister responsible for Native Affairs would be willing to provide a copy of that report because some of the concerns that are outlined in the report and which are confirmed are pretty staggering.

That's the present situation, Madam Speaker, as we enter what could be a phase of exciting new development for Native people, for Northern Canada. As you know, there's been a great deal of momentum developing in recent years, a momentum of Native people fighting for self-government; fighting for greater control over their own lives. It's been discussed

constitutionally, it's been discussed at the reserve level. Certainly in this Legislature we have joined in that discussion and I think I can say without a doubt that my colleagues in the New Democratic Party support that move toward self-government.

Can we blame Native people if they are somewhat distrustful of the intentions of the Federal Government as the Federal Government talks of its supposed support for self-government? Can Native people be blamed if they argue that they have a legitimate concern that cuts in the Department of Indian Affairs which are supposedly going to lead to additional resources for Native communities, that those additional resources will not be passed on to them? Can they be blamed, Madam Speaker, for feeling this way? I certainly think not.

If one looks at the record, whether it be in Manitoba or the under-funding, whether it be in terms of those specific cuts I've outlined, or whether it be in terms of the Nielsen Report and other reports that have talked of major cuts, I think there's a genuine concern amongst Native people about the intentions of the present Federal Government in regard to Native programs.

As I said, Madam Speaker, this could be an exciting time for the North and for Native people. Certainly it is in some ways. There has been progress despite the gloomy picture that I painted earlier and I'm proud to say that Manitoba has led the way, whether it be in terms of health with some of the major initiatives in Northern communities over the last few years, including the introduction of the air ambulance service, the construction of many nursing stations in Native communities. We've made moves to improve health care in Native communities, in terms of education there have been a number of significant initiatives in the North. We're training teachers, social workers, managers, nurses; we're giving Northerners and Native people in particular, the opportunity to have an education and then to work in the North and that's pretty significant.

If anyone doubts the significance of that, Madam Speaker, one only has to attend some of the graduations. I had the fortune to attend a recent graduation involving the Awasis Agency where Native people were graduating from a course that gave them skills in terms of child and family services.

I had the opportunity to attend the recent graduation of nurses where Northerners had the opportunity to complete a nursing education in Northern Manitoba and now will be staying in Northern Manitoba to work.

Madam Speaker, there is a considerable excitement in those communities but that excitement will dissipate, that momentum will dissipate if we don't make a firm commitment to Native people for fair funding, for recognition of their Aboriginal rights, for recognition to their right for self-government.

Call it what you want, Madam Speaker, call it a vision of the North, perhaps. I know that that's a word that members opposite take some offence to buy I remember a Conservative Prime Minister some 25 years ago who referred to that. He had some fervour behind that vision. I think we a place for renewed vision for Northern Canada and Northern Manitoba in particular in which Native people will have greater control over their own destiny, in which they will be able to break down many of the barriers that prevented full participation in previous years.

As I was researching this speech I was reminded of a quote by Jean-Jacques Rousseau. That, Madam Speaker, was that "man is born free; yet he is everywhere in chains." That is the situation facing Native people today. They're born free, they seek freedom; the freedom to control their own destiny. They seek the freedom to a decent standard of living, decent health, education and social services.

But they find themselves in chains; chains of bureaucracy, chains of lack of self-control. If we just lift those chains, if we just give them that control over their own destiny, if we make a complete commitment to recognizing their rights to a decent standard of living, recognizing their Aboriginal rights, recognizing their right to self-government, I think we can achieve that vision of the North which has been expounded by so many people over these past few years, we can build a better Northern Canada and a better Northern Manitoba.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Arthur.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

As critic for Native Affairs, I want to say that I am pleased to participate in the debate, and I think it's important that the record be set straight as to why the resolution is on the Order Paper. Madam Speaker, one would certainly question the sincerity of the member who just made the introduction of the resolution as far as the Native people are concerned and his own political well-being and future. Where has there been one positive recommendation in a resolution of this kind? Where is there a positive recommendation?

Let's take a look at it, Madam Speaker. What is it? It's again the fed-bashing of the New Democratic Party in Manitoba. That's what it is. It's the political betterment of a member of the Legislature from the North, not one iota of positive thoughts to help the Native people in this province, Madam Speaker. I will back up that statement with the evidence that I'll be laying on the record here immediately, because what is the first thing they say in the resolution?

"WHEREAS the Federal Conservative Government has cut programs affecting Northerners and aboriginal people of Canada in particular." Well, let's go to the Estimate Book of the Province of Manitoba under the New Democratic Party of which he is a member of the government. Let's take a look at the Estimates of Northern Affairs, Madam Speaker, where the money is going to be spent. Let's take a look at it.

What did they do? They cut over \$1 million out of Northern Affairs. Can you imagine that, Madam Speaker? Raising a lot of Cain about the federal cutbacks to the Northerners, and what did he and his government do? How sincere is he? Look at the colour of him, Madam Speaker. He's as red as the flag beside you, Madam Speaker.

MR. S. ASHTON: On a point of order, Madam Speaker. If my face is red, it's from embarrassment for the member who's speaking, because he knows not of what he speaks.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please. I can't hear. The honourable member does not have a point

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of order. A disagreement over the facts is not a point of order.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Madam Speaker, if I don't know what I speak, then something is wrong with the Estimate Book that we've had tabled. Is he saying that the government is now tabling false Estimates? Is that what he's saying, that they're falsifying and cooking the books? Is that what he's saying? He's really saying what we've been saying is true.

So, Madam Speaker, let the member stand and apologize, because it is his government that is cutting back to the Northerners through Northern Affairs programs. I'll give you one specific area that probably would point out the most, and it's in the area of direct grants where there is a specific cut which, I'm sure, has helped in certain areas. So don't let him stand here in his way of being so sanctimonious and sacred as far as Northern Manitobans, because it's only his own political betterment that he's interested in.

Natural Resources as well, Madam Speaker, which a lot of that money is spent in Northern Manitoba dealing with the concerns, I'm sure, of the resource base of which the Native community live on has been cut by several millions of dollars. Yes, Madam Speaker, again evidence that the Minister is only standing talking here to us in hollow tones. Don't be that kind of a person. You don't represent and you don't speak and have any credibility for those people in which you're speaking on behalf of. What the member has done has done the Northern community and the Native community far more harm than good. To try and serve his own political interests, he has hurt the community in which he is trying to help.

I would say, Madam Speaker, we should expect an apology from the Member for Thompson not only to the Natives and Northerners, but to the Federal Government as well for the falsification of what he's been saying. I would hope that he would have the intestinal fortitude to do so.

Madam Speaker, he makes reference to the Neilsen Task Force. Well, there are many reports that are out, but let's deal with a report that this government has put forward. Let's deal with money that they have spent through Manitoba Hydro. I won't go into the questionable part of how the whole contractual agreement was left. I will a little bit later.

But the WMC was hired at \$40,000.00. What was one of the projects of WMC? WMC were hired. Yes, they were hired. One of the objectives was to check the success of the project, and this is Limestone. The success of the project can be measured simply by the percentage of Native employees and by the number of contracts awarded to Native-owned or Native-employed businesses. Has the member instructed or made sure that his Minister has instructed that all companies or the majority of companies doing business on Limestone have Natives working in their shops or on their executives? Has he checked into that? Has he made sure that the Natives are employed?

Well, I'm glad the Minister of Northern Affairs finally woke up, because it is his department, the Minister that cut the money. It should be he and his Member for Thompson who are dealing with one another. It's he that he should be bringing a resolution in on, going after him, not the Federal Government, Madam Speaker.

There are other questions that have to be asked. Are the majority of the permanent jobs going to be maintained on the Hydro projects in the North? Are they going to be taken by Native Canadians? What is the percentage? I asked the member today, what is the percentage of Native Canadians now hired by Manitoba Hydro? I asked the Member for Rupertsland, the Minister responsible for Native Affairs. These are pertinent questions, and I hope that he's pointing to his colleagues and, of course, bring to the attention of this great sanctimonious Member for Thompson.

Yes, Madam Speaker, it is time that they asked some questions of each other, not of the Federal Government and everyone else. You know, the deplorable conditions and all these things that he points out, who have they come about under? A Liberal Government for the majority of the last 15 years in Ottawa. That's who was in Ottawa. That's how the conditions developed the way they were. Who was in Manitoba? Yes, it was NDP, and they have the nerve, Madam Speaker, to bring in such a resolution.

My, my, my! How much credibility does a member like that have? How much credibility does he have, Madam Speaker? I think that he has done the people of the North, the Native Canadians, far more harm than he has good just to better his own political image, but he's been caught at it. He's been caught at it, Madam Speaker, and each and every member on this side will get up and walk over him on each and every issue that he's brought forward. Madam Speaker — (Interjection) — that's right.

Here's one here. You know, this is the real old scare tactic. I would like him to bring forward any factual evidence that the hospitals in the North are closing. I want some factual evidence that's happening. He put it on a resolution; I want that information. I want them to bring it forward. Where is the report recommending closing of hospitals? I want him to tell me some factual situations. I want some factual information, Madam Speaker, and I want to also have him point out the deterrent fees that he talks about. Deterrent fees, my goodness sakes, he knows that our position is clear on that.

Madam Speaker, he refers to a leaked document. Well, Madam Speaker, a leaked document, well, that's the oldest trick in the book, to make reference to something that no one can substantiate. But he of all people making reference to a leaked document, Madam Speaker. He raised such a major issue in this Assembly that one should never ever have any kind of document unless it has been hand delivered or certainly a trail on it. Yes, Madam Speaker, he of all people talking about leaked documents, and using that as a substantial piece of evidence. My goodness, Madam Speaker, I'm overwhelmed by the member's gall to stand in this Legislative Assembly and make reference to a leaked document, he who had so much trouble with his mail; he who had such a ruckus with you, Madam Speaker, as to whether he should apologize over it. Yet, he uses it as one of his substantive items in a resolution.

Oh, Madam Speaker, I tell you that this member will think twice before he ever puts another resolution on the Order Paper. We're going to make sure that he does, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, you don't have to be overwhelmed by my logic — (Interjection) — oh, it was underwhelmed, was it?

We talk about giving the Native Canadians their right in society. Well, Madam Speaker, who was the great Canadian who gave the Native Canadians the right to vote in this country? I ask the question of the Member for Thompson. Who was that great Canadian? Well, I'll tell him in case he's afraid to utter his words in this Chamber. It was John Diefenbaker. That's who it was, and he was the best Progressive Conservative this country's seen in many years. That, Madam Speaker, is who it was.

Would it have choked him, Madam Speaker? If it had been Stanley Knowles, I'm sure he could have uttered it out of his mouth. Yes, I'm sure he could have, but he couldn't get John Diefenbaker out for some reason.

Yes, I would hope the Member for Rupertsland again would stand and compliment that great Canadian, John Diefenbaker, who gave them the right to decide. That's a commitment for the Native Canadians to participate in the parliamentary system, to determine their destiny. They talk about self-government. Who has set the example? It's been the Progressive Conservatives in this country. Yes, Madam Speaker, let's let the records speak.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. J. DOWNEY: Madam Speaker, the back bench holler about a bad example. I think the majority of Canadians would say that John Diefenbaker is a good example of the rights of Northerners and he is the man who had the vision for the North, and I'll tell you, he delivered on it; but I don't think the vision that is coming from the Member for Thompson, particularly in what we see here, is very clear.

My colleague from Penembina, Pembina When I get excited, Madam Speaker, I have a problem with the — it's an hallucination that the Member for Thompson is having.

Madam Speaker, I think it's important, when the member talks about open and honesty, that they practise it before they preach it. The New Democratic Party in the Province of Manitoba is standing here with a resolution dealing with honesty and openness. What about all the information and all the wrongdoings that they're trying to cover up with, not only they themselves, but that members have been accused of, Madam Speaker?

Yes, there have been many things that have been alluded to. I don't have time in the few minutes that I have left to go through all the problems, whether it be the McKenzie Seeds issue, whether it be the tax problems that they've tried to wind their way out of or the letting of contracts that are questionable within the whole system. Madam Speaker, there are a multitude of things and my leader, several days ago, made it very clear on the record, in his grievance, as to what the majority of them were, did an excellent job of pointing out the kind of honesty and openness that we have in the New Democratic Party. He has the very gall to put it on a resolution.

Madam Speaker, the credibility of the member, the credibility of this resolution can only be put down to it's the political betterment of the New Democratic Party and the Member for Thompson. But as far as a sincere

effort to help the Natives of this province, to help the Northerners of this province, Madam Speaker, we have to look to the Progressive Conservatives who are sincere in everything they say and do to try and help the betterment and the development of that great North that we have.

We, Madam Speaker, and I as a member of a former government, spent thousands of dollars in development projects, whether it was 4-H programs in Thompson with the Natives of that area, whether it was the agriculture program in the Wabowden area that we were working to develop. Yes, Madam Speaker, it was some real and meaningful programs that we were working on, and I would hope that the member over there would take a lesson, read back some of the history of what has been done for the North and not stand in his place and just try to gain some cheap politics at the expense of those people who we all want to sincerely help.

I have to be straightforward and say that I am absolutely unable to support the resolution because of the way in which it's been presented and what the member has said.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister responsible for Native Affairs.

HON. E. HARPER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm pleased to take part in this debate and also support this resolution.

I might say that . . .

A MEMBER: It's the first positive action you've taken since you've been Minister.

HON. E. HARPER: I've been very positive in terms of supporting Native people and I happen to be one of them.

I must say that when they mentioned about Diefenbaker giving the right to the Indian people to vote, that may be the case. As I said before, that was the last time the Progressive Government was progressive. I might say that we've always had the right to vote, but not within the Canadian society.

We've always had the democratic communities, democratic reserves, as the case may be. We've always exercised the right to govern ourselves and I think that lacks the understanding of the members opposite because that is something that we've always been fighting for, is the right to govern ourselves within the Canadian Constitution and to be part of this country.

I might say that the report that was leaked, the Neilsen Task Force Report that was leaked, entitled "Operation, Buffalo Jump." I think even the title, in a sense, is racist, because if you analyze what that means, the buffalo used to be around when the first people came from Europe. There were a lot of buffalo around and how they used to kill the buffalo was to herd them and also run them off the cliff. So, in that sense, the "Operation, Buffalo Jump" title in a sense implies that we are somehow to be gotten rid of.

At the same time, the report doesn't really support the recognition of our rights, but rather supports the extinguishment of rights. Last year, I spoke on this on the Neilsen Task Force Report and they had the final

report that was tabled. It was called, "Improved Program Delivery — Indians and Natives," and this final report of the Neilsen Task Force confirms the fact that the Federal Government is proceeding with the recommendations that were contained in that report that was leaked earlier.

I might say that this cutting back of program dollars, cutbacks to bands is occurring. I can give you some examples of the cutbacks that have been made. One is in the area of education, where the Manitoba Indian Education Association has experienced cutbacks to its programs; and this is confirmed by the recent audit that was commissioned by the Minister of Indian Affairs. The allegations that were presented by the Brotherhood of Indian Nations and by the First Nation's Confederacy confirm that these allegations were true.

The reporting of the actual results of the departmental operation to parliament was also misleading, and that is the finding of the auditor who did the report. Also the report found that there was evidence to indicate that some of the programs were underfunded and that administrative costs had not been appropriately transferred. It also confirmed the Minister's directives were not being followed. As a matter of fact, the Minister of Indian Affairs put a directive out advising that no cutbacks would be made to the existing programs.

As a matter of fact, the report confirmed that there were actually cutbacks to existing programs. This has embarrassed the government, the Government of Canada, especially the Department of Indian Affairs.

I had spoken to Crombie, not in detail of the audit, but he mentioned the fact that he had problems in Manitoba in respect to the audit that was being done. As a matter of fact, this present day, or yesterday, there were sit-ins at the Department of Indian Affairs offices by some chiefs protesting the inadequate funding and also the lack of program dollars that are available to them.

Even some of the purchasing controls were circumvented. It was also found out that there were dollars that were transferred to banks with inadequate funding.

They made some comparisons to funding to certain programs in relation to the provincial agencies. One of the comparisons they did was comparing of the Child and Family Services. They compared it to the Indian-delivered program, which is the Southeast Child and Family Services program. They compared it to a provincial agency and they found out that the Indian-delivered program was underfunded by \$177,000 and at the same time indicated they were short-staffed by four people.

In that sense, when the bands are taking over some of the programs, they encounter the cutbacks or the lack of funding in order to ensure, I guess, a quality delivery to the bands that they serve, or to the tribal councils.

I might say that the Nielsen Task Force, or the new program that they just did, the improved service delivery and also the leaked document, has damaged the relationships in terms of trying to achieve self-government between the Federal Government and the aboriginal people.

If you want to develop a good relationship, if you want to start negotiating, you need to have the trust and the honesty and the integrity of the opposition and

the people that are negotiating. By this task force, I think what it has done is damaged the relationships that should exist in negotiating the self-governments that will exist on reserves.

I find that the Federal Government, who has the trust responsibility to the Indian people, who have the statutory and constitutional responsibilities, would proceed in this manner to start developing policies not in consultation with the chiefs or the aboriginal people but rather in the back rooms and start implementing some of these policies.

I think there needs to be a clear direction set by the Minister himself. As a result of the report, I find it incredible that he doesn't have control of his department; even his directives are not being followed by his department.

A MEMBER: Were there any positive recommendations on how to straighten it out?

HON. E. HARPER: One of the recommendations I would like to maybe mention is that they — I'm willing to help him any way that I can. If he calls me, I'd be pleased to sit down with him and discuss some of the problems that he may have.

The plight of Native people, I've always said, shouldn't be a partisan issue because we are at the bottom of the social scale ladder and we are trying to achieve the same kind of quality services that other Canadians have access to.

But, in terms of the report, the cutbacks that are being implemented are not going to provide that at all. As a matter of fact, the Department of Indian Affairs is encouraging and also beginning to implement the Nielsen Task Force in terms of providing a minimal standard of housing or services to Indians so as to discourage them from staying on reserves and going into the cities because their policy of providing services to Indians is only limited to people that reside on reserves. They don't consider the Indian people that reside in the cities or in towns as their responsibility.

As a matter of fact, their definition of responsibility is six months. If an Indians lives for six months in the city or off the reserve for six months, that he's no longer the responsibility of the Federal Government but rather a responsibility of the Provincial Government.

This is, in a way, off-loading their responsibilities. I've always felt that the treaty rights that we have are recognized and should be supported by the Federal Government not only within the boundaries of the reserves but should be extended beyond the reserve boundaries and into the cities.

We have probably the largest reserve in Canada here in Winnipeg. There are many status Indians who live in Winnipeg but do not receive the care or the services that they require.

This is one of the things that I, as a Minister of Native Affairs, would like to address in terms of making a clear policy in respect from the Federal Government as to what its responsibilities are.

Certainly, the Nielsen Task Force report doesn't encourage the development of the Indian self-government. As a matter of fact, I've said before, it destroys the relationships that exist there. It is sort of a carbon copy of the 1969 White Paper policy which

was rejected by Indian people across this country because it proposes to dismantle Indian Affairs and also it proposes to, in a way, extinguish the rights of the Indian people rather than recognizing the rights of the aboriginal people.

This has to be, I think, seriously addressed by the Federal Government. As I've said before, I'm willing to talk to the Minister and ask him what assistance he may need, or in terms of what I could offer him in addressing some of the problems that we have in Manitoba in terms of responsibilities, in terms of trust and treaty obligations, and also in terms of the constitutional obligations that they have in supporting the aboriginal people in this country.

In closing, I would have to say that the Federal Government, in a sense, has not lived up to its treaty obligations, has not lived up to its trust obligations. Being the senior government in this country, they should be the ones leading and providing the guidance that the other Provincial Governments may be following. At the same time, they are the ones that have treaty obligations to the aboriginal people. They were the ones that signed treaties with the Indian people, and I feel that the Federal Government has totally not lived up to its treaty obligations. So in closing I would say that I support the resolution, and I would keep my office open for the Minister. So I would close in that I was pleased to speak on this resolution.

Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie.

MR. E. CONNERY: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I rise with pleasure to reply to the proposed resolution. Unfortunately, the Member for Thompson, all I can say about his speech, it was like the storm we had last night, a big puff of wind and it went away.

Madam Speaker, I have a very tender spot in my heart for the Metis and Native people. I grew up in St. Vital where there was a large community of Native people. I went to school with them, grew up with them, and I've worked with them. I know the strengths, and in fact I even have Metis people who are relatives of mine, and I'm proud of that fact.

Madam Speaker, given a chance to have a meaningful job and a meaningful way of life, the Metis people were able to lose the status of being on the welfare rolls and the unemployment rolls to become very meaningful people within our city and within our province. I think this is what the Metis and Native people of this province need is an opportunity for a meaningful job and meaningful life, not just the giveaways that have been promised by the various governments.

This is why the Federal Government in Ottawa are trying to take a meaningful look at the programs that are in place today. Get rid of the waste. We can't afford the ongoing amounts of money that are being spent with no meaningful evidence of success in bringing the Native people into the mainstream of life.

I think this is what we see on the other side. We get platitudes and little gifts here and little grants there. It's excellent when it comes to the time for a vote, but it doesn't do anything for the Native people. I think there needs to be a hard look at this.

When I went to Portage la Prairie, Madam Speaker, I had the opportunity to then become involved with the true status Native Indian. The true status Native Indian is in most cases a very intelligent, a very worthwhile person, and a person with pride. But over the 25 years that I've been in Portage, and I've seen the government programs that have not benefited the Native people, and this pride has lowered.

Madam Speaker, we were very interested within our group to learn a little bit more about Native culture. We do employ large numbers, and I'm probably one of the largest employers of Native people in this province, so I know what I say when I understand the strengths and weaknesses of the Native people. I've had a lot of communication with them.

But one of the unfortunate things, and I think some of it comes from the Native leaders themselves, when a professor at the University of Brandon spoke to us and one of his comments was that the government took away our forest. The government has now become our forest. I think, unfortunately, that is what we are seeing, is that the governments have made the Native people go to them, and they haven't responded in the way that the Native people have needed.

It's taken over 100 years to do to the Native people what the people of Canada have done. Well, we should be very ashamed of ourselves on both sides of the House, federally and provincially, for what we've done to the Native people, not what we've done for the Native people.

Madam Speaker, the Mulroney Government is being criticized for the program cuts. Well, Madam Speaker, the Mulroney programs that they're talking about, there are 106 programs in the Neilsen Report. Now, how can you get meaningful programs out of 106 various programs? You cannot do it. So what they're saying is they've got to consolidate them and put them back together.

We see the Indian Affairs and these things that they're doing. You can see the Indian Affairs have got an amazing large number of programs for the Native people, in the millions of dollars. But the main thing of these programs is to make them be self-sufficient, to give them jobs, to make them be very meaningful people in this country.

I'm going to go to the report, Madam Speaker, because I think there are some things in here that we should look at. Right now, with all of the programs that are being spent on Native people, it's \$3 billion. Not including the universal programs of UIC, Old Age Pension and Family Allowance, we're spending over \$3 billion on the Native people.

But we also have to recognize what the difference between the Native population and the regular population is. Nationally, 52 percent of aboriginals are under 20 years of age, compared to 32 percent for the rest of the population. They're a young population that are going to be around for a long time and, if we don't have meaningful programs and jobs to make them part of the mainstream of life, they've got a long, bitter, miserable life.

Only 22 percent of the adult aboriginal population has trained beyond high school, compared to 40 percent for the rest of the Canadian population. After all these gobs of money, what have we got? That's the problem; we have not succeeded.

Those who maybe have looked through the Neilsen Report will see the vast numbers of programs that the Governments of Canada have put forth for Native people over the years, and they haven't worked. This is what the Government of Canada is saying. All that we've done up till now is put the Native people as a second-class citizen, rather than making them first class.

Eighty percent of the aboriginal people live west of Quebec; 84 percent of the Metis and non-status people live on the Prairie provinces. So the problem is very unique to Western Canada that we better address it and address it very sincerely.

For example, 33 percent of the aboriginal people residing in Alberta live in Edmonton and Calgary off the reserve. The proportion of off-reserve Indians has been steadily rising in the past two decades, and it has doubled in the past two decades.

The aboriginal population is significantly younger than the national. Age structure has important labour force implications. In the Prairies, for example, one in six children under the age of 15 years is of aboriginal ancestry. Also, their population is growing, because their fertility rate amongst the Native people is double that of the rest of Canada. So that problem is going to be growing faster than the rest of Canada, but we don't want to admit that. We don't want to look at it. Just spend more money will not solve the problems that we have today.

Seventy-five percent of the aboriginal population has less than high school graduation, compared to 45 percent for the national average. Approximately 20 percent of Indian students complete high school, compared to 75 percent of the rest of Canada.

All the way through, we have spent gobs of money. Nothing has worked. What the Government of Canada now is saying, let's take a second look at what we've been doing, and let's see if we can now put something back together.

Madam Speaker, we can see some of the problems, and I'll just mention them very quickly because time is running out and I won't be back tomorrow to finish. Band-spending probe, these are some of the problems

we have on the bands, that the money hasn't been handled right. Also, the government under David Crombie admitted that the Indian Affairs Department, which is administered probably mostly by whites, has not done the job. It has misappropriated funds; the whole thing is a mess of inappropriation.

But they've also said band funding boosted to meet shortfalls. Here it is — (inaudible) — million Hydro offer rejected by Indian Bands. The Province of Manitoba is not willing to live up to their indications. How many claims has the Manitoba Government settled with the Native people in the Hydro deal? One, and the Federal Government is being criticized for failing to deal with the land claims. Where is your track record? "North gets top priority," this is what the Minister of Energy said. The Native people up North will get priorities, up until the election, then we saw the union people get it.

Job training, why train them if you're not going to give them the job? We see all of these things coming up, job preference again, this time for contractors — they don't get it and the indignity of all is to put a waterslide with provincial money on a Native ancestral burial grounds where you degrade the Native people when you put up a waterslide and the member over there should be ashamed that he's a part of the government that did it.

Madam Speaker, I'll close with one last — and I want to close on a positive note and it's the success story that was in the Brandon Sun, March 25, where it talks about the Crane Indian Reserve discovered, after 10 years, they have now become an economically viable reserve with meaning and a feeling of self-worth. That is what we have to do, is develop the success stories, not the ludicrous giveaway programs that don't give dignity to the Indians.

MADAM SPEAKER: When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member has five minutes remaining.

The hour being 5:30, I am leaving the Chair with the understanding that the House will reconvene at 8:00 p.m. in Committee of Supply.